

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council**

held in Church House, Widecombe on Thursday 5 October 2023 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor Y Elliott (Chairman), J Bibby, D Edwards, T Guest, S Raynor (formerly Jones), C Partridge and S Zab

Members of the Public: Two

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

#### **4920 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- District Cllr Cox
- County Cllr Gribble
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

#### **4921 OPEN FORUM**

A resident advised that PCSO Campbell-Mosely will be attending the next coffee morning in Leusdon (1st Wednesday of the month) with a view to running more regular police surgeries. She also advised that the Leusdon Hall centenary celebrations will be held on 20 October from 2pm.

#### **4922 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.

#### **4923 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7 September 2023 which were approved as a true and correct record.

#### **4924 REPORTS**

(a) County Councillor: No report.

(b) District Councillors: No reports.

(c) DNPA Representative: Rob Steemson was not present at the meeting but sent a written report advising that:

- The work to be undertaken on FP29 at Kingshead is still being agreed.
- Vegetation clearance has taken place on FP2, FP3, FP4, FP6 & FP27.
- Myself and a colleague from our Recreation section have walked FP7 between Ponsworthy & Jordan which is part of the Two Moors Way to look at potential

improvements. In the next financial year, the DNPA can draw down extra funding specifically for work on long distance trails.

- I have been instructed to replace the gate and repair the erosion on FP25 at Dartmeet linked to the cattle grid fencing.

(d) Police Report: No report.

(e) Delegate Reports: None

#### 4925 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Edwards, Partridge & Zab)

(a) Parish Field

(i) The income and expenditure for the Parish Field (to 29 September) was received. A balance of £2232.25 was noted.

(b) Affordable Housing

(i) The houses have not yet been advertised on Devon Home Choice. However, it was noted that the website still shows that eight dwellings are available despite one already having been allocated. It was agreed that the clerk should ask Teign Housing to update the website to show that there are only seven properties now available.

(c) Trees

(i) Members received the offer of a horse chestnut sapling which has been grown from a horse chestnut which had fallen from the felled tree. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to accept the kind offer although it was felt that it may be too small for the village green and that it might be better suited to the parish field or on the site of the new community hall. Members also discussed the Coronation Living Heritage Fund which has been set up to support local tree planting initiatives to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III. Cllr Zab offered to explore this with a view to obtaining one or two trees for the village green. A standard tree (6-7 feet) was recommended, either a lime or a horse chestnut.

(ii) Members discussed whether a tree condition report was required. At this stage, it was agreed to accept Geoff Partridge's offer of a visual inspection of the trees when the leaves have dropped. He would focus particularly on the horse chestnut on the green but thinks that given how well it has looked over the summer, it would suggest that it is currently in reasonable health. Geoff would do this at no cost to the Council. Members gratefully accepted Geoff's offer and agreed to commission a full condition assessment next year (unless any issues arose before them).

(d) North Hall sub-lease between the Parish Council and WDSG

Members received a quotation to draw up the Licence to Let and the Underlease totalling approximately £3,000 + VAT. Given the level of costs involved, it was agreed that other options should be explored. A meeting between the representatives of the Sports Group and the Parish Council would be arranged. The Chair and Cllr Bibby would represent the Parish Council.

(e) Lay-by at the bottom of Widecombe Hill

Members received quotations for improving this area for parking. Confirmation has not yet been received from DCC, however, as to whether this area is DCC's responsibility. After discussion, it was agreed that this was a low priority and therefore there is no justification for the Parish Council to spend money on it at this time. DCC should, however, be encouraged to improve the area if it is their responsibility.

#### 4926 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Jones & Guest)

(a) New planning applications/appeals:

- 0427/23 & 0428/23 – Lower Cator Farmhouse, Widecombe-in-the-Moor: Replacement garden room extension to front. Members unanimously agreed to support this application.
- 0410/23 – Great Cator Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor: Conversion of traditional stone barn to holiday let with associated garden and parking area (revised application). The majority of members agreed to support this application.
- 0394/23 & 0395/23 – Pink Cottage, Ponsworthy: Increase existing chimney height (revised drawings). Members unanimously agreed to support this application.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals: None

(c) Other planning matters: A concern was raised about whether there is a breach of planning conditions relating to 0252/21 (widening of access and new hardstanding, Land South West of Honeybag Tor). It has been observed that the gate has not been put back, the wall has not been repaired, the hardstanding was never completed properly and there are two huge piles of felled wood (thought to be diseased with phytophthora) which have not yet been burnt. It was agreed to ask DNPA's Enforcement Officer to investigate.

#### 4927 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Bibby, Jones & Guest)

(a) Payments: Members received and approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements (October) – £261.37
- HMRC – PAYE Q2 – £177
- Information Commissioners Office – Data Protection Licence renewal – £35 (direct debit)
- Leusdon Memorial Hall – Hall hire (September) – £20
- Platform One – parish field sign – £1294.08

(b) Budget 2024-25: Members were reminded that the Finance team would be required to present a draft budget at the next meeting. The final figures would not be required to be approved until January's meeting.

#### 4928 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

(a) Cleaning of yellow lines at Newbridge: This has been done, however leaves have now fallen on them again. It was agreed that this should be raised again with DCC/TDC early next year to ensure the lines are visible before Easter.

(b) Members discussed the debris running down Thornhill Lane and collecting in the cattle grid. It was noted that this is a persistent problem which, unless some form of drain is installed or vehicular access is restricted, will continue indefinitely. For now, it was agreed to report the blocked cattle grid to DCC.

(c) The clerk advised that a resident has reported excess water on the highway at Easter Lane/Church Lane Head around Great Dunstone House. It was agreed to ask DCC to clear the drains which may have become blocked. It was also believed that one of the drains is broken (there is a cone over it). This will become particularly relevant as we approach the colder months as the water on the road will freeze causing a real safety issue for vehicles.

(d) Members noted that there had been an unexpected road closure on Widecombe Hill. It seems that utilities do not have to give any notice of works.

#### 4929 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Members received an acknowledgement of the letter of thanks from the Parish Council for the improvements made by DNPA to Footpath 2 at the bottom of Widecombe Hill.

(b) Members noted a letter from Widecombe Community Hall CIO informing the Parish Council of the opportunity to purchase an engraved stone as part of the 'supporting wall' of the new hall. Donations upwards of £40 would be appreciated. It was suggested that a sum might be included in the Council's 2024/25 budget.

#### 4930 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. It was agreed to invite Roger Claxton to the next meeting to discuss the website.

#### 4931 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 2 November at 7.30pm in Church House, Widecombe.

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