

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in Church House, Widecombe on Thursday 7 November 2024 at 7.30pm

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

**Also attending:** County Cllr Bullivant and District Cllr and Ashburton Postmaster Rogers

**Members of the Public:** Four

**Clerk:** Suzanna Hughes

### **5057 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- District Cllr Nutley
- District Cllr Major
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

### **5058 OPEN FORUM**

Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers advised that the mobile library service is being tested next week with a view to opening to the public very soon.

The new landlords of The Old Inn, Michael and Shane, introduced themselves. The pub is re-opening on Sunday 10 November at 11.30am. There will be a Christmas craft market in the pub on 14 December and they would like to donate any monies they raise back to the village. They wondered whether they could use the funds to buy a Christmas tree or some new lights for the village. They will also have a book swap in the corner of the pub which will be a permanent feature.

### **5059 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.

### **5060 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes Parish Council held on 3 October 2024 which were approved as a true and

correct record.

### **5061 REPORTS**

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

County Cllr Bullivant advised that, following the last meeting, he had fed back to the Highways Engineers the list of defects in the parish and, given the amount of yellow markings on the

roads, he hopes that these will be addressed over the next few weeks. Cllr Edwards advised that she had also reported some defects; one pothole has been repaired but the quality of work was so poor that it is in need of repair again. She has reported this to Meg Booth, DCC, who agreed that the standard of repair was poor.

There was a discussion about the Ponsworthy Bridge closure which has been initiated by SWW. It was noted that utilities have the right to carry out work without notice. However, the issue here is that the bridge has now been shut for 5 weeks; contractors were on site for the first week but the past 4 weeks, no one has been on site. There is a long diversion which is very inconvenient for the community and impacts the school buses. The closure has resulted in children being late for school every day for the last few weeks. It was recommended that the Council writes to Meg Booth, DCC. The Chair and Cllr Partridge will pen something appropriate to send.

County Cllr Bullivant spoke about the increased cost burdens for the County Council following the budget. The government is not offering the County Council enough funds to offset these increased costs resulting in a hugely difficult financial challenge for Devon County Council to continue to provide services.

**(b) District Councillors**

District Cllr Rogers reminded members about the Cost of Living Workshop on 20 November in Ashburton. If anyone needs transport, contact Cllr Rogers.

The connectivity fund has been approved. A 'Ring and Ride' service will be available from next spring. Details are currently being worked on but two new vehicles will be purchased and they will be seeking volunteer drivers to support the service. He advised that in October alone, the current provider, Newton Abbot Community Trust, did 3126 trips, demonstrating a real need for this service in rural communities. Cllr Rogers was thanked for his hard work in making this happen.

Cllr Rogers was asked about whether the Parish Council should have been formally notified about the consultation regarding the future of the public toilets. Cllr Rogers advised that there is no statutory requirement for the District Council to provide public toilets and it can no longer afford them. TDC will be consulting on whether parishes wish to take on the asset but he will find out more details next week and let the Parish Council know.

**(c) DNPA Representative**

No report.

**(d) Police Report**

During the period 1 – 31 October, there were no criminal offence recorded for this area. There were 5 non-crime incidents across the area. These involved a missing person, firearms licensing and road traffic collisions.

**(e) Delegate Reports**

Cllr Partridge attended a meeting of the Church House Committee. The Committee has been approached by parishioners requesting some chairs with arms. The Chair asked whether Wifi had been discussed. Whilst there is a system in the church, there is an understanding that the Church House Committee was considering taking over the pre-school's telephone line and

internet connection so that Wifi can be available to everyone using Church House and not just the pre-school. Cllr Partridge was unsure of any progress with this.

The Chair advised that there was a Village Green tidy-up day on 27 October. The memorial stones have had a good clean and the cobble stones around them have been fully exposed. The engravings are also much clearer with the exception of the millennium stone which covers the time capsule. Lloyd Mortimore has advised that the best option would be to remove the stone and have it re-engraved. She is awaiting a cost for that work and will let members know. Thank you to everyone who helped with the tidy-up.

## **5062 PROJECTS & ESTATES**

*(Cllrs Raynor & Partridge)*

- **Parish Chest**

Devon Archives are happy to receive the contents of the parish chest. Cllr Bibby confirmed her offer to transport the documents to Devon Archives in Exeter. The clerk will write to the History Group to advise them of this decision.

- **Defibrillator cabinet**

Having given this further thought and consideration, it was agreed, despite having established that the cabinet fails open, to purchase an unlocked cabinet to ensure that access to the defibrillator is always unimpeded. The cost of the cabinet itself is in the region of £550 and it will need fitting by a qualified electrician. Cllr Bullivant advised that he and Cllr Gribble still had some funds available in their locality budgets which would cover this cost. It was agreed that the clerk would make an application. Members thanked them for their generosity. Cllr Edwards advised that she will be taking over the responsibility of the guardianship of the defibrillator from Judy Southcombe.

- **Future of Public Toilets**

This had already been discussed in the open forum. More information was expected from TDC about a period of consultation.

(d) **Parish Field**

There was no change to income and expenditure for the Parish Field

## **5063 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON**

*(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)*

- **New planning applications/appeals:**
- 0210/24 – Challamoor Field, Buckland in the Moor

Consultee Notification of Amendments: 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 received a copy of a letter which Buckland-in-the-Moor Parish Council had written to KTL in October 2023. It was understood that this had been sent to Widcombe Parish Council in

October 2023 inviting comments. It was believed there was some feeling in Buckland that Widecombe Parish Council had ignored it but this was not the case as the clerk had no recollection of receiving it.

It was noted, however, that Widecombe Parish Council, when considering its response to the planning application in May, were mindful of the concerns of Buckland residents. Whilst continuing to acknowledge Buckland's concerns, a mobile signal is of high importance to Widecombe residents. As the Parish Council has a responsibility to represent the needs of its residents, the majority of members therefore agreed to continue to support this application (one member abstained from voting).

- (0411/24 – Land opposite Corndon Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Prior Notification – Extension to existing agricultural building (i) 0361/24 – Littlecot Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

No comments.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

- (i) 0131/24 & 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 noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- (ii) 0358/24 – Beech Tree Cottage, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Unfettered residential occupation of the property known as Beech Tree Cottage in breach of conditions (e) and (f) of planning permission granted under ref: 84/1903/06/1D

Members noted that DNPA has issued a Certificate of Lawfulness.

- (iii) 0361/24 – Littlecot Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Use of existing building for agricultural and training/education facility for timber, green forestry and country skills

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- 0376/24 – Southcombe Meadow (land Sx 713764), Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Regularise a partially constructed equestrian/agricultural building and for approval of the proposed works to complete the building (following approval ref: 0397/21)

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

## **5064 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

*(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)*

- Members noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an

agreement on the new rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2024. Clerk's salary will be backdated

accordingly.

**(b) Payments**

Members approved the following payment:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements – £632.44 (November & December, including back pay)

**(c) Budget 2025-26**

Members received and considered draft budget proposals for 2025/26. A final decision on this will be made in January's meeting.

- **Meeting Dates 2025**

Members agreed meeting dates and venues for 2025 (subject to hall availability). A final list will be circulated once venues have been confirmed.

**5065 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](mailto:customer@devon.gov.uk)

- Road Warden Scheme – Cllr Raynor advised that two volunteers will be attending the Chapter 8 training on 10 December. Cllr Raynor will be setting up a What's App group and will be sending all volunteers details of an online Highways Safety Awareness course. The scheme will not be up and running until the New Year.

**5066 CORRESPONDENCE**

The new website which Roger Claxton has been working on is now live.

**5067 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 Raynor advised that there was a situation at Widecombe Fair where the disabled toilet door closed locked trapping someone's belongings in there. She suggested that the Parish Council obtains a spare Radar key to keep locally as a back-up in case this happens again. It was agreed that the clerk would ask TDC if they could provide one.

Cllr Partridge will write to TDC about their plans to cut the hedge behind the public toilets now that the nesting season is over.

**5068 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 2 January 2025 in Church House,  
Widecombe.

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