

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council
held on Zoom on Thursday 3 September 2020

Members present: Councillor Hassell (Chairman), Clare (from item 4578), Fenton, Partridge, Routley and Whiteside

Also present: County Councillor Gribble, District Cllr Parker-Khan and District Cllr Nutley

Members of the Public: There was one member of the public present.

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4577 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Edwards
- Cllr Elliott

4578 CO-OPTION

Members received an application from Jenny Clare to join the Parish Council as a co-opted member. The

clerk confirmed her eligibility and it was therefore agreed that she should be co-opted immediately. Jenny

proceeded to join the meeting as a co-opted member.

4579 OPEN FORUM

A member of the public raised the issue of the footpath from Bowden Lane to the moor at Hameldown

reminding members of its substantial deterioration over the last couple of months. Despite it being a vehicle

route, vehicles are unable to use it as the surface has completely eroded and there are a significant number of

potholes. She advised that she is planning to have a wall rebuilt but the contractor can't get access up the

path. DNPA has informed her that it is not their responsibility. DCC's Public Rights of Way Officer, John

Baker, is coming to look at it tomorrow. County Cllr Gribble suggested that he would make contact with Mr

Baker after he has looked at the path. He also intends to arrange a visit with the local Highways Engineer.

The same member of the public was also concerned about Airwave Solutions Ltd.'s proposed base station site

upgrade at land at Glebe Farm about which it has consulted with the Parish Council. The Chairman advised

that the Parish Council had commented on the proposal as part of the pre-consultation process and had raised

a number of concerns. Members of the public will be able to comment on the proposal if and when it is

submitted to DNPA as part of the planning process. A copy of the Parish Council's response would be sent to

her for information.

4580 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.

4581 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2 July 2020. A minor amendment was

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

4582 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Gribble informed members that he had nothing further to report other than the actions he intends

to follow up in respect of the footpath from Bowden Lane (see open forum). The Chairman advised

that the issues on the Natsworthy Valley Road and Thornhill junction have still not been resolved and

water is still rushing down the road. Cllr Gribble offered to follow this up again.

Cllr Fenton praised the work at Ponsworthy Splash and advised members that DCC had done a good job.

(b) District Councillors

District Cllr Parker-Khan advised that she had been involved in some highways issues at Lower Town

and engineers are not looking at the problems raised. The Devon Solar Together project is launching

soon. Devon Climate Emergency is looking to incentivise a solar PV collective purchasing scheme for

the residential 'able to pay' sector. TDC has elected Cllr Alan Connett as its new leader to replace Cllr

Gordon Hook. The textile recycling banks have reopened again. A consultation has opened regarding

planning reform. This is available for comment. TDC is seeking feedback from urban, rural and coastal areas about how it responded to COVID.

Cllr Fenton congratulated TDC on the information it had been providing to businesses in its newsletters

during the pandemic which he thought was helpful and informative.

(c) DNPA Representative

No report.

(d) Police

No report.

(e) Delegate Reports

No reports.

4583 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Fenton & Whiteside)

(a) North Hall Field Lease

Members received legal advice regarding the lease to which responses were agreed. It was also agreed to ask the solicitors to draft a new underlease to the Widecombe and District Sports Group.

(b) Planting of sapling on Village Green

Members received a proposal from the Widecombe History Group to plant a sapling on the Village

Green as a fitting remembrance of 2020 – the year that COVID-19 dominated lives and the year the

old sycamore (which had been a major feature of the village green for many years) was felled.

After

discussion, there was a general feeling that since the felling of the sycamore, the green had become

much more open and sunnier. Members therefore agreed to decline the offer on the grounds that the

green is not the correct place to plant a new tree at this time. Suggestions for an alternative location in

the parish would, however, be very much welcomed.

4584 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards)

(a) Tree Stump Carving

Members received a proposal from Cllr Edwards following discussion and research by a local panel of

residents. Designs, artists and costs had been researched and were presented to members for consideration. After discussion, it was agreed that there was no longer support from the Council for

the carving. The main concerns were the cost and whether this level of expenditure was appropriate at

this time. There was also doubt about how long the carving would last and how robust an intricate

carving would be. The Estates team along with Cllr Edwards were asked to come up with some alternative proposals for the stump.

4585 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Booty & Elliott)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0370/20 – Field to the west of Brook Lane Cottages, Brook Lane, Widecombe-in-the-Moor
Construction of eight affordable residential dwellings and associated infrastructure

It was agreed that the Parish Council supports this application with the following comments:

- To reiterate Parish Council comments during earlier consultation, our focus is on ensuring the houses go to local people with a need as a priority. We are supportive of the principal for local needs housing and as such, evidence of need for 8 dwellings of the sizes proposed should be confirmed.
- These are well-thought through plans in terms of the development, particularly regarding a creative use of the sloping site.
- The houses will offer a more cost-effective solution to renting on the moors compared to many of the older properties that are expensive to heat and hard to keep damp-free.
- Timber window and door frames soon look tatty and require ongoing upkeep. Carefully chosen uPVC would be better suited to a modern property.
- Confirmation from the Developers of the definition of 'affordable' would be welcomed.

- A contribution from the Developers to the local area would be welcomed, such as the adjacent play area, for example.
- Some concerns have been raised by existing Brook Lane residents of potential overlooking and loss of privacy and increased traffic noise. A Method Statement for the construction phase would be beneficial to consider the impact on these residents.
- A regular meeting of the foreman/Teign Housing with residents of Brook Lane Cottages would be welcomed also so that any issues of noise, traffic, access, parking etc during the construction process can be addressed quickly and disruption minimised.

(ii) 0349/20 – Middle Natsworthy, Widcombe-in-the-Moor

Replacement hall chimney with replacement cap and lead tray at roof level; repairs to pointing and flashing of north chimney and replacement concrete cap

It was agreed that the Parish Council supports this application with the following comments:

- This is a Grade 2 listed property with internal water damage as a result of leaking chimneys.
- The proposed repairs are planned to re-use existing stone in identical positions, using traditional lime mortar and careful positioning of new trays to hide them from view.
- The repairs are likely to be beneficial to the upkeep of the heritage asset.

(iii) 0324/20 – The Bakehouse and The Wheelhouse, Ponsworthy

Replace and raise roof plus addition of bridge to form first floor rear access to The Bakehouse and reinstatement of timber cladding with new windows on The Wheelhouse

It was agreed that the Parish Council has no objections to this application. The following comments were agreed:

- Insulation and energy efficiency improvements internally result in the increase in ridge height and the external upgrades & alterations appear largely aesthetic.
- Careful thought has been given to the modern materials proposed for a sympathetic appearance.

(iv) Consultation Airwave Solutions Ltd – DAC169/EAS0546 – Proposed Base Station Site Upgrade, Land at Glebe Farm, Widcombe-in-the-Moor NGR 271268, 076855

It was noted that the following response had been submitted to the applicant's agent in response to the pre-consultation exercise:

'By way of historic context, the existing mast received major local objection when it was first proposed and since then more recent applications for masts within the Parish at the top of Hannaford Lane and near Dockwell Cross have also failed to receive local support.

We recognise that the core issue is updating the Airwave service to the 3ES (three Emergency Services – Fire, Ambulance and Police) and that the existing provision needs upgrading.

However, the current timber mast is no higher than the trees, so quite well camouflaged, but the new mast is over twice the height and not in keeping with the environment it is to be installed in and is in a very prominent position in an iconic Dartmoor village location.

In considering DNPA Policy DMD20;

- the siting and external appearance of the proposed mast will absolutely damage the landscape character of the area when viewed from a range of publicly accessible locations over several miles.
- There is no evidence of suggested camouflage techniques or alternative masts with less visually intrusive styles being considered.
- The statement that "the existing site is self-selecting. It is highly unlikely that an alternative location exists" suggests that no efforts have currently been made to investigate this possibility.

Specific issues that we would also like you to consider include keeping the new mast to the

shortest height possible, using timber construction as before and an agreement that the trees on-site are kept in good health and at the same height, or taller, than currently.

We would welcome your feedback on the above points and ask you to consider investigating alternative locations and/or if a smaller and less visually intrusive tower at Glebe Farm, accommodating 3ES only, is a possibility in order to maintain essential service coverage with minimal impact on the special qualities of the Dartmoor National Park.

An open meeting, or social-distancing alternative, for Airwave Solutions Ltd to provide information to the local residents of Widecombe would be welcomed, so that fully informed judgements can be made regarding the proposals, as part of the consultation exercise'.

4586 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Routley)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payment:

- Cheque no 001055 – Clerk's salary and disbursement (September) – £272.06

(b) NALC National Salary Award 2020/21

Members noted the new pay scales for clerks to be implemented from 1 April 2020.

4587 HIGHWAYS

No new issues were reported.

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

4588 CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr Elliott received a response from the headteacher of Widecombe Primary School, Des Stokes, regarding his

views on the 20mph speed restriction and parking on the field. He advised that he would support the stretch of

road around the vicinity of the school being sign-posted at 20mph. He also supports parents parking on the

field although this is not always possible as it becomes unusable in poorer weather.

4589 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 informed members that Teign Housing want to do a mail drop informing residents of the parish

of the proposed affordable housing development. To ensure that all households in the parish receive a copy, it

was agreed to send Teign Housing the list of addresses which the Parish Council had previously obtained from

TDC. Members were also keen that former residents of the parish who might wish to move back were also

informed of the development. A copy would therefore be placed in the Parish Link, on the parish website and

circulated via the parish communication email system.

For information only, the clerk advised that permission has been granted in Holne for a lighting mast to allow the Devon Air Ambulance to land at night. The clerk asked members whether it was an appropriate time to advertise the Parish Council's grant scheme to local groups. (In a usual year, some of the grant budget is allocated in September.) After discussion it was agreed that the scheme should be advertised for allocation in January 2021. Cllr Partridge also informed members that the Dartmoor Coronavirus Community Support Grant scheme was also still open for applications to help Dartmoor communities.

4590 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be held on Zoom on 1 October 2020 at 7.30pm.

Signed Dated