

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 1 May 2025 at 7.30pm

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

**Also attending:** District Cllr Rogers

**Members of the Public:** Four

**Clerk:** Suzanna Hughes

### **5117 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

It was proposed by Cllr Raynor, 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.

### **5118 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

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

### **5119 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- District Cllr Nutley
- District Cllr Major

### **5120 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 Partridge declared an interest in item 5129(a) – Geoff Partridges invoice for repairs to the bench.

### **5121 OPEN FORUM**

The landlord of The Old Inn advised that they had done some fundraising to plant flowers around the village and asked who was responsible for the tree and surrounding bed outside Church House. It is believed to be unregistered land. The Parish Council could not see that anyone would have any objections to this.

He has also applied through TDC to be the Wildlife Warden for the village. The Chair invited him to say a few words at the Annual Parish Meeting about what he has planned. He was also

encouraged to co-ordinate with the Jubilee Orchard and the pre-school who have an outdoor classroom.

#### **5122 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 April 2025 which were approved

as a true and correct record.

#### **5123 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP**

It was agreed to maintain the Committee and membership was agreed as follows:

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

#### **5124 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following roles and representatives were 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 Guest
- Defibrillator – Cllr Edwards
- Highways and Footpaths – whole Council
- Parish email communication system – Tim Hassell
- Church House – Cllr Partridge
- Wildlife Warden – Michael Jonas
- Road Warden – Sue Raynor

#### **5125 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS**

(a) Members received and adopted updated Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as proposed.

(b) Members reviewed the Assets Register. The existing values remain unchanged. Updated photographs of the defibrillator cabinet and relocated tree seating would be inserted. The equipment purchased for the Road Warden scheme will also be added to the list. Cllr Raynor to send a list to the clerk.

(c) No changes were required to other governance documents.

## **5126 REPORTS**

### **(a) County Councillor**

No report.

### **(b) District Councillors**

Cllr Rogers advised that the Household Support will not be available until June.

He will pursue the matter of securing funding for new play equipment post-election.

He will also follow up a request from Widecombe Fair Committee to secure exclusive use of the car park on Fair Day.

The toilet consultation will be discussed in July's Full Council meeting.

Details about the Ring and Ride service will be communicated next week. They still need volunteer drivers.

### **(c) DNPA Representative**

No report.

### **(d) Police Report**

Police Sergeant Seth Saunders retired on 4 April, after 21 years' service. PS Ryan Cooke will be the new Neighbourhood Team Leader for the area, starting on 14 May.

PC Claire Hurrell is the Neighbourhood Beat Manager working alongside Police Community Support Officer Tamzin Campbell-Moseley.

In the period 1 – 30 April 2025, there was 2 criminal offences recorded for this area:

1 x Owner/person in charge of dog dangerously out of control causing injury

1 – Theft of motor vehicle (Land Rover)

On 13 April 2025, police were called to the Holne area of the moor. A Land Rover with a trailer containing sheep had been dumped and left with its engine running. The Land Rover had been stolen (without keys) overnight from Widecombe and subsequently used in an attempt to steal a livestock trailer, sheep and equipment from a farm in Buckfastleigh. Most items were subsequently recovered.

There were 5 non-crime incidents across the area which mainly included Firearms Licensing and road-related incidents.

### **(e) Delegate Reports**

None

## **5127 PROJECTS AND ESTATES**

### **(a) Closure of Dartmeet toilets**

Members received and noted a reply from Sally Morgan in response to a letter sent by this Council as reported in April's minutes at item 5110 (a). The response stated:

*'It is unfortunate that Widecombe Parish Council has relied on a second-hand media report for information, as I assure you that there was no criticism, implied or otherwise, directed at the Parish Council.*

*If members had attended the meeting regarding the regrettable closure of the public toilets in the Parish, they would have heard a broad and mostly positive discussion about the future and potential funding provision for public conveniences in general.*

*I can neither apologise for nor retract comments penned by a journalist, especially since any media report does not adequately or fairly convey the entire debate.'*

**(b) Parish Field**

(i) Members noted that there has been no change to the income and expenditure since last month.

(ii) Grazing licence – having received no applications to graze the field, there has been an offer from a resident to use half a dozen of his sheep to graze the field at no cost. Cllr Bibby will arrange for the licence to be signed.

**5128 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON**

- **New planning applications/appeals**

- 0141/25 – Cockingford Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Covering over livestock handling and feeding areas

Members agreed to support this application.

- (ii) 0146/25 & 0147/25 – Jordan Manor, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Partial dismantling and rebuilding of a section of dry-stone granite boundary wall to facilitate remedial excavations following a heating oil leak

Members agreed to support this application.

- **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

- (i) 0210/24 – Challamoor Field, Buckland-in-the-Moor

Installation of 20m lattice telecommunications tower supporting 9 no. antennas, 2 no 600mm dishes, together with 1no. foul weather enclosure, 1 no. generator and 1no. meter cabinet plus a 1.2m satellite dish and compound fencing for the EAS and Shared Rural Network projects

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional consent.

**5129 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

**(a) Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & disbursements – £287.37
- DALC membership fees – £223.09
- Lee Accounting (SW) Ltd (internal audit of accounts) – £108

- G Partridge – repairs to bench in car park – £225
- Community First – insurance renewal (third year of 3-year LTA) – 149.05
- M Brown – Parish Field fencing – £200

(b) **Audit 2024/25**

- (i) Members received and noted the year-end bank reconciliation.
- (ii) Members received and noted 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
- (iii) 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
- (iv) Members completed and approved Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2024/25).
- (v) Members received, approved and signed Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2024/25).

**5130 HIGHWAYS**

(a) Road Warden Scheme – Cllr Raynor advised that they have had five sessions so far and the volunteers have worked very hard and filled 67 potholes. The areas covered include from the turning to Lower Town down Ponsworthy Hill as far as Ladymeadow Terrace. They have also done the top half of Bonehill and some parts of Langworthy Lane. The next area will be Natsworthy and it is noted that there are some potholes around the village and one at Cockingford which they will also look at. They are trying to arrange two sessions a month as a minimum.

The road to Jordan is going to be closed in May/June to replace an oil tank and pipe work at Jordan Manor. Given the condition of this stretch of road, it was suggested that Highways could use it as an opportunity to resurface it whilst the road closure is in place.

(b) Other highways matters including:

(i) Concerns were raised about a 12-car navigational rally organised by Plymouth Motor Club on 25 April between 9.30-11.30pm. The main concerns were the speed of vehicles and the impact on other vehicles, residents and animals. A resident attended the meeting and described her direct experience of it.

After discussion, it was agreed that Cllrs Edwards and Raynor would draft a letter to Plymouth Motor Club expressing the concerns raised. It was agreed to copy in Highways, DNPA and the Commoners Council.

***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](mailto:customer@devon.gov.uk)

**5131 CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**5132 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*

None

**5133 NEXT MEETINGS**

- Annual Parish Meeting – 22 May 2025 (Church House Widecombe)
- Parish Council Meeting – 5 June 2025 (Leusdon Memorial Hall)

Signed ..... Dated .....