

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 3 October 2024 at 7.30pm

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

**Also attending:** District Cllr and Ashburton Postmaster Rogers and District Cllr Major

**Members of the Public:** Two

**Clerk:** Suzanna Hughes

### **5045 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- Cllr Raynor
- District Cllr Nutley
- County Cllr Bullivant
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

### **5046 OPEN FORUM**

A resident advised that she hadn't quite understood why there had been difficulties accessing the defibrillator a couple of months ago and had established that the Ambulance receiver did not know the code for the cabinet. Judy Southcombe had also informed her that if there is a power cut, the cabinet locks and you are unable to open it. Judy therefore continues to recommend to the Council that the locked cabinet is replaced with an unlocked cabinet. Judy has also advised that adapting the existing cabinet so that it is permanently unlocked is not a practical solution for that cabinet because it is alarmed. It was agreed that members would formally discuss this item at item 5050(b).

Ashburton Postmaster Stuart Rogers advised that, shortly, library books will be able to be ordered via an iPad on the post van. The books will be loaded onto the van for delivery the following week. Residents will need to be a library member; this can be done online or Lucy will be able to assist with this on the van.

### **5047 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.

### **5048 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES**

Members received the minutes Parish Council held on 5 September 2024 which were approved as a true and

correct record.

## **5049 REPORTS**

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

Members were advised that Cllr Phil Bullivant is asking officers to look again at logged highways issues and officers will be working through those. New issues should still be logged on DCC's website. He is also happy to help with any issues in connection with the Road Warden Scheme.

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

District Cllr Major advised that applications for the Housing Support Fund are now closed though this will be extended with additional funding from central government being made available and applications will reopen imminently. There have been slight changes to the Working Age Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the process for applications for council tax reduction by care leavers and the self-employed. There will be short public consultation about this. TDC will be carrying out an asset review when they are sufficiently staffed.

District Cllr Rogers advised that he, along with District Cllrs Paul Parker and Rob Steemson, is making a collective submission with Dartmoor National Park's support to get a three-ward bus to complement the existing bus service. It will be a pre-booked, round robin service to help connect communities on Dartmoor.

He is circulating weekly cost of living information which will also start to include menus for bulk cooking. Volunteers are also being recruited to help teach basic cookery skills. He is also able to help those who are digitally excluded access support from TDC. DASH can also offer support by appointment in Ashburton Library. He also reminded members about the Cost of Living workshop on 20 November in Ashburton and he can arrange transport for those who would otherwise be unable to attend.

He will continue to chase the cutting of TDC's hedge behind the public toilets in the car park.

Cllr Partridge asked whether TDC still had any appetite to install EV chargers in Widecombe's car park. Cllr Rogers confirmed that the appetite still exists but they need to find the funding.

The Chair advised that she had sent Cllr Nutley a list of the TDC owned benches in need of repair and he will be following this up.

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

Rob Steemson advised that two new public footpath signs have been installed at either end of FP27 near Rex Bridge and two new public footpath signs have been installed at either end of FP1 at Lower Natsworthy. He is awaiting landowner/tenant to sort out the gates. Other signs for other paths are on order.

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

During the period 1 – 30 September, there were two criminal offences recorded for this area involving:

1 x Harassment, 1 x Assault. There were 12 non-crime incidents across the area. These involved a missing person, firearms licensing and road traffic collisions.

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

None

## **5050 PROJECTS & ESTATES**

*(Cllrs Raynor & Partridge)*

- **Parish Chest**

Members received a response from the History Group regarding the parish chest and its contents. It was confirmed that all but one item has been digitised and they supported the contents of the chest being sent to Devon Archives for safe-keeping. Members agreed that the clerk should contact Devon Archives to find out how the Council would go about relocating the documents and whether there is a cost implication. Cllr Bibby offered to help transport the documents, if needed.

(b) **Defibrillator cabinet**

Based on the information shared in the open forum that the cabinet locks when there is a power cut and that the existing cabinet is not suitable for adaptation, there was a strong argument for replacing the locked cabinet with an unlocked cabinet. In his professional capacity, District Cllr Major thought that the lock would fail open in a power cut and that to fail close would be strange but that he would need to look at the locking mechanism on the cabinet to be sure. It was agreed that it was necessary to ascertain the facts, but if it was found that the cabinet fails locked, members agreed that a new unlocked cabinet should be purchased (approx. £500) using the Council's underspends. Cllr Major will look at the cabinet and let the Council know his findings.

(c) **Parish Field**

There was no change to income and expenditure for the Parish Field (to 3 October 2024).

## **5051 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON**

*(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)*

- **New planning applications/appeals:**

(i) 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 agreed to support the application on the following grounds:

- It supports the teaching of rural skills on Dartmoor. Littlecot Farm Training will introduce people, both locally and nationally, to Dartmoor to learn the green timber skills which are intrinsic to the conservation, management and maintenance of the many ancient woodlands in Dartmoor National Park and elsewhere
- No chain saw or logging machinery will be used so noise levels will be very low and most of the training will be carried out inside
- The existing buildings will not be altered and there will be no need for anything more than minor building work inside. They are already connected to electricity/water/foul water drainage

- No accommodation is being offered so local bed and breakfasts/hotels/camping bars/pubs should gain
- With training numbers being so low, traffic impact will be minimal and it is noted that Highways raise no objections
- The scheme seems to fulfil many of DNPA's requirements for sustainable business within the Park

(ii) 0376/24 – Southcombe Meadow (land Sx713764), 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 agreed to support the application.

(iii) Appeal against the refusal of planning permission relating to application 0501/22

Primms Cottage, Poundsgate – Replacement House and Studio

It was agreed by majority to offer no further comment.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

(i) 0353/24 – Lower Hannaford, Poundsgate

Prior Notification – Steel frame storage building

Members noted that Prior Approval is not required.

**5052 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

*(Cllrs Bibby, Guest & Edwards)*

(a) **Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary and disbursements – £277.37 (October)
- HMRC (PAYE Q2) – £189
- Information Commissioners Officer – Data Protection Licence renewal – £35 (direct debit)
- Leusdon Memorial Hall (September's meeting) – £13.50
- G Partridge – Removal of sycamore tree – £350
- **Small Grants Scheme**
- Members noted that the pre-school has decided not to proceed with the outdoor building for which the Parish Council had granted a small grant of £500 (April 2024) and instead wish to claim the lower figure of £200 (for toys and other equipment) which the Council had approved should the outdoor building project not be pursued. A list of expenditure was provided.

- Having advertised a second round of grant applications, it was noted that only one application had been received. It was therefore agreed to readvertise the scheme more widely to encourage further applications. These will be considered in January's meeting.
- **Budget 2025-26**

The Finance Committee were reminded that a draft budget will need to come to the next meeting for initial review and discussion.

### **5053 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 Bibby advised that an application to formally join the Scheme has been submitted and is being looked at. An application for funding has also been submitted. With 17 volunteers, they have requested funding for equipment for two teams (approx. £500 per team). Widecombe Fair Committee will be considering at their next meeting whether the road wardens will be able to use their cones and hi-vis jackets. Some of the WFC members have already done the Chapter 8 training and they are seeking confirmation from DCC as to whether this will be sufficient or whether further training will be required.

### **5054 CORRESPONDENCE**

None

### **5055 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*

- **Parish Mailing List**

Members were reminded that the parish mailing list is a volunteer-run system and anyone in the parish can subscribe to receive notices that are submitted for sharing. It is not intended to advertise businesses or fund-raising events etc.

The Chair reminded members to submit some blurb about themselves for a Rolling Along piece about the Parish Council. The piece will also include information about the three current vacancies.

Cllr Edwards advised that the sandbag store door won't open. Cllr Guest offered to have a look.

Cllr Partridge advised that, now that the sycamore tree has been removed, the FiPL grant is still available to grind the stump. Cllr Partridge will ask Sam Hall to do this.

Cllr Bibby advised that Teign Housing will be visiting on 10 October, to carry out the snagging of the new houses. She was particularly concerned about the lack of grounds maintenance and

would bring this up with them next week. The Chair also commented that the heating systems in the houses are very complicated. Cllr Bibby offered to raise this as well.

**5056 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 7 November 2024 in Church House, Widecombe.

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