

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in Church House, Widecombe on Thursday 2 September 2021

Members present: Councillor Hassell (Chairman), Butcher, Clare, Fenton, Jones, Partridge and Whiteside

Also present: District Cllr Nutley

Members of the Public: One

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

4714 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Edwards
- Cllr Elliott
- Rob Steemson, DNPA
- District Cllr Cox
- District Cllr Parker-Khan
- County Cllr Gribble

4715 OPEN FORUM

A member of the public was present to answer any questions relating to her planning application to be discussed at item 4721(i).

4716 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.

4717 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15 July 2021 which were approved as a true and correct record.

4718 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Gribble was unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman advised that he has been informed by Rob Steemson that the double yellow lines at Deeper Marsh are going to be repainted.

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Parker-Khan was unable to attend the meeting but advised that she had attended the unveiling of the new memorial bench at Leusdon Hall. She has been able to contribute from her councillor's fund and she reported that it looks fantastic.

Cllr Nutley was present but had nothing relevant to report.

(c) DNPA Representative

No report.

(d) Police

No report.

(e) Delegate Reports

Cllr Fenton advised that he attended a meeting of the Church House Committee. They have benefitted from the COVID grants awarded by the government and have used some of this funding to decorate the hall. The National Trust has decided that it no longer wishes a representative to attend these meetings but the lady who usually attends is willing to attend in a voluntary capacity. The National Trust no longer see the building as a valuable asset and there was some concern that they are losing interest. One outstanding matter which is the responsibility of the National Trust is the fire alarm which is split between the shop and the hall and hasn't yet been done.

4719 PROJECTS

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Partridge & Fenton)

(a) Parish Field Open Day – 11 September

Cllr Fenton reported that Cllr Edwards has applied for the TENS licence. He sought volunteers to help run the various stalls and circulated a timetable for members to complete. He has a sale or return arrangement for the cider and will also purchase some soft drinks. The History Group and DNPA are putting on displays and Widecombe Singers will be performing. The sheep have not been grazing in the field since July so some strimming will need to be carried out. [It was noted that the issue of water has not been resolved which will impact on future grazing and the Projects team still need to do some work on this]. Members discussed a questionnaire which has been drafted for parishioners to complete regarding future use of the field and some amendments were suggested. A revised version will be circulated for final comment. It was emphasised that the questionnaire was designed to gather ideas and is not the policy of the Council.

4720 ESTATES

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Edwards & Elliott)

(a) Horse chestnut tree

Members received a report of the condition of the horse chestnut following a decay test using a Resistograph (micro-drill). The purpose of the inspection was to assess the structural integrity of the tree and give appropriate recommendations for management of the tree. The tree is in a poor physiological condition with a declining, thinning crown. The decline in crown vigour is most likely due to the presence of Honey Fungus affecting the root system/base of the tree and

directly causes cambial dysfunction affecting uptake of water and nutrients. The tree is significantly declining physiological condition and the fungal decay is highly likely to cause more advanced root decay which could result in failure of the tree or death. Members also received a quotation of £1050 + VAT to ameliorate the soil around the base of the tree which has been compacted over many years due to large numbers of visitors using the green and sitting under the tree for shade. It was acknowledged that this figure represents a significant portion of the parish precept and there are no guarantees that this work will save the tree in the long term. However, members agreed that it has a high landscape amenity value, its loss would be detrimental to the area and that every effort should be made to save it.

It was therefore agreed to accept the quotation. It was suggested that the contractor is asked to produce a notice which can be put up next to the tree for parishioners to read explaining the work and why it was being carried out. It was also agreed to resite the benches underneath the tree.

4721 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Clare & Elliott)

(a) New planning applications/appeals

(i) 0397/21 – Southcombe Meadow, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Erection of equestrian/agricultural building (12.7 x 7.6m)

Members agreed to support this application. The Parish Council supported a previously refused planning application (0310/19) and the new location is also deemed to be appropriate.

The development will enable efficient, small-scale animal and land management.

(ii) 0406/21 – Stone, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Improvements to below-ground drainage to the exterior of principal Listed Building and repairs to the main elevation (re-pointing)

Members agreed to support this application. It was considered that this is a good conservation proposal to limit ingress into the property in a sympathetic and practical way.

(iii) 0417/21 – Newbridge Hill Cottage, Poundsgate

Change of use land to domestic curtilage

Members agreed to support this application. The change of use seems appropriate and the scale seems reasonable for change to domestic use.

(iv) 0431/21 – Old Post Office, Poundsgate

Erection of two rear single storey extensions

Members agreed not to comment on this application as they did not feel they had all the relevant information regarding the application.

(b) Planning Decisions/Withdrawals

(i) 0268/21 – Café on the Green, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Erection of staff accommodation

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(ii) 0351/21 – Middle Cator Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Erection of agricultural building (18.2 x 9m)

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

(iii) 0252/21 – Land South West of Honeybag Tor, Widecombe-in-the-Moor

Widening of access and new hardstanding

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.

4722 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

(Lead Councillors: Cllrs Clare & Whiteside)

(a) Payments

Members received and approved the following payments:

- Cheque no 001081 – Clerk's salary and disbursements – £254.12
- Cheque no 001082 – Dart Forest Trees (Horse chestnut Resistograph) – £354
- Cheque no 001083 – D Edwards (TENS Licence for Parish Field Open Day) – £21
- Cheque no 001084 – G Partridge (strimming around the village) – £150

4723 HIGHWAYS

There were no new issues.

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

4724 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Members received correspondence advising that the large boulders restricting parking behind the gate at Newbridge which Rob Steemson organised 2 years ago have been removed. Parked vehicles are now blocking the gate. It was noted that this was in the parish of Holne and would be discussed in the meeting of Holne Parish Council next week.

Cllr Partridge advised that DNPA will be discussing changes to the byelaws which will include parking next to cattle grid gates. If the Authority approve the byelaw consultation, the Parish Council will have an opportunity to comment at some point.

(b) It was noted that DCC has made a six-month closure on Bowden Lane from 3 September whilst works to the wall are being carried out.

(c) The latest edition of the TDC newsletter has been circulated to members. Cllr Jones highlighted the Zoom Ecology Workshop on 14 October from 10.30am-1.00pm. Should anyone wish to attend they should contact greenspaces@teignbridge.gov.uk by 20 September.

4725 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

(a) Cllr Fenton advised that the Parish Link is back in print again. New editors are being trained up and distribution is being improved.

4726 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Church House on 7 October 2021 at 7.30pm in ChurchHouse.

Signed Dated