

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombeon Thursday 4 November 2021

Members present: Councillor Hassell (Chairman), Butcher, Edwards, Elliott, Fenton, Jones, Partridge and Whiteside

Also present: County Cllr Gribble and District Cllr Nutley

Members of the Public: Six

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

### **4740 RESIGNATION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(a) Members received and noted the resignation of Cllr Clare

(b) Members received apologies from:

- District Cllr Parker-Khan
- District Cllr Cox
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

### **4741 OPEN FORUM**

A member of the public advised the Parish Council that Widecombe Commoners Council has applied for a grant of around £250,000 from the Farming in Protected Landscapes Scheme for the installation of a number of cattle grids in the area. He asked whether this had been considered by the Parish Council and if not, will it be, as this is a sufficiently important matter that needs as wide a consultation as possible. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council has not been consulted and was unsure whether it needs to be consulted. He invited County Cllr Gribble to advise on this who informed members that four of the proposed cattle grids (Shallowford, Ponsworthy, Lower Cator and Cator Gate) were discussed at the HATOC (Highways and Traffic Orders Committee) meeting earlier that day and it was unanimously agreed to put them forward for advertising. They will be funded by Spitchwick Commoners and DNPA. Cllr Edwards advised that the money they have asked for is not just for cattle grids, it is for a lot of other things as well to do with management of the moorland and this is just the first proposal. It is the very start of a very long process which she is sure will involve consultations with Parish Councils and other bodies.

### **4742 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.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

### **4743 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 October 2021 which were approved as a true and correct record.

There were two matters arising from those minutes:

- It was agreed that the Projects Team would present the Terms of Reference for the Parish Field in February's meeting.
- Cllr Fenton would chase the signed Grazing Licence which had not yet been returned.

#### 4744 REPORTS

##### (a) County Councillor

In addition to the report he had already given in the open forum about the HATOC meeting, Cllr Gribble advised that DCC has agreed a further £8.5m package of support for local communities to deal with the ongoing impact of COVID over the winter period and beyond. The byelaw consultation has now closed.

Cllr Fenton commented that the design of the sign posts on Dartmoor is not appropriate for the weather conditions of the moor. They do not withstand the wind and often break off or point in the wrong direction. A member of the public also commented that the names of the sign posts indicating their location are slowly disappearing. Cllr Nutley suggested that he and Cllr Gribble could raise this at the DNPA meeting which they are both attending tomorrow.

It was noted that two new grit bins are in place. The Chairman advised that the grit bin at Dunstone is damaged and needs replacing. Cllr Edwards advised that a new grit bin is also needed on Blackaton Hill. It was agreed that the clerk would put forward a request for the damaged Dunstone bin to be replaced and a new bin sited on Blackaton Hill.

Cllr Partridge asked how much longer will it take to complete the relining work at Deeper Marsh and Newbridge. The road closures cause considerable inconvenience to parishioners.

##### (b) District Councillors

Cllr Nutley advised that TDC is struggling to attract HGV drivers and are finding it difficult to compete against larger firms. TDC is achieving a 56% recycling rate. Householders are still putting waste into their black bins which shouldn't be there. It has been agreed that new properties will be charged for bins. It has also been agreed to charge £300 for additional residual black bins. This affects around 69 households which could recycle more but don't. Currently, 24,210 subscribe to a green bin which is 748 up on last year.

##### (c) DNPA Representative

Rob Steemson submitted the following written report:

The contractors for Highways have made a start with renewing the yellow lines in and around Newbridge. So far, they have completed Hannaford lane and Newbridge hill and started preparing the Deeper Marsh road. I met the lead person and mentioned that the lines in the turning bay were missed last time and he confirmed they would do them. I also asked him to chase Highways themselves for all the signs required to re-enforce the yellow lines.

I am presently planning sites for potential erosion works within, and just outside the Parish boundary on Hameldown. This is part of my wider erosion works that link across a wider area

towards Grimspound, Hookney Tor, Birch Tor and into Soussons wood. This might link up with potential WildFire Partnership fire break work and be part of a comprehensive bid to the Farming in Protected Landscapes funding.

Our other main topic of the last six weeks is the consultation on the review of Dartmoor National Park Byelaws and we have received lots of mixed feedback.

We are also just about to start our random Public Rights of Way checks which is part of our requirement under our agreement with Devon County Council.

(d) Police

No report.

(e) Delegate Reports

None.

#### 4745 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Fenton)

No items

#### 4746 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards & Elliott)

(a) Members received correspondence from TDC regarding its proposal to extend the current car parkcharges to include the winter period. Members also received a report detailing the intention of the family who donated the land in 1984.

Cllr Nutley explained that TDC is looking to standardise winter charging across the district and increase much-needed revenue for the Council. The Chairman expressed concern about displacedparking should charging be introduced as there are no restrictions to park in the village from October to the end of April. It was noted that having asked for a breakdown of the costs, the car park is alreadygenerating a profit. Costs will inevitably increase if winter charging is introduced (enforcement, taking money away from the machine etc) and TDC could in fact make a loss. It was further commented thatthe costs which had been sent to the Parish Council were not real costs but apportioned central costs. Similarly, hidden in the costs is a payment of business rates (£3,500) which TDC is paying itself.After a discussion, members voted unanimously against the proposal to introduce winter charging in the car park on the following grounds:

In a letter dated 13 January 1982 from William Van Straubenzee to Widecombe Parish Council, he stated that his intention in making the gift 'is to confer as large a benefit as possible to the Parishof Widecombe through its Parish Council rather than upon the District Council but he accepts that the car park extension would make more sense if it were vested legally in the District Council asthe then existing car park was already so vested'.

During the winter, the car park is used mainly by parishioners visiting local businesses or attendinglocal events. The introduction of charges during the winter would therefore go against the overriding wish of William van Straubenzee when he gifted the land, i.e. to confer as large a

benefit as possible to the Parish of Widecombe, and TDC should not be profiting further from this gift to the financial detriment of parishioners and local businesses within the parish.

Cllr Partridge pointed out that the hedge around the back of the toilets has not been cut again. Cllr Nutley offered to follow this up.

(b) Members noted that the soil amelioration has been completed around the chestnut tree on the green. Following a discussion about whether any further action is required to protect the tree, it was agreed that Estates will look into some appropriate signage and will look at removing the bench to discourage members of the public from standing underneath the tree.

#### 4747 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Clare & Elliott)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0540/21 – Rugglestone Inn, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Change of use from agricultural to a camping area

It was agreed to support this application, The application had been previously supported by both the Parish Council and members of the public and this appears to be simply an application to change existing permission from a temporary basis to a permanent one. It's an ideal location and supports the sustainability of a local business and has been shown to work well to date on a temporary basis.

(ii) 0575/21 – West Sherrill, Poundsgate

Replacement agricultural barn for livestock/agricultural and machinery

It was agreed to support this application. This is an application for a replacement/extension of the existing farm buildings and seems to be in-keeping with similar typical farm buildings in the area and an appropriate scale to ensure the sustained viability of an established farming business. It also appears to be in accordance with the DNPA Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan 2006-2026.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

(i) 0483/21 – Stone, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Replacement of existing garage/workshop

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

#### 4748 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Butcher & Whiteside)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Cheque no 001087 – Clerk's salary and disbursements – £244.57
- Cheque no 001088 – J Southcombe (replacement defibrillator pads) – £57

- Cheque no 001089 – Dartforest Tree Works Ltd (soil amelioration around chestnut) – £1260

#### 4749 HIGHWAYS

There were no new issues.

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)

#### 4750 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Members received and noted an invitation to attend Highways Parish & Town Council Conference on 24-25 November 2021.

(b) Members received and noted the Town and Parish Briefings as listed on the TDC newsletter.

(c) Members received and noted an invitation to attend Devon's second Local Councillor Climate Emergency Support Network on 30 November 2021

#### 4751 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

Cllr Fenton requested that the Parish Council discusses the Wildlife Warden Scheme at the next meeting encouraging parishes to have their own warden to help keep wildlife on the agenda.

#### 4752 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Church House on 2 December 2021 at 7.30pm in ChurchHouse.

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