



Doddiscombsleigh Parish Council
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Thursday 10 January 2019 at
7.30pm in Doddiscombsleigh School

Present:

Cllr B Plummer (Chairman), Cllr S Hewitt (Vice Chairman), Cllr L Turney, Cllr Davis, Cllr H Hanson, Cllr B Hornby & 8 members of the public

Clerk: A Miller

Open Forum:

The following questions were raised.

- The public welcomed that the main roads were swept and they are cleaner and safer now.
- Potholes. The current practice of filling potholes is not cost effective, because the contractors fill only the biggest potholes and do not treat the smaller ones at the same time. There are smaller potholes on the roads constantly and Devon County Council has to pay the contractors several times to come out to the same roads. Potholes were reported at Rectory Lane.
- There is a big puddle at the entrance of footpath 1. It was reported but no action has been taken.

1 Apologies for Absence – None

2 Declarations of Interest / Requests for Dispensations

Cllr S Hewitt, Cllr L Turney, Cllr Davis, Cllr H Hanson and Cllr B Hornby declared pecuniary interests in agenda item 10.2 and requested dispensations for this meeting. The Council decided to give the dispensations on the basis that without the dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business.

Proposed Cllr Hewitt **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

3 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meeting (circulated)

Ordinary meeting of 8 November 2018 – Signed and accepted as a true record.

Proposed Cllr Hewitt **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

4 County Councillor's Report – None

5 Planning Application: 18/02417/FUL

Location: Hereford Cottage

Proposal: Double garage and re-surfacing of driveway

The applicant who was present informed the Council that comparing the new version of the application with the previous version, which was rejected by Teignbridge District Council, he has reduced the size of the proposed garage. The planned building is situated behind a hedge and has a low impact on the surrounding area. The Parish Council decided to support the application.

Proposed Cllr Turney **Seconded** Cllr Plummer All agreed

6 Matters Arising

6.1 Speed Limit in the Parish

Decision about sign design, location and other issues regarding the 'Slow Down' signs – The Council thanked the children preparing the fantastic designs for the Slow Down signs. The Council discussed the proposed locations for the signs and made the following decision.

Location 1: At the junction, opposite Half Acre.

Location 2: At the bank of Springfield.

Location 3: At the gate entrance, opposite Dent House.

Location 4: At Sexton's Cross, next to the gateway sign.

Proposed Cllr Hewitt **Seconded** Cllr Hornby All agreed

The Council chose 4 designs from the children's drawings, which appear as Appendix A to these Minutes.

Proposed Cllr Plummer **Seconded** Cllr Hornby All agreed

The Council discussed the quotes for supplying the signs and chose Hirst Signs Ltd to deliver the 4 road signs.

Proposed Cllr Plummer **Seconded** Cllr Hornby All agreed

The Clerk reported that a grant of £500 from DCC Cllr Jerry Brook's Locality Budget was approved for the project. The Parish Council has the opportunity to apply for a grant of £288 from the Communities Together Fund. The Council decided to apply for the additional grant.

Proposed Cllr Plummer **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

6.2 Road Sweeper

Report about the work done and funding received. Decision about the remaining grant – The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's application for a grant from the Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund was successful and £300 has already arrived to the Council's bank account. Tick Lane and the road from the Triangle to Sheldon Lane was swept and the drains were cleared where it was possible. Unfortunately, there is still a blocked drain at the entrance of Woodah Farm, where the road sweeper could not unblock the drain. The sweeper recommended to use high pressure jet to clear the drains at the critical places. The work took longer than it was estimated and the cost is £735+VAT=£882. The grant covers £300, the Parish Council has to pay the remaining amount from the earmarked Emergency Fund.

The question of the jet clearing was discussed and agreed that the Council has previously explored this option and found it very expensive. If Woodah Farm cut the hedge it can cause problem with the drainage again. In spite of this possibility the hedge cutting would be important, as the hedge is too big and the traffic moves to the other side of the road where the road collapses as a result. Write a letter to Woodah Farm and ask them to cut the hedge and improve road safety.

7 Future of the Triangle

Discussing a consultation response to Devon County Council regarding the condition and future of the fir tree and the beech tree at the Triangle.

Cllr Turney gave a summary of the current situation. A tree expert from Teignbridge District Council inspected the cedar tree in the Triangle in the summer, when the Parish Council planned to install a circular bench around it. His opinion was that the tree was dangerous and it should be taken down. Devon County Council inspected the cedar and beech trees in July 2018. Their inspection report was received in December, which found that the trees are in decline, present a risk to the surrounding area and recommended the removal of both trees. Following the request of concerned parishioners, Cllr Turney contacted another tree

surveyor, who prepared a report, which appears as Appendix B to these Minutes. Cllr Hewitt remarked that the members of the Council did not have the opportunity to see this report before the meeting. Cllr Turney read out the new report, which recommended some minor tree surgery – removal of the major deadwood – for the cedar tree and frequent monitoring. For both trees this report established a low risk of harm. The fee for the surveyor's report is £160, which is payable if the Parish Council would like to use it.

The methods of the different tree inspections were discussed and the financial interest of the County Council, who is responsible for the Triangle. The Parish Council decided to send the surveyor's report to Devon County Council as a consultation response to help make the best decision regarding the future of these trees and the appearance of the village centre. Cllr Turney to send the answer.

Proposed Cllr Turney **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

8 Parking Conditions on Haldon Hill and Discussing the Possibility of Supporting Changes in Public Transport

Cllr Hewitt informed the Council that she sent an email of complaint to the Forestry Commission regarding the dangerous situation at Haldon during busy weekends. Aggressive situations may develop when drivers cannot get through on the narrowed road, and the park rangers do nothing to solve them. The road is not safe for pedestrians, who are crossing the ridge road hidden by the parking cars and not visible by the drivers of the moving cars. There is space in the car park, but drivers choose to park on the road, because the parking fee is too high. A clearway will be installed, which will prohibit parking on the road, but it has not happened yet. There is no public transport to Haldon, which might reduce the number of cars on the hill. The Parish Council decided to send a letter to the manager of the Forestry Commission to increase awareness of the difficulties that the neighbouring communities experience when they try to get through Haldon Hill. Cllr Hewitt to send the letter.

Proposed Cllr Hewitt **Seconded** Cllr Turney All agreed

9 Information about the Work of the Dunsford – Doddiscombsleigh Twinning Association

Cllr Hewitt gave an update about the planned fundraising events of the Twinning Association. The Association is still looking for families to host French guests in June, who can go to France for a long weekend next year in return for their hospitality. The question of a French flag or bunting was discussed and agreed that Cllr Hewitt asks Dunsford Parish Council about the available flags to borrow.

Proposed Cllr Turney **Seconded** Cllr Plummer All agreed

10 Finance

10.1 Report

Bank account balance and bank reconciliation – The Clerk reported that the bank balance at 31 December 2018 was £7,859.55. After deducting the amount of un-presented cheques, the net bank balance was £7,818.60. The grant of £300 from the Highway Maintenance Fund arrived. Earmarked funds: CIL £2000, Circular bench / Triangle project £2000, Emergency Fund £1500, Parish Path Partnership Grant £541.29, Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund £300. The end of quarter bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Cllr Hanson. The Council resolved to accept the accounts.

Proposed Cllr Hanson **Seconded** Cllr Turney All agreed

10.2 Proposed Budget and Precept for 2019/20

The Parish Council accepted the budget for 2019/20 with the estimated cost of £3,961 and earmarked the following amounts: CIL: £1,403 Parish Path Partnership Grant £541 Elections £1,300 and Emergency Fund £1200.

Proposed Cllr Turney **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

The Parish Council discussed the different options for the amounts of the precept and the council tax. The Council's income decreases next year as there will be no Council Tax Support Grant due to central budget cuts, while the costs are growing. The Council decided to increase the council tax by a small amount, £2 per year, to reduce the negative effect of government cuts and set the precept at £3,622.

Proposed Cllr Turney **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

10.3 Approval of Expenditure

Payments to approve:

- Road Sweeper £882.00
- Clerk's salary and expenses £956.05
- Envelopes and stamps £8.96

Proposed Cllr Turney **Seconded** Cllr Hanson All agreed

11 Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk reported that the first defibrillator training was held and the second one would take place at the following week. If neither of the dates were suitable for someone, interested parishioners can borrow the DVD and the first aid equipment and can practice the first aid at home.

A parishioner asked about the more accessible footpath from Batts Brook to Sheldon Lane and was interested whether it is suitable for an all-terrain mobility scooter. It was agreed that this path is not suitable for a mobility scooter but a stile was replaced with a gate on footpath 1 at Spynishlake, which made a new section accessible for mobility scooters.

12 Chairman's Remarks – The Chairman thanked everyone for their participation.

13 Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 14 March 2019

The public left the meeting.

PART B

The Parish Council discussed the quotes for the **Parish Paths Partnership project** and chose Elliott Fairs to carry out the improvement work.

Regarding the installation of the **Slow Down Signs** the Parish Council accepted the offer of Steve Brooks Haulage Ltd, which volunteered to install the signs to support the community and improve road safety in the village.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55 pm.

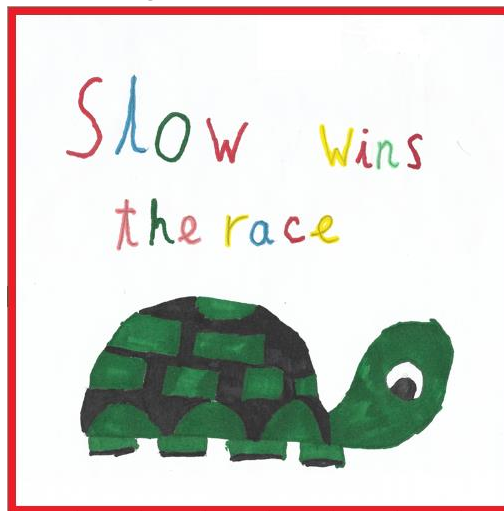
Signed.....
Chairman

APPENDIX A

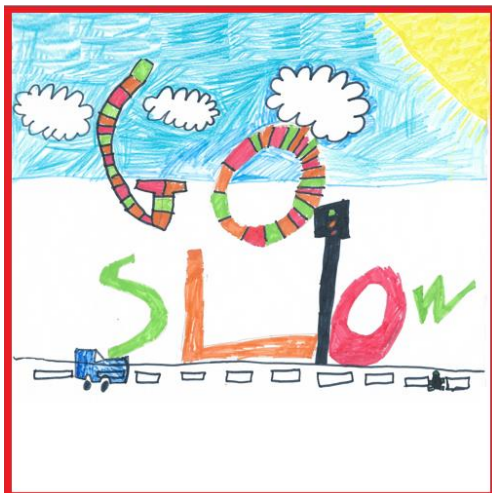
Design for location 1:



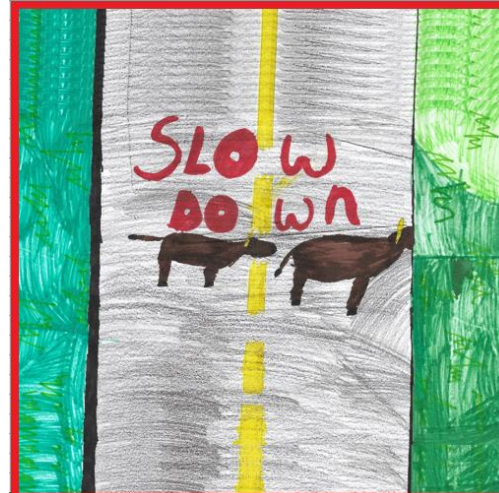
Design for location 2:



Design for location 3:



Design for location 4:



APPENDIX B

Doddiscombsleigh
Ref: TC190101

Tree Inspection & Risk Assessment

I am a Chartered Arboriculturist and *Institute of Chartered Foresters* Registered Consultant. I am also a Fellow member of the Arboricultural Association and Chartered Environmentalist. I specialise in tree inspection and risk assessment and have 20 years experience of survey and inspecting trees.

The 2x trees on the 'triangle' have been reported as high risk and scheduled for removal.

I have been instructed by the Parish Council to survey the 2x trees located on the small triangular public open space adjacent to The Nobody Inn. I have been given a copy of a tree inspection recently undertaken by contractors working for the County Council (DCC) and a copy of email correspondence which describes why the trees were scheduled for removal.

Cedar tree

DCC and the LPA have noted that the Cedar tree is in decline.

The initial view about this tree appears to have come from Mark Waddams (TDC) who recommended removal because of the request to located additional seating under the canopy. Mark correctly identified that the tree has had a decline in health in recent years. The DCC report confirms this view and states that the tree should be felled.

Minor branch loss can be expected, as with any mature tree.

The tree decline can be assessed to some extent looking at historic google street view images. The tree has declined since 2011 although the last 2 years has seen a slowing of the decline – currently the tree appears to be in similar condition as it was in 2016, albeit with a little more dead material throughout the canopy.

In my view, whilst there is an elevated risk of further minor branch loss the main structure (scaffold branches & trunk) is largely defect free and therefore poses a very low risk of failure.

The risk of major tree failure is low.

There is a small patch of dead bark at the stem base. This was noted by DCC although not explored fully. I paired away the dead material to discover only a discreet area of dysfunction – certainly not significant enough to warrant removal of the tree. I would suggest that with some minor tree surgery i.e. removal of the major deadwood, that this tree can be safely retained. Its condition should be monitored frequently to establish the rate of further decline.

Beech tree

In my opinion there is no justification to remove this Beech tree.

This tree does have an area of dysfunction on the main stem but in my opinion it is a defect that is not progressing significantly. Coupled with the fact that the tree canopy has been previously reduced, such that it is not carrying much size/weight, I would suggest that the structural branching & stem can support the tree safely.

Risk Assessment

Both the Cedar tree and the Beech are within the Tolerable region of risk. I have used a Quantified Tree Risk Assessment system to assess the level of risk as follows:

The level of risk posed by both trees is tolerable.

Risk of Harm – Cedar = 1/400,000

Risk of Harm – Beech = 1/1,000,000

To put that into perspective...the risk threshold used by NASA in the case of falling debris from failed satellite's is 1/10,000. This is deemed an acceptable level. This level is also used by the HSE.

The risk posed by the 2x trees I have assessed is low.