



## **Doddiscombsleigh Parish Council**

### **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Thursday 9 June 2022 at 7.30 pm at Ashton Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr W Hole (Chair), Cllr J Sawyer, Cllr M Moorhouse, Cllr E Davis, Cllr R Crocker, I Pfister Neighbourhood Highways Officer and E Fairs lengths man  
Clerk: A Miller

#### **1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed everybody. Cllr Burdge sent her apologies, because her work commitments she could not attend the meeting.

**Resolved** The Council unanimously voted to accept the apology.

#### **Open Forum**

No questions were raised.

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

None.

#### **3 County and District Councillors' Report**

District Cllr Purser sent his report which was forwarded to the Council.

County Cllr Brook previously indicated that he might not be able to attend the meeting but he promised to look into the Parish Council's application for a grant from the Locality budget. The application was submitted in May with Cllr Brook's support but no feedback has been received.

#### **4 Neighbourhood Highways Officer's Report**

The Neighbourhood Highways Officer introduced herself to the new members of the Parish Council, highlighted the current policies and answered questions. The following topics were raised.

- The drain budget, which last year was £186,000 was taken away from the department.
- The decision about ordering specific works has been centralized. Officers have input regarding what issues go on the list of jobs, but the decision happens at a higher level now.
- As material prices are going up sharply, Highways returned to the practice of repairing only those potholes which meet their criteria, even if there is another pothole nearby which will need to be repaired some weeks later.
- The price of gully clearing went up by 300%.
- Previously the department had a drain clearing team, which was sent out for urgent works, but it was taken away.
- She encouraged the Parish Council to report potholes on the Devon County Council website and let her know about the issues as well.

- There is still money available for road patching, but it is very limited and the result is not nice – similar to the repair on Tick Lane.
- Regarding collapsing manholes: it is difficult to deal with South West Water. If there is a problem, the public can call South West Water, report the issue and get a reference number.
- She encouraged the Council to apply for a grant from the Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund.
- Regarding the Railway Bridge. The Parish Council brought up the issue, because recently there was an incident when a lorry slipped off the road and was hanging above the railway. The road was shut for 3.5 hours to enable the rescue. The potential hazard of this location had been reported by the Parish Council to Devon Highways several times. The Officer asked the Council to try and obtain photos of the incident and the damage and get the police reference number. Cllr Hole agreed to contact the police and to take photos. Clerk to include in the Newsletter the importance of reporting incidents and obtaining a reference number.
- Regarding the Parish Council's 20mph speed limit application. There is a limited budget for the project and a lot of applications. The decision is centralized and will be made at a higher level.

## 5 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meeting

**Resolved** The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting of 12 May 2022 were unanimously accepted as a true record.

## 6 Planning Matters

### 6.1 To Note Planning Decisions

None.

### 6.2 To Discuss Planning Related Issues

After publishing the agenda, a new planning application arrived but no documents have been uploaded to the District Council's new planning system yet. Also, new documents have been uploaded to two previously discussed applications. The Parish Council agreed to discuss the new 22/00747/CLDE Corn and Cob Cottages Great Leigh Farm and the revised 20/02355/FUL Nobody Inn and the 22/00513/FUL Hereford Cottage applications at its next meeting in July.

## 7 To Receive Reports and Updates

### 7.1 To Receive a Report about the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and to Consider Other Platinum Jubilee Projects

#### 7.1.1 Platinum Jubilee Weekend

Members of the Jubilee Celebrations Committee reported that the event was very successful and well received by the community. About 150 people attended the celebrations on Saturday and again on Sunday. The participants agreed that it was a great opportunity for the community to get together and although there would not be another jubilee for a while, an annual village bring & share event would be a good idea. Possibly around Harvest, at the end of September from next year.

The Organizing Committee will have another meeting later when the final result of their fundraising will be discussed.

The Parish Council agreed to thank two volunteers, Steve LeMarchant and Colin Gibbs, for painting the bench and the church board, repairing and painting the parish notice board, raising the flag and making the Triangle ready for the celebrations.

### 7.1.2 Queen's Green Canopy – Tree Planting for the Jubilee

The landowner has agreed to plant crab apple trees in the road verge. The smallest free tree pack from Woodland Trust contains 15 very small saplings and the Parish Council does not have enough space to plant them. Mr Fairs, who is also the Wildlife Warden of the Parish, recommended we obtain as mature trees as possible to give them the best possible start. The Teign Valley Nursery was recommended as a good local source of trees. Clerk to contact the District Council to clarify whether the trees can be funded from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), as part of the biodiversity infrastructure.

### 7.1.3 Commemorative Plaque for the Flagpole

The Clerk asked three quotes for a plaque to go on the flagpole to commemorate that the original wooden pole was replaced for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Two companies answered and neither of them can provide the plaque. Either their plaque needs to be drilled to the pole which cannot be done because it is fiberglass or they cannot provide curved signs which would fit on the pole. Boat makers were recommended as a source of advice. Clerk to contact boat makers and ask advice how to install a plaque on a fiberglass flagpole.

### 7.2 To Receive a Highways Update and To Consider the Annual Maintenance Plan for Drain Clearing

Highways issues were discussed previously at agenda item 4 with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer.

The Parish Council discussed the second draft of the Annual Maintenance Plan for Drain Clearing. Mr Fairs, the contracted lengths man explained that the first draft showed an ideal maintenance plan, but the second draft, which concentrates on winter jobs, should still be able to keep the drains in working condition during the most critical part of the year. The selected drains would be cleared after the leaves have fallen and at the end of winter.

**Resolved** The Parish Council decided to adopt the Annual Maintenance Plan for Drain Clearing with 40 hours work per year. The Council agreed to apply for a grant of £500 from the Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund to cover part of the cost of the program and use up £500 from the CIL fund for drain clearing and general maintenance. Proposed Cllr Crocker Seconded Cllr Hole. All agreed

### 7.3 To Receive a Telephone Box Project Update

Cllr Hole reported that now, as the Platinum Jubilee celebrations are over, the work would start and he would order the necessary parts for the repair. The Men's Shed will be involved in the project and the door of the telephone box would be taken away for the repair.

The Clerk reported that £1,130 of donation, collected from the public was credited on the bank account. Together with the previously received £20 donation there is £1,150 for the project.

### 7.4 To receive a Parish Path Partnership and Footpath Update

None.

## 8 Finance

### 8.1 To Receive a Finance Report

The Clerk reported that the £1,130 donation for the telephone box project was credited on the bank account since the last meeting. The bank balance at 7 June 2022 was £13,276.27. After deducting the amount of earmarked funds and grants, the general reserve was £2,163.92.

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

As it was discussed under agenda items 7.1.2 and 7.2, the Parish Council agreed to spend £500 for drain clearing from the CIL Fund and ask for advice from the District Council, whether tree planting for the Queen's Green Canopy can be covered from CIL.

## 8.3 To Review the Financial Regulations regarding Online Banking

**Resolved** The Parish Council unanimously agreed to replace the existing paragraph 6.10 of the Financial Regulations once there would be possible to make payments from the new Unity Trust Bank account and the HSBC account is closed, and add paragraph 6.19 to the Financial Regulations.

"6.10. If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment."

"6.19. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council in writing before any order is placed."

## 8.4 Approval of Expenditure

HSBC bank account fee in May £8.00

Venue hire 12 May 2022 £30.00

Venue hire 9 June 2022 £15.00

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

The Clerk indicated that once the Unity Trust Bank account is open £500 initial deposit would need to be transferred from the HSBC account. Also, stationery would need to be purchased soon.

## 9 To Discuss the Response Received from Mel Stride MP regarding the Mobile Coverage in the Village

Answering the Parish Council's email regarding the subject, Mel Stride MP assured the Council that there would be a mast installed in Lower Ashton by the end of 2024, which would improve the outdoor 4G coverage in a significant part of the Parish.

The response was noted.

## 10 Clerk's Correspondence

### 10.1 Adult Care Services

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received two emails regarding recruitment of domiciliary care staff. One of the emails was from a local resident and the recruitment was for providing care specifically for Doddiscombsleigh residents – information regarding this opportunity is on the website.

### 10.2 Website

The Parish Council was contacted with a complaint regarding why there had not been information about the coming Village Fete on the website. The Clerk clarified that the organizers of the Village Fete did not want to advertise the event before the Platinum Jubilee weekend and they started to place posters - and send information to the Clerk - only after the Jubilee. After receiving the posters, details of the event were put on the website.

In the same complaint it was raised why there are no new community events on the website. The Clerk reported that following the complaint, the old events were removed from the published website and only not time sensitive information or compulsory information required by the Transparency Code remained on the site. Maintaining community information on the website requires more time and the Clerk was already working overtime. If the Council does not require further overtime, a possible solution would be to give access

to a volunteer, who would maintain the community part of the website while the Clerk would publish the Transparency Code documents and other information which is received by the Council e.g., road closures. When the current website was established in 2017, it was considered whether to ask a volunteer to publish community news on the website. However, the system does not allow separate access to different parts of the website – community or Parish Council information -, so anybody who has a right to edit the website can edit everything. The Parish Council previously was of the opinion that the best solution is to give editorial rights only to the Clerk. If the Council would like to review this decision, the topic can be put on the agenda. The Council considered to try and find a volunteer to edit community news and discuss the issue at a later meeting.

**11 Date of Next Meeting**

The Clerk reported that Woodah Farm agreed that the Council can hold future meetings at their venue, because an on-site volunteer would move into the property soon. Devon Wildlife Trust is in the process of reviewing the use of the Farm, including hire charges, but until this has happened the Council can hire the place at a favourable price.

**Resolved** The Council unanimously agreed to move the day of the meetings to Tuesday and to hold ordinary meetings on the following dates.

- 12 July 2022
- 13 Sep 2022
- 11 Oct 2022
- 8 Nov 2022
- 13 Dec 2022
- 10 Jan 2023
- 7 Feb 2023
- 14 Mar 2023
- 25 Apr 2023
- 9 May 2023

**12 Chairman’s Remarks**

The Chairman thanked everybody for their participation. He expressed his intention to identify at the beginning of every meeting whether members of the public are attending the meeting for a specific item or generally are observing the whole meeting. If there is an item of interest, that issue can be discussed first. This practice shows respect towards the public and saves them time.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.51 pm.

Signed.....  
 Chair

Date