

## **WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council

held on Thursday 5 September 2019

in Church House, Widecombe

Members Present: Councillor Hassell (Chairman), Edwards, Elliott, Fenton, Partridge, Routley and Whiteside

Also present: Toby Russell (Devon Air Ambulance Trust)

Members of the Public: There were nine members of the public present.

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

### **4464 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- Cllr Booty
- Cllr Morley
- County Cllr Gribble
- District Cllr Cox
- District Cllr Nutley
- Robert Steemson (DNPA)

### **4465 OPEN FORUM**

A member of the public raised the issue of the destruction of the walls along the Natsworthy road following recent timber clearance and asked when these will be repaired. He also stated that the cattle grid is blocked at the bottom of Thorny Hill Lane which means stock can walk across it. It was also reported that the gate has been detached and has fallen causing an accident involving a resident. This has been reported. The

Chairman advised that the DNPA Ranger, Rob Steemson, has advised the Council that he has asked

Highways to clear the debris from the cattle grid (which has washed down the lane) and requested the

installation of some suitable drains. The Chairman advised that the Council would also write to DCC to

reinforce the need for this to be done. With regard to the timber extraction, Rob Steemson has advised that

this is legal and everything is now a lot tidier and the contractor has agreed (with full land owner support and at

no charge to DNPA) when finishing to put some surplus rocks around the Bonehill rocks area to stop ongoing

four-wheel drive damage.

A member of the public asked whether the Parish Council would be responding to the proposed removal of the

payphone in Widecombe. They were advised that this item would be discussed later in the meeting.

A member of the public expressed concern about the condition of the highway at Ponsworthy Splash. The

concrete has worn away and cars are being damaged. Furthermore, lorries are getting stuck and local farmers

are becoming disgruntled that it is them who have to go and sort the problem out. It is

understood that limestone concrete has been used, which has now eroded by the stream which is too acidic for limestone. A granite concrete was suggested as more appropriate for this purpose and in this location. The Council agreed to make appropriate representation to DCC Highways.

A member of the public advised the Council that in 2011 he had been involved in a group of parishioners trying to create a 20mph zone in the centre of Widecombe. The project, however, was put on the back-burner whilst other projects took priority. He now plans to resurrect the campaign and has written to Open Spaces, Natural England and the head of National Parks England for advice and support. He also intends to circulate a petition to measure the level of interest in the community for taking this further.

A member of the public referred to a discussion in July's meeting about animals being killed on the roads and suggested that a notice should be placed on the highway as motorists leave the moor displaying a telephone number to report any injured/killed animals. The Chairman advised that motorists have a legal responsibility to report any animals which have been injured or killed to the police.

A member of the public welcomed the change of the Parish Council's seating arrangements though sometimes it was difficult to hear people speak. This was noted. She raised queries about the meeting in August and was advised that this was an extra meeting to discuss planning applications which had been submitted during the summer recess. She was advised that the Parish Council only has 21 days to comment on planning applications and therefore it could not wait until September's meeting. She queried the DNPA Local Plan consultation events. The clerk advised that the dates of these events have been posted on the noticeboard.

A question was also asked about meetings to discuss the details of the parish vote. The Chairman advised that the Council would be agreeing to delegate a Parish Vote sub-committee the powers to decide the format and details of the parish vote. All meetings would be advertised and open to the public. It was suggested that the Council considers having its open forum item at the end of the meeting. The clerk advised that it was preferable that it was at the start of the meeting so that members could hear the views of the public on items on the agenda before they made a decision. It would be too late to comment at the end of the meeting as a decision would already have been made.

4466 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & 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 Elliott declared an interest in items 4469.3 (a) (i) and 4469.4 (b) (Handbell ringers grant application)

Cllr Fenton declared an interest in item 4469.4 (b) (St Pancras's grant application)

Cllr Partridge declared an interest in item 4469.1 (b) (ii)

#### 4467 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

4467.1 Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 July 2019 which were

approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

4467.2 Members received the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 6 August 2019

which were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

#### 4468 REPORTS

4468.1 County Councillor

No report.

4468.2 District Councillors

No reports.

4468.3 DNPA Representative

Rob Steemson was unable to attend the meeting but sent a report. Some items had already been

covered in the open forum. In addition to these, Rob thanked the Parish Council for supplying half the

funding for the rock banking at and around the Newbridge cattle grid area. After feedback two rocks

will be slightly moved soon to enable safer pony and trap access. He has also asked Highways, via

Scott Riddell, to see if they can place any relevant waste material from current cattle grid clearance

and resurfacing works in the local area behind the rocks to start making up a bank. The four bins at

Newbridge will get reduced to two imminently. Brightly coloured `Please do not feed the ponies`

posters made by Widecombe School have been put up around the area during the summer. He is

hoping that the TV companies are coming out very soon to follow up the Mid Devon article and various

positive Facebook posts which is great feedback for the School. In mid-September, he is taking children from both Widecombe and Ilsington to look at the respective Parishes boundary and stones

around Hemsworthy (White gate) area.

4468.4 Police

No report.

#### 4468.5 Delegate Reports

Cllr Elliott reported that she had attended the DNPA Forum at which a variety of issues were discussed. A large proportion of the meeting focused on environmental sustainability.

Ashburton has

declared a Climate Emergency and encouraged other Councils and DNPA to do the same. Time scales to become carbon neutral were also discussed. Cllr Elliott advised that she would be happy to

attend future forums.

#### 4469 MATTERS ARISING

##### 4469.1 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Booty & Elliott)

###### (a) Devon Air Ambulance Night Landing Site

Toby Russell updated the Council on the progress which has been made to deliver a night landing site in Widecombe. A written report had also been circulated prior to this meeting which was noted by members. The challenge for Widecombe has been to find an appropriate site large enough to fulfil the safety and operational need of DAAT. Widecombe Fair Field has been identified as a feasible site but there is an issue with grazing stock and how that could be managed. The other issue for this parish is the mobile phone signal. The lights need to be operated by mobile phones and because of the lack of signal in the parish, an antennae would need to be installed to piggy-back off. The school would be the obvious location to install an antennae but it has not yet been approached. The final hurdle is how it is financed. Grants are available until March 2020 and from these DAAT would fund some of the costs. The community, however, would need to raise around £3500. The next step will be to liaise with Widecombe Fair Committee about the stock grazing issue and the school about the antennae. If these can not be resolved the community would have to explore alternative sites.

###### (b) New planning applications:

Members considered the following new applications:

###### (i) BT Consultation on removal of payphones

Members received details about the proposed removal of the payphone in Widecombe. It was agreed that this Council would object to the proposal on the grounds that there is no mobile phone signal in Widecombe and, given its proximity to the village defibrillator, it is the only means of contacting the emergency services.

###### (ii) 0372/19 – Replacement roof coverings and temporary installation of two bat boxes at Higher Uppacott, Poundsgate

Members agreed to support this application.

###### (iii) 0381/19 – Erection of two general purpose agricultural barns (13.5×13.5m) with hardstanding and painted Devon bank at Higher Sherwell Farm, Poundsgate

Members agreed to support this application.

###### (iv) 0357/19 – Change of use of land for domestic curtilage at Middle Cator Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Members agreed to make comment on this Certificate of Lawfulness application.

###### (c) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

###### (i) DNPA (Newbridge Hill, Poundsgate) Tree Preservation Order 2019

Members noted that this Order was confirmed on 7 August without modification.

###### (ii) 0249/19 – Change to reduce the number of glazed sections from five to four at rear of dwelling, Middle Natsworthy, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional listed building consent

(iii) 0222/19 – Replacement roof, installation of new roof lights, removal of existing extension and addition of new extension, change of use of agricultural land to residential use and erection of open fronted timber framed car park, Bowden Barn, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(iv) 0319/19 – Extension of plant room, relocation of oil tank, creation of new Devon bank and installation of bore holes for a ground source heating system, East Shallowford Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(d) DNPA Local Plan Consultation

Members noted that DNPA is consulting on the final draft of the new Local Plan for Dartmoor between 16 September and 1 November 2019 and that drop-in events have been arranged for the public to attend.

#### 4469.2 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton & Whiteside)

(a) Land Registry searches on land in the parish to establish unregistered land

Cllr Fenton reported that his was in abeyance and he would report back when he had done some work on it.

(b) Parish Field

The Chairman reported that the fencing work has been completed in the field. A general discussion ensued about the future use of the field and it was agreed that a proposal would be put before the Council in February's meeting.

(c) Sandbag Store

Cllr Edwards reported that the floor of the store is rotten and it is difficult to shut the door. It was agreed that quotes for repairs should be sought. Cllr Partridge offered to be a second keyholder until the door is repaired and can be closed without being locked. Cllr Edwards also advised that Widecombe Fair Committee wanted to borrow some sandbags to hold down their road signs. They also wished to store any additional bags they purchase. It was agreed that they could borrow the sandbags and could also keep their own sandbags in the store.

#### 4469.3 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards & Morley)

(a) Parish Vote

(i) It was agreed to delegate a Parish Vote sub-committee powers to decide format and details of the parish vote. All meetings would be advertised and open to the public.

(ii) It was agreed that the vote would only be by post and will be one vote per household in line with the way council tax is paid.

(iii) The following dates for the voting process were agreed:

– Wednesday 23 October – send out voting cards and factsheet

– Saturday 9 November (am) drop-in session/open meeting in Leusdon Memorial Hall

– Tuesday 12 November (pm) drop-in session/open meeting in Church House, Widecombe

– 28 November – deadline for votes to be received

– 2 December – result announced by Adjudicator at Parish Council meeting

(iv) It was agreed to appoint the Clerk, Suzanna Hughes, as Adjudicator.

(v) It was agreed to move the January meeting to 2 December to allow the vote result to be announced. There will be no meeting in January.

(b) Affordable Housing

The Chairman reported that the Steering Group had met on 19 August. The DNPA Planning Officer who had been advising Teign Housing has now retired and the planning officer who has replaced her has given Teign Housing a new set of criteria. Plans will now therefore have to be redrawn. Consultation packs will follow and events will be arranged in 4 locations. Teign Housing is hoping to submit a planning application before Christmas. With regard to housing need, it is thought that once planning permission of the development is granted and work commences, people will probably come forward and register.

(c) Poundsgate Noticeboard

Cllr Partridge advised that Moor than Meets the Eye has agreed to make a grant to the Parish Council towards the cost of purchasing a new noticeboard in Poundsgate. In return, a small amount of interpretation will need to be included. Quotes will now be sought.

#### 4469.4 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Routley)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Cheque no 001016 – Clerk’s salary and disbursements (September) – £247.47
- Cheque no 001017 – TDC (Recharge for Parish Election 2/5/19) – 188.65
- Cheque no 001018 – B Booty Boulders at Newbridge) – £240
- Cheque no 001019 – M Clare (Parish field fencing) – £201.40
- Direct Debit – ICO (Data Protection Licence Renewal) – £40

(b) Grant applications (s.137 LGA 1972)

Members considered the applications received and agreed to grant the following:

- Leusdon Memorial Hall – £100 towards the cost of updating the electrical system (Chq 1020)
- St Pancras PCC – £100 towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard (Chq 1021)
- Widecombe Pre-school – £200 towards the cost of purchasing a new piece of equipment. It was agreed that a grant would not be given for the cost of heating (Chq 1022)
- Friends of Widecombe School – £100 towards the cost of special needs resources (Chq 1023)
- Widecombe Hand Bell Ringers – £500 towards the cost of cleaning and polishing

#### 4470 HIGHWAYS

The following issues were raised and would be reported to DCC:

- The double yellow lines at Deeper Marsh are having little if no impact and it is understood that only a handful of tickets have been issued over the summer period. It was agreed to ask DCC how many fixed penalty notices were issued over the summer.

• The top stones along the ridge of Newbridge are not secure. It was questioned again, whether limestone mortar is being used as this appears to be inappropriate to secure the stones longer-term.

- It was noted that the sign at Leusdon has now been replaced. However, the sign at Ponsworthy splash

sign still has not. Also, from Green Lane on the Haytor Road to Houndsfoot Cross there are 4 directional

signs none of which include Widecombe.

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  
4471 CORRESPONDENCE

Members noted that the Rural Skip will be located in the coach park on Saturday 5 October, 10am-4pm.

4472 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

The Chairman advised that he has been asked whether the Council can request recycling bins for carboard

and tins. It was agreed that the clerk would contact TDC.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

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

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 3 October 2019 at 7.30pm.

A meeting of the Parish Vote Sub-Committee will be held on Thursday 26 September 2019 at 6.30pm.