



Doddiscombsleigh Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Thursday 12 March 2020 at
7.30pm in Doddiscombsleigh School

Present:

Cllr M Moorhouse, Cllr H Hanson, Cllr E Davis, Cllr S Burdge, DCC Cllr J Brook, Mr E Fairs (Climate Emergency Working Group) and 1 member of the public

Clerk: A Miller

The councillors, who were present at the meeting, elected Cllr Moorhouse to chair the meeting.
Proposed Cllr Davis **Seconded** Cllr Burdge All agreed

Open forum: no questions were raised.

1 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Turney and TDC Cllr Purser

2 Declarations of Interest / Requests for Dispensations - None**3 County and District Councillors' Report**

TDC Cllr Purser, who could not attend the meeting, sent his update. TDC matters centered mainly around the budget with a number of increases in council tax, car parking including Sunday parking charges reintroduced and bin charges. Full council confirmed the budget with associated cuts and charge increases. Rural Aid was to be cut completely but TDC Cllr Purser fought to have it reinstated and was successful. Rural Aid is being cut to 26k and only to be bid for from parishes with a precept of less than 20k. The local strategic plan will be going out to consultation towards the end of March. Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will follow after that. TDC emergency planning is taking place in case Corona virus takes a hold.

DCC Cllr J Brook told the Parish Council that DCC budget was approved in February. Money spent on children and adult services will increase and Highways will receive more money as well, but even more would be needed. Government is altering statutory arrangements for educational need without sufficient additional funding. Schools will be in red. DCC has a special reserve of £100m this year, which will disappear if schools need money.

Road network - DCC successfully bid for money, they received £18m, more than other counties. However the last 6 months brought very rainy weather and the roads deteriorated. It is not good for local businesses, commuters and holidaymakers. It was discussed that heavy farm vehicles use the roads, which were not designed for this load. Part of the single farm payment should be used to maintain roads.

Coronavirus - Retired NHS workers are to be called back to help with the pandemic. The government gives them pension holiday for this period. NHS and Public Health England advice should be followed during the emergency.

DCC is introducing a permit system for all Highways work from 1 April. Everybody pays for a permit to carry out work which effects the road network. Dates are fixed on the permit. It is meant to be a self-financed service. Skanska is pulling out from Devon.

Clearing drains. DCC's opinion is that it is better to do it locally. Communities can take up more responsibility and consider employing a lengthsman. The Parish Council was concerned about how to justify an increase in council tax in order to pay a contractor when the residents have already paid for this service in their council tax to DCC.

4 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meetings (circulated)

Ordinary Council meeting of 9 January 2020 and Extraordinary Council meeting of 23 January 2020 – Signed and accepted as a true record.

Proposed Cllr Hanson **Seconded** Cllr Burdge All agreed

5 Condition of Approval

Considering an enquiry about when condition 4 of the planning permission for a permanent agricultural dwelling in Little Park Farm (application number 16/02462/FUL) will be met. A member of the public drew the Parish Council's attention to this issue. According to condition 4 of the planning permission for permanent dwelling: "4. Within two months of first occupation of the hereby approved dwelling the temporary dwelling on site shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the removal works commencing. REASON: In the interests of local amenity and as there is only justification for one dwelling on this site in association with the rural enterprise."

The permanent dwelling seems to be occupied for more than two months, but the temporary dwelling still stands. The owner of the property sent an email to the Parish Council stating that he has private and personal reasons why the condition had not been met yet but he would not disclose these reasons to the public.

The Parish Council discussed the item and agreed that the planning enforcement is the responsibility of the District Council. Members of the public have the right to contact the planning enforcement officer directly. The Parish Council cannot act as an arbitrator and it is not a planning authority.

Proposed Cllr Moorhouse **Seconded** Cllr Burdge All agreed

6 VE Day

Mr Fairs, member of the organizing committee, detailed the preparations for the street party in the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The clerk reported that the event will be covered by the Parish Council's public liability insurance. As any future event, it will be dependent on the situation with the coronavirus outbreak.

7 Village Fete and Barn Dance

There is not a fixed venue for the barn dance yet. Insurance can be obtained after the decision about the exact location.

8 Community Litter Pick

It was discussed whether the litter pick on Saturday, 21st March can go ahead in the current situation. It was agreed that because the event is not indoors, it is possible to practice social distancing. The Parish Council wanted to leave for every resident to decide whether they would like to take part or not. In the health & safety briefing it is necessary to advise people to follow government guidelines. The NoBody Inn will provide complimentary tea and coffee for the litter pickers.

9 Climate Emergency Working Group Report

Mr Fairs reported about the workshops that he attended representing the Parish.

Tree Planting Workshop. The right tree to the right place for the right reasons. Do not plant next to houses, roads, drains. Good reasons are biodiversity, screening. Trees need 40-50 years to grow, when climate will be different. The chosen tree has to be suitable for the

climate in the future. Arrangements have to be in place for maintenance as well. TDC has to plant thousands of trees in order to be carbon neutral.

Climate Emergency Workshop. It was a Question & Answer session about the topic. ACT (Action on Climate in Teignbridge) produced an Action Plan Toolkit which was sent to the parishes.

The Working Group is preparing a plan about what needs to be done, together with nearby parishes. The Group will present the plan to the Parish Council and then to the residents. Teign Climate Hub. The Hub received £1000 National Lottery grant for organizing events. The Repair Cafe was held in February. Unfortunately, the Film Night, which was planned for 13th March, was postponed because of the coronavirus outbreak.

DCC's Devon Climate Emergency Team have started to write their plan and it is consulting with different groups now. It will effect every part of life. The Working Group recommends the Parish Council to endorse the Devon Climate Declaration and support the process.

Proposed Cllr Burdge **Seconded** Cllr Davis All agreed

10 Appointment of Internal auditor

The Council appointed Kate Berry, who did the audit in the previous years, to do the internal audit for the 2019/20 financial year. **Proposed** Cllr Burdge **Seconded** Cllr Davis All agreed

11 Welcome Letter

Cllr Hanson told to the Council that there is not an official way to know about new residents in the village, so it is not so straightforward to deliver them the welcome letter. The list of new electors is updated every month, but there is no guarantee that the new electors are new residents at the same time. It was agreed that the Welcome Letter can be put on the website. A request to the residents to inform the Council when new people move to the village can be placed in the newsletter.

12 Website Accessibility

The topic was first on the agenda in July 2019. The website accessibility regulation requires that the Parish Council's website should be accessible for everybody, particularly those with disabilities, by September 2020. The clerk reported about the progress of the project. There are two main issues to handle. One is the format of the webpages themselves and the other is the format of the uploaded documents.

The clerk checked the accessibility requirements for the documents. Currently documents are uploaded in pdf format to the website. An accessibility checker for Acrobat Reader would cost £15.17/month with one year subscription. There is a built-in accessibility checker in Word, which indicates whether there are accessibility errors in a file or if it is fine. The agenda for this meeting was uploaded in an accessible Word format to the website. The clerk downloaded a free screen reader program, used by visually impaired people. The program is able to read the agenda and the Minutes in Word, or as pdf files in Acrobat Reader. But it cannot read pdf documents which are opened in a browser from the website link. All the Parish Council documents dated after September 2018 must be in accessible format on the website by September 2020.

Webpages. The clerk evaluated the homepage with Wave, a program, which was listed as an accepted tool on the government accessibility webpages. The result is a list of errors, alerts and issues which need to be fixed by a programmer using ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications). The problem is, that although the screen reader reads the homepage, it does not recognize the links or the clickable buttons, and treats them as simple text. The clerk sent the result of the evaluation and links to government and WIX guidance (the company, which hosts the village website), to the creator and administrator of the website and asked an estimate for the necessary works.

As there are no videos and audio files on the website, the aim is that people with disabilities can listen to the texts and recognize links and clickable lists on the page. In this way they can

access all the information that is on the website. The online form needs to be accessible as well. In this way the website will meet the criteria, which needs to be proved with a Wave test. The administrator of the website estimated that it would cost £150 to bring the parish website up to the standard where it meets the accessibility requirements. The work can be done by the July 2020 meeting.

The Parish Council agreed to order the work.

Proposed Cllr Hanson **Seconded** Cllr Davis All agreed

13 Matters Arising

Dog Control in the Village – The volunteers, who patrol the lanes, reported that the situation was better lately, either because the rain washed away the dog messes or because dog owners walk less with their dogs in the bad weather. But there is an ongoing problem, the same dog on Rectory Lane.

14 Parish Path Partnership and Footpath Update

The annual Parish Path Partnership forms were sent to Devon County Council and the improvement of the unclassified road between Leigh Cross and Spanishlake Cross was referred to them.

The possible improvement of the Church footpath was discussed. The drystone wall is damaged where children use it as a ramp with their bicycles or cars have to pull in to give way to the traffic from the opposite direction. Devon Highways does not accept any responsibility for the path, it is not on their system. Mr Fairs offered to have a look at the path to ascertain what needs to be done exactly.

15 Highways Update

Cllr Moorhouse, as the new snow warden, reported that at first he experienced some difficulties to get the grit bins filled, but the Neighbourhood Highways Officer was helpful, and the grit bins are now filled.

Sheldon Bridge: The Parish Council reported the problem to Devon Highways last November, but has not got any feedback yet. The clerk told to the Council that Devon Highways explained that they use police data to decide which project will be supported. If there are accidents reported in an area then there is more chance to get funding for the necessary works. There is no such evidence to support safety improvement works at this bridge, because incidents are usually not reported. It was agreed to ask residents in the Magazine to report occurring incidents to the police and help to support the Parish Council's request to improve the safety of the bend before the bridge.

16 Finance

16.1 Report

The bank balance at 29 February 2020 was £4,248.19. After deducting the amount of unpresented cheques, the net bank balance was £4,124.59. Earmarked funds: CIL £1,402.84, Parish Path Partnership Grant £141.44, Community Plan £1,000 and Climate Emergency support £200.

16.2 Approval of Expenditure

Previous payment:

DALC course – Clerk, Planning £48.00

Proposed Cllr Hanson **Seconded** Cllr Burdge All agreed

17 Clerk's Correspondence

The clerk reported that the Teign Valley and Haldon Hill Churches is asking for volunteer coordinators to help organize the delivery of shopping for people in self-isolation. The opinion was that in the village people can ask neighbours and friends if they need help.

A member of the public drew the Council's attention to the deer shooting in the village. There are concerns about the safety of dogs and horses and their riders / handlers using the lane close to the location of the shooting if the animals are frightened from the noise. There is no notice given about the time of the shooting. It was discussed that there was a deer culling season and the shooting, however unfortunate it is for some residents, is not illegal during this time.

A new planning application arrived, regarding tree felling. The Council can agree a date if they wish to hold a meeting.

18 Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman thanked everyone for their participation.

19 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 14 May 2020

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 pm.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date