



**Doddiscombsleigh Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 8 November 2022 at**  
**7.30 pm at Woodah Farm**

**Present:** Cllr W Hole (Chairman), Cllr M Moorhouse, Cllr R Crocker Cllr J Sawyer, Ms I Pfister Neighbourhood Highways Officer and her colleague from Devon County Council and 2 members of the public

Clerk: A Miller

**1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed everybody.

Cllr Burdge and Cllr Davis sent their apologies. Cllr Burdge could not attend the meeting due to her other commitments and Cllr Davis had health issues.

**Resolved** The Parish Council unanimously approved the absences of Cllr Burdge and Cllr Davis.

**Open Forum**

The public had the opportunity to express their views at the appropriate agenda items.

**2 Declarations of Interest / Requests for Dispensations**

None.

**3 Councillor Co-option**

Mr Charles Brook expressed his interest in becoming a parish councillor. The Council agreed that a local businessman from a younger generation would be a great addition to the Council.

**Resolved** The Parish Council agreed to co-opt Mr Charles Brook as a parish councillor.

Proposed Cllr Crocker Seconded Cllr Hole All agreed

**4 To Discuss the Condition of the Fir Tree at the Triangle**

The Parish Council asked GreenTrees, the company who previously gave advice about the fir tree, to check the damage at the base of the tree. The Council also asked the tree expert to do a picus tomograph on the tree. The report appears at the appendix to these minutes.

The following points were raised.

- The tree is important for the community, an iconic part of the landscape and loved by residents and visitors. The condition of the tree is a very sensitive subject in the community.
- Four years ago, when the tree warden from Teignbridge and Devon County Council intended to remove the tree, the Parish Council commissioned another expert's report, which concluded that the fir tree could be saved by removing the deadwood. Devon County Council carried out the work.
- The current report and the scan show a significant decay and loss of solid wood at the base of the tree. Four years ago the decay was only a minor defect.

- Unfortunately, the tree is in decline and the question is how quick this decline will be.
- The recommendation is either reducing the height by 4-5m, which might have a short or mid-term effect, or remove the tree.
- The Triangle is the responsibility of Devon County Council and maintained by them at public expense.

**Resolved** The Parish Council unanimously agreed to send the picus tomograph and the report to Devon County Council, because the area is their responsibility.

It was also discussed that if Devon County Council decides to remove the tree, it would be good to keep the timber and use it to make something memorable from it for the community. The soil at the Triangle is in a poor condition and needs some time, improvement and proper topsoil before doing anything else – preferably a more mature tree will be planted. A mushroom, identified as *meripilus giganteus* spread at the Triangle in October, which is not harmful for the public but dangerous for deciduous trees. The fungi need to be removed before planting a new tree.

## 5 To Discuss the Condition of the of the Kerbstones at the Triangle

A broken kerbstone at the Triangle is lifting the road and it is a hazard. Previously the stone was hit by a turning trailer. The Neighbourhood Highways Officer asked the Council to send her a photo of the kerbstone and indicated that Devon County Council will remove the stone.

## 6 Neighbourhood Highways Officer's Report

- The Highways Department feels the financial strain of cuts, the amount that Devon County Council intends to save is higher than Highways entire budget.
- Resources are very limited. Central government funds available only if there is snow or another unusual event.
- Potholes on Willhayes Hill: the Neighbourhood Highways Office is aware of them and soon these potholes will meet the criteria for repair.
- Devon County Council repairs the potholes but only if it meets their criteria: 300mm x40mm with sharp edge. The public should report the potholes online.
- Tick Lane will be resurfaced.
- She is aware of the problem at the railway bridge and Devon Highways officially notified Historic Railway Estates that they will be liable for any damage if there is an accident happens. Devon Highways do not accept any responsibility.
- Gritting route: every village has one. Doddiscombsleigh has a secondary gritting route, which only be gritted if there is snow or ice.
- Double yellow line at the school: the parking restriction was requested by the police, because emergency vehicles could not get through parked cars. There will be a public consultation about the proposal.
- Speed restriction: 30mph speed limits are usually approved if the police ask for it.

## 7 County and District Councillors' Report

Cllr Purser sent his apologies and his November report:

"The Local Plan is in its final stages before going to Council for final approval and then to inspection by a Government inspector.

An additional £5 million has been received by Devon to help people with the cost of living crisis and a household support package is being developed and launched soon.

You may have seen a great deal of ongoing discussion around the redevelopment of market square in Newton Abbott with a potential new cinema and proposals for the Alex theatre.

The new Teignbridge lottery launches next week with £1 tickets and proceeds going to worthwhile charities, currently 35 have joined. See website to take part.

A landlord who failed to carry out essential works has been fined £10,000.

Note the bottom portion of the Teign Valley road is being closed for a week to ten days from

the 7th November.

Everybody eligible is urged to have booster vaccinations for covid and flu as covid infection rates are again on the rise.

Still a number of vacancies at Teignbridge dc in most departments especially LGV Drivers and Loaders shortage of whom is putting the waste collection service under considerable pressure.”

## 8 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meeting

**Resolved** The Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting of 11 October 2022 were unanimously accepted as a true record.

## 9 Planning Matters

### 9.1 To Note Planning Decisions

#### 9.1.1 22/00747/CLDE Corn And Cob Cottages, Great Leigh Farm

Certificate of Lawfulness for existing residential use of properties – approved

#### 9.1.2 20/02355/FUL The Nobody Inn

Two storey extension to Inn and part demolition, demolition of dwelling (with occupation restriction) and replacement as part of extension to inn, repositioned and extended car park, and associated landscaping - refused

### 9.2 To Discuss a Planning Application

#### 22/01215/HOU Shippen Barton

Replacement rear extension, extension of existing front porch, new flue and rooflights

Both the applicants and their neighbours sent emails to the Council saying that they intended to attend the meeting but could not come.

The Parish Council was informed that there is a dispute between the neighbours, because the planned front porch extension would have an effect on the neighbour's (Brookford) access and this point is not mentioned in the Design and Access Statement.

It was discussed that Shippen Barton has a long history of access issues and the Planning Authority has to clarify the situation.

**Resolved** The Parish Council decided to make the Planning Authority aware of the access dispute and to ask the Planning Authority to clarify the situation before making any decisions.

Proposed Cllr Sawyer Seconded Cllr Hole All agreed

### 9.3 To Discuss Other Planning Related Concerns and How to Deal with Planning Concerns in the Future

The item was discussed after agenda item 10.5.

Following the Parish Council's request at the last meeting, the Clerk sent an invitation to the Planning Authority (PA) asking a representative to come to this meeting and help to improve the efficiency of the comments of the Parish Council. The Clerk received a phone call from the PA explaining that they cannot come to the meeting. There are 50 parishes in the area and the PA was concerned that if they came to this meeting it would create a precedent and they should have to go to other parishes' meetings as well. But the PA will be thinking about how to communicate more effectively with parish councils.

Regarding the general question, why the parish council's comments do not seem to have too much effect on the Planning Authority's decisions, the following information was received.

The PA consider parish council comments, but they consider other points as well.

Even if the Parish Council's answer contains material planning considerations, it does not mean that it will change a decision.

The PA approves an application if they cannot find a ground for refusal. If there is ground for refusal, they consider whether they can justify the refusal if the applicant appeals.

The PA looks into the case law - the decisions that planning inspectors make during an appeal. Case law is changing and that means that previously refused applications can get through later.

If the PA believes that an appeal would win, they do not refuse the application, because there is a cost for the PA in the appeal process and they believe that they should save taxpayers' money.

The reason behind a decision is detailed in the officer's report. Previously the PA emailed to the parish councils the officer's report together with the decision notice, but since the new online system started, they stopped doing it. Now the officer's report can be found online amongst a planning application's documents.

If somebody builds without planning permission it is not unlawful until an enforcement notice is issued. The PA encourages people to apply retrospectively for a permission if they think they can give a permission.

The main reason behind a decision seemed to be based on cost, cost and cost.

It was not possible to ascertain how risk taking is the PA in their decisions and whether they try to justify a refusal if they receive a lot of objections from a community.

The Parish Council was of the opinion that a representative of the Planning Authority should have come to the meeting. The Council spends the majority of its time dealing with planning issues and decided to hold monthly meetings to be able to send consultation responses to the PA. This time is not well spent if the comments do not have an effect.

It was discussed that Doddiscombsleigh is probably not the only parish experiencing problems with the PA. The Chair persons of the parishes should come together and discuss their issues.

It was agreed to email the other parishes in the area of Teignbridge PA and ask the Chair persons to discuss the situation.

Invite district Cllr Andy Swain to a meeting, who led a review of the Planning Enforcement practices in Teignbridge earlier this year.

#### 9.4 To Discuss the Need for a Neighbourhood Plan in Doddiscombsleigh

The Chairman asked the topic to be discussed, because if Doddiscombsleigh had a Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council would get 25% of the CIL money instead of 15%. The CIL fund proved to be an important source of income this year. It was also mentioned that neighbourhood plans have a legal weight in determining planning applications.

Previously the Parish Council had a Village Plan Working Group, which approved its Terms of Reference by September 2019, but covid stopped the work of the group.

The Chairman agreed to contact the members of the group.

### 10 To Receive Reports and Updates

#### 10.1 To Receive an Update about Tree Planting for the Queen's Green Canopy

The lengthsman reported that he checked the trees at the Teign Valley Nursery and he would like to plant 2 crab apples (possibly different varieties) and a rowan. The planting would take place in January- February. The trees will grow to a medium size height (5-8m) so not be too problematic in the future due to proximity to telephone line and the road. They are also native and provide both flowers and fruits/berries for wildlife and foragers to utilise. The Parish Council noted the information.

#### 10.2 To Receive a Highways Update

The lengthsman reported that he would carry out the annual drain clearing program after the leaves had fallen. Due to the mild weather most of the leaves are still on the trees.

### 10.3 To Receive a Telephone Box Project Update

The Chairman reported that the door was placed on the telephone box the previous day. The kiosk requires some more days of external work and then a system for internal display will be done. There will be some additional expense.

### 10.4 To Receive a Parish Path Partnership and Footpath Update

The first part of footpath 1 had been checked and it was in order.

### 10.5 To Receive an Update about Website Accessibility Improvements

The Clerk contacted County Cllr Jerry Brook regarding a potential grant of £1,000 from the Locality Budget for a new website which would be fully compliant with accessibility regulations. The answer was not promising. Earlier this year the Locality Budget was suspended and all the resources were taken away. Later the Locality Budget was reinstated but with a reduced amount. Devon County Council sent out newsletters to the public about its bleak financial situation and the possibility of future cuts.

The Parish Council discussed that acquiring a new website without grant funding would be a great financial strain and asked the clerk to explore the possibility of having a shared new website together with another parish in the Teign Valley.

## 11 Finance

### 11.1 To Receive a Finance Report

The total bank balance (HSBC and Unity Bank together) at 31 October 2022 was £13,667.25. After deducting the amount of earmarked funds and grants, the general reserve was £3,766.20.

The Parish Council noted the accounts.

### 11.2 To Receive an Update about the Registration with Unity Trust Bank

After the last meeting the first payments were made successfully from the Unity Trust Bank account. However there are still only two councillors registered to authorize payments from the agreed five councillors. With only two councillors having access to the bank account, it is not safe to close the other HSBC account, because the Council can easily get into the situation when it cannot make payments in time. Councillors to register with Unity Bank.

**Resolved** The Parish Council unanimously agreed to add Cllr Brook to the list of councillors who can authorize payments from the Unity Trust Bank account.

### 11.3 To Discuss How to Use Up the CIL Fund

**Resolved** The Parish Council unanimously agreed to use up £250 from the CIL fund to pay for the picus tomograph of the fir tree.

### 11.4 To Discuss Possible Projects and Ideas for Next Year's Budget

At the last meeting the coronation was mentioned as a possible project. The Clerk clarified with the District Council that no specific grant is planned for coronation celebrations, but the National Lottery might have some grants next year. It was discussed that the National Lottery supported art and sport projects for the Jubilee, but there was no general funding for the celebrations. It is most likely that for a parish event the Council needs to use own resources. Councillors to bring an estimate for the next meeting about the planned events and estimated cost.

Teignbridge District Council confirmed that there is a 21% increase in election costs.

### 11.5 Approval of Expenditure

Venue hire 8 November 2022 £10.00

HSBC fee £8.00

Fir tree report and picus tomograph £300.00

SLCC membership fee £80.00

Telephone box door replacement - carriage cost £42.00

**Resolved** The Council unanimously approved the expenditures.

**12 Clerk’s Correspondence**

None.

**13 Date of Next Meeting**

13 December 2022

**14 Chairman’s Remarks**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.58 pm.

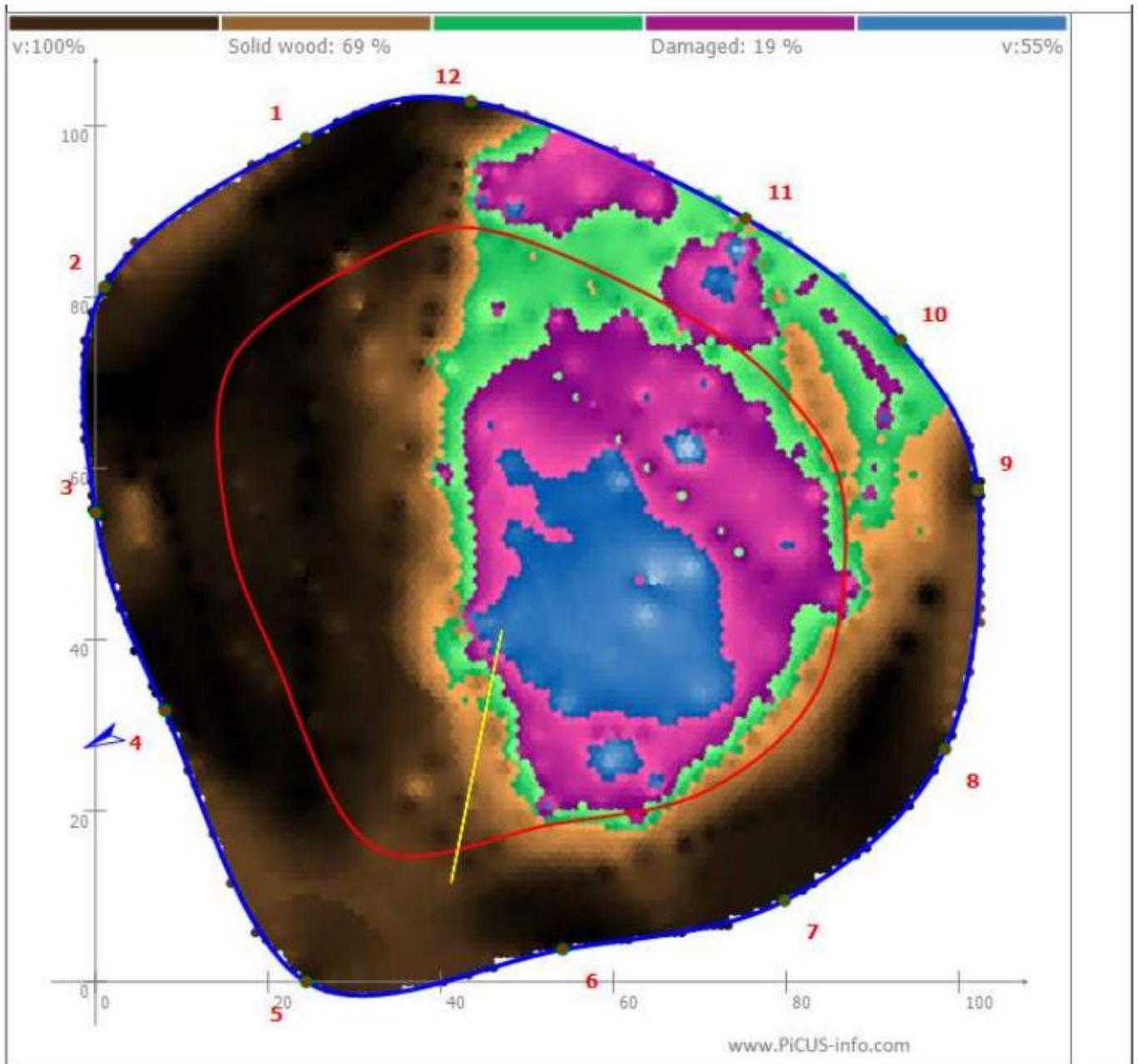
Signed.....

Chair

Date

**APPENDIX**

<b>Picus: The Green Doddiscombsleigh</b>			
<u>Client:</u> Doddiscombsleigh PC			
<u>Tree Expert:</u> Bill Crumby NdArb MarborA Bridford Wood House Dunsford Bridford Exeter EX6 7ER UK		Tel: 07778 412145 Fax: Domain: www.green-trees.co.uk email: info@green-trees.co.uk	
Tree species:	Atlas cedar	Tree height [m]:	20
Town:	The Green	North at measuring point:	4
Neighbourhood:	Doddiscombsleigh	Crown spread [m]:	
Road:		Position of measuring point 1:	0
Number of tree:	1	Trunk circumference (130cm height)[cm]:	
Measure date:	10/22/2022 12:47:00 PM	Tomography level at height [cm]:	25



Comments:

Decay is reasonably extensive at measure level..

Suggest reducing the leverage on the stem by lowering tree height or complete removal.

