

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 2 May 2024 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor Y Elliott (Chair), J Bibby, D Edwards, T Guest, C Partridge

Also attending: District Cllr Rogers

Members of the Public: Two

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4992 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Edwards, seconded by Cllr Partridge and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Elliott is re-elected as Chair. Cllr Elliot accepted the position and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4993 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Partridge, seconded by Cllr Guest and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Raynor is elected as Vice Chair. Cllr Raynor was not present at the meeting but had already agreed to accept the position, if elected. She will sign her Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next meeting.

4994 RESIGNATION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(a) Members received and noted the resignation of Cllr Zab.

- Apologies were received from:
- Cllr Raynor
- District Cllr Nutley
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

4995 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.

Cllr Elliott declared an interest in item 5005(b).

4996 OPEN FORUM

Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers has arranged for cash to be available on the post office van through Starling on Widecombe Fair Day. He will speak to the Widecombe Fair Committee about the preferred location for the van on that day.

4997 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4 April 2024 which were approved

as a true and correct record.

4998 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It was agreed to maintain the Committee structure as follows:

- **Projects and Estates:** Cllrs Edwards and Partridge
- **Planning and Finance:** Cllrs Bibby, Raynor and Guest

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The following roles and representatives were also agreed:

- Trees – Estates Committee
- Widecombe Fair – Clerk to ask Widecombe Fair Committee to contact the Parish Council should it require anything to be discussed.
- Widecombe & District Sports Group – Cllr Partridge
- Parish Field – Cllr Bibby and the Estates Committee
- Snow Warden – Miles Fursdon
- Sandbag Co-ordinator – Cllr Edwards
- Defibrillator – Judy Southcombe
- Highways and Footpaths – whole Council
- Affordable Housing – whole Council
- Parish email communication system – Tim Hassell
- Educational Trust – no representative
- Church House – Cllr Partridge
- Climate and Environment – no representative

4999 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

Members reviewed the Parish Council governance documents and it was agreed that no changes were required.

5000 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

No report.

Cllr Partridge suggested that there should be an option to report a road defect (other than a pothole) such as the defect at Runnage Bridge where there is a dip in the road but it is not a

pothole. District Cllr Rodgers will speak to John Hart at DCC about this and about the large number of potholes in the parish which require attention.

(b) **District Councillors**

Cllr Rogers advised that he has an agreement from a TDC officer to meet with Teign Housing and the Parish Council to discuss the affordable housing allocations process. If the Parish Council emails him with their questions, he will ensure the correct person is present at the meeting to answer them.

He is working on a project with TDC and DNPA to try to connect communities with transport. There is grant funding available and he will keep the Parish Council posted on progress.

(c) **DNPA Representative**

No report this month but Rob Steemson will be attending the Annual Parish Meeting and will give a review of the last 12 months.

(d) **Police Report**

During the period 1 – 30 April, there was one criminal offence whereby the public toilets in the car park were broken into on 13 April. There was no damage caused and nothing was stolen. There were 3 non-crime incidents across the area. These involved a road traffic collision, a missing person and assisting DRG and Ambulance with removing a stroke patient from Sharp Tor.

Cllr Rogers advised that scammers are buying local telephone numbers which is a real problem at the moment. He would send the clerk with some information about this.

Cllr Bibby advised that she had contacted the police recently about some people at Natsworthy Gate who had lit a bonfire contrary to the DNP bylaws. The police advised that she could call the fire brigade if the fire was out of control but otherwise the police are not responsible for breach of bylaws. She was informed, however, that DNPA are going to have evening marshals during the summer although they will not be able to be contacted directly.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

Cllr Bibby advised that she had contacted a member of Lustleigh Parish Council about their Road Warden Scheme. Since November, they have filled 37 potholes. She has asked to meet with him to discuss how the scheme is working etc.

5001 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Bibby, Raynor & Guest)

(a) **Payments**

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements – £277.37
- Lee Accounting (SW) Ltd (internal audit of accounts) – £108
- Geoff Partridge – Chipping of hedge parings in the parish field – £250

(b) **Insurance renewal**

Members received the insurance renewal from Community First for 2024-25 at a cost of £149.32. This was the second year of a three-year long-term agreement. The renewal was accepted with no amendment to the level of cover required.

(c) **Audit 2023/24**

(i) Members received and noted the year end bank reconciliation

(ii) Members received and note the internal auditor's report to agree that this Council is confident that the internal audit arrangements provided by Lee Accounting (South West) Ltd

provides excellent reassurance for the public that the financial systems are robust and fit for purpose and to continue with their appointment as the Internal Auditor to the Parish Council

- Members agreed that this Council is exempt from a limited assurance review under s9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and to sign the Certificate of Exemption
- Members agreed to complete and approve Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2023/24)
- Members received, approved and signed Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2023/24),

(d) **Annual Parish Meeting – 22 May 2024**

The meeting will be held in Church House at 7.30pm. Invitations have been sent to local groups and organisations to give a short report about their activities. It was agreed that an individual speaker was not needed but the Chairman would give a report about the Parish Council's activities over the last 12 months. The clerk will arrange refreshments and the Chair will bring wine glasses.

5002 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Edwards & Partridge)

- **Parish Field**

(i) The income and expenditure for the Parish Field (to 30 April 2024) was received. A balance of £1353.85 was noted.

- Grazing: the Chair reported that it has been observed that the pre-school children have been petting the sheep which are currently grazing in the field. She has now spoken to the pre-school about this and the children will now shoo them away if approached by the sheep as they are walking through.

5003 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Raynor & Guest)

(a) **New planning applications/appeals:**

- (i) [0131/24 – Higher Tor Farm, Poundsgate](#)

0132/24 – Higher Tor Farm, Poundsgate

Internal remodelling of existing farmhouse, replacement windows and replacement of existing corrugated metal cladding. Refurbishment of existing cottage. Internal alterations to existing barn to create private yoga studio. Ancillary works to existing garage to create plant room and store. Landscape enhancement.

Members agreed unanimously to support this application.

(ii) 0150/24 – Southcombe House, Widcombe

Retrospective erection of an ancillary building

Members agreed by a majority to support this application.

(iii) 0142/24 – Springdown, Poundsgate

Replacement of all rotting timber windows with Aluminium framed triple glazed units

Members agreed to support this application.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

(i) 0084/24 – Widcombe Valley Campsite, Lower Southway Farm, Widcombe

Application for prior approval for a temporary recreational campsite Class BC Part 4 Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (Class BC – temporary recreational campsite – 20 tents and 2 small campervans_

Members noted that DNPA has determined to refuse Prior Approval

5004 HIGHWAYS

Potholes and other highways maintenance issues can be reported direct to DCC:

Online: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

Telephone: 0345 155 1004

Email: customer@devon.gov.uk

5005 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Members received an update from the gentleman looking after the horse chestnut sapling. It was agreed that he should continue to look after it until it is more established.

- Members received a request from Widcombe Community Hall to run a weekly cake stall on the green

over the summer months to raise additional funds for the hall. This will be on a Monday when the Café

on the Green is closed. Members approved this request.

- Letters of thanks were received from Widcombe Community Hall and Widcombe Pre-school for

grants awarded to them from the Parish Council.

5006 MEMBERS' ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR GENERAL DISCUSSION, FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS AND/OR ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

Members are reminded that they have not received the statutory notice of this business to be transacted and should therefore recognise that any decision made may be taken to be unlawful if challenged in the future

(a) Cllr Partridge advised that parishioners have raised a concern about children playing in the stream and building dams interrupting the flow of the water. It was agreed to keep an eye on it and remove any dams if seen.

(b) The Chair updated members about traffic around the school at the end of the day. She advised that the bus will continue to temporarily block the road at 3.30pm whilst picking up the children. Unfortunately, some parents continue to park on the single yellow lines despite the parking restrictions (from 1 April) and permits being made available for parking in the TDC car park. Minimal disruption will therefore continue for a few minutes at the end of the school day. The school are doing all they can to encourage parents to park sensibly so as not to block the road.

5007 NEXT MEETINGS

- Annual Parish Meeting – 22 May 20224 (Church House, Widecombe)
- Parish Council Meeting – 6 June 2024 (Church House, Widecombe)

Signed Dated