



Doddiscombsleigh Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Thursday 6 May 2021 at
7.30 pm online

Zoom Meeting ID: 811 9682 5306
Password: 126 663

Present: Cllr Turney (Chairman), Cllr H Hanson, Cllr M Moorhouse, Cllr J Sawyer, and 5 members of the public
Clerk: A Miller

The meeting was held following the Annual Parish Meeting of the Electors.

Annual Council Business

1 Election of Chairman

Cllr Sawyer asked whether Cllr Turney would carry on with the Chairman responsibilities and Cllr Turney agreed.

Resolved Cllr Turney was unanimously re-elected as Chairman.

2 Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Turney signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

3 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Burdge, Cllr Davis, County Cllr Jerry Brook and District Cllr Purser

4 Declarations of Interest / Requests for Dispensations

None.

5 County and District Councillors' Report

Devon County Cllr Brook sent his annual report to the Parish Council, which appears at Appendix to these Minutes.

6 Councillor Vacancy and Co-option

There were no applications for the councillor vacancy.

7 To Appoint Councillors to Dedicated Responsibilities

Resolved The Parish Council agreed to the following responsibility areas:

Cllr Turney – Planning, Affordable Housing, Defibrillator, School Playing Field, Events Co-ordinator, Community Planning Steering Group Representative, Climate Emergency Working Group Representative

Cllr Hanson – Parish Path Partnership Co-ordinator, Footpaths, Finance, CIL

Cllr Davis – Emergency Planning

Cllr Burdge – Community Planning Steering Group Representative, Public Information, Dog Control, Highways

Cllr Moorhouse – Snow Warden

Cllr Sawyer – Drainage Warden

Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Turney All agreed

8 To Review of Governance Documents

Resolved Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Statement of Internal Control were readopted without amendment. The Parish Council decided to adopt the new Model Code of Conduct, prepared by the Local Association of Local Councils.

Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

9 To Review the Council's Policies and Procedures

Resolved Website Advertising Policy, Complaints Procedure, Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Policies, Website Accessibility Statement and Risk Register were readopted without amendment. It was agreed that the existing insurance cover is fit for purpose. Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

10 To Review the Memorandum of Understanding with Doddiscombsleigh Primary School Governing Body

The playground is currently closed for the public for health and safety reasons following an incident in summer 2019. Cllr Turney informed the Council that the School Governors will discuss the issue at their next meeting. It was agreed to return to the topic at the next Council meeting.

11 To Review the Subscriptions to Other Bodies

Resolved The Parish Council agreed to continue the existing subscriptions to the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Turney All agreed

12 To Decide about the Time and Place of Next Meetings until the Next Annual Meeting

Resolved The Parish Council agreed to continue holding ordinary meetings on the second Thursday of every second month. The dates of the ordinary meetings will be:

8 July 2021

9 September 2021

11 November 2021

13 January 2022

10 March 2022

12 May 2022 Annual Council Meeting

The Parish Council will return to face- to-face meetings in line with the legislation. The place of the meetings will be decided closer to the dates when restrictions regarding indoor gatherings will be known. Proposed Cllr Sawyer Seconded Cllr Moorhouse All agreed

13 To Approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

13.1 Internal Auditor's Report

The Clerk reported that the internal auditor has carried out the audit and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2020/21 without comments.

13.2 Approval of Governance Statement

Resolved The Annual Governance Statement was agreed.

Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Moorhouse All agreed

13.3 Approval of Statement of Accounts

Resolved The Annual Statement of Accounts was agreed.
Proposed Cllr Moorhouse Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

13.4 Decision about Certifying the Parish Council as Exempt from External Audit

Resolved The Parish Council decided to certify the Council as exempt from external audit in 2020/21. Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

13.5 Agree dates for Exercise of Public Rights

Resolved The public will have a right to inspect the Annual Statements and the related documents between 3 June and 14 July 2021. Proposed Cllr Moorhouse Seconded Cllr Turney All agreed

14 To Approve the Asset Register

Cllr Sawyer's internet connection was lost during this agenda item and he left the meeting.

Resolved It was confirmed that the Asset Register was up to date.

Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

15 To Approve the CIL Report for the 2020/21 Financial Year

Cllr Sawyer's internet connection recovered during this agenda item and he re-joined the meeting.

Resolved The Parish Council approved the CIL Report for the 2020/21 Financial Year.

Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Turney All agreed

Bimonthly Council Business

Open Forum

The Chairman informed the public that they can express their views relating to planning applications at the appropriate agenda items and asked whether there are any other questions to raise. There were no other questions.

16 Ratification of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved The Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting of 11 March 2021 was accepted as a true record. Proposed Cllr Sawyer Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

17 Planning Matters

17.1 To Note Planning Decisions

21/00349/AGR Tall Barn Whitemoor Farm, Replacement boiler house and log store – prior approval not required

21/00415/CAN Straithead House, Remove tree which is damaging wall – no objection

21/00229/FUL Hereford Cottage, Extension and conversion of existing lincay to holiday cottage – permission granted

17.2 To Discuss Planning Applications

17.2.1 21/00716/VAR Coombe Park

Variation/removal of conditions 3, 5 & 6 on planning permission 19/01410/FUL (Replace shed with a treatment room/cabin to support physiotherapy/TMS therapy) relating to hours of operation and use

The applicant and his neighbour were present at the meeting and the Chairman invited them to express their views. After that the Parish Council discussed the application. Two opinions emerged: one opinion was to send an objection as a consultation response to the Planning Authority and the other opinion was to only raise specific concerns.

Resolved The Parish Council decided to draw the Planning Authority's attention to the concerns regarding the impact of the application on the neighbours in terms of light, noise and privacy. The Council decided to ask the Planning Authority what kind of additional mitigation would be possible to ensure the privacy of the neighbouring property if the application were approved.

Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Turney. There were 2 objections to the proposal. As the for and against votes were equal, the Chairman, Cllr Turney, exercised his casting vote and the proposal was accepted.

17.2.2 21/00501/HOU 2 Littlewell Park

Convert car port to garage and utility with accommodation above with dormer and first floor extension to main dwelling

Resolved The Parish Council decided to make no observations. Proposed Cllr Sawyer Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

17.2.3 21/00566/FUL Great Mistleigh Farm

Extension of existing ancillary accommodation to provide a self contained holiday/residential letting unit

Resolved It was agreed that as the Parish Council could not carry out a site visit, it would not make a separate comment; but the Parish Council decided to support the Wildlife Warden's comment – which Mr Fairs sent to the Planning Authority on 28 April 2021 – regarding biodiversity.

Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Sawyer All agreed

17.2.4 21/00682/CLDE Herons Brook

Certificate of lawfulness for existing use of domestic garden curtilage including a building which provides residential storage

Resolved The Parish Council decided to make no observations. Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Sawyer All agreed

17.3 To Discuss Planning Enforcement/Potential Planning Enforcement Issues

17.3.1 Straithead Barn

Concerned residents contacted the Parish Council regarding the development at Straithead Barn. The listed property has planning permission for renovation and building an extension - planning applications 19/00792/FUL and 19/00793/LBC-, but there are concerns that the development is not happening in line with the approved drawings: the ridge height of the extension is higher by approximately a metre than it should be. The building is situated in the conservation area and it can be clearly seen from the centre of the village. The higher extension has an impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

The Building Control carried out a site visit in April and ascertained that the ridge height is higher than it was approved. In spite of this finding, the building work has not stopped. The Parish Council was also informed that old timber was removed from the listed barn and soil and clay was tipped onto neighbouring land. It is a concern that this activity might have caused a loss of archaeological information, as the land itself is in the conservation area as well.

Resolved The Parish Council decided to raise concerns with the Planning Enforcement regarding the building works at Straithead Barn.

Proposed Cllr Moorhouse Seconded Cllr Sawyer All agreed

17.3.2 Other Issues

It was discussed that the Parish Council referred three cases within a year to the Planning Enforcement for clarification without any effect.

Resolved It was agreed to send a follow-up email to the Planning Committee asking about the cases in progress. Proposed Cllr Sawyer Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

18 To Receive Reports

18.1 Parish Path Partnership and Footpath Update

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council will receive a grant of £250 for general maintenance within the Parish Path Partnership Scheme.

18.2 Highways Update

Cllr Sawyer reported that the lengthsman has done the work that was agreed at the March meeting and it made a big difference in the state of the drains and the roads. The invoice is waiting for approval at item 19.2.

The Parish Council welcomed a resident's decision to plant daffodil bulbs along the raised path between the church and the pub. The flower display stopped cars reversing into the side of the path.

A resident informed the Parish Council that there was a sewage problem at Rectory Lane in March. It was discussed that the situation is not yet solved as there is still a sewage leak in the area.

Resolved It was agreed to send an email to South West Water regarding a sewage leak at Rectory lane. Proposed Cllr Sawyer Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

18.3 Bus Shelter Project Update

Cllr Moorhouse reported that the contractor, Mike Wye, has repaired the bus shelter and painted the cob structure. The building looks really nice now. At the front left corner, which was in the worst condition, there was not a stretch cote applied. If there is a good paint on the area, there will not be a problem with it. The shelter will need regular maintenance and painting. There is a lot of paint left, which will be enough for several years. The paint can be stored by Cllr Moorhouse. The invoice is waiting for approval at agenda item 19.2.

It was discussed that a volunteer working party can paint the windows and the ceiling to finish the redecoration of the bus shelter.

19 Finance

19.1 Report and Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk reported that the bank balance at 28 April 2021 was £6,744.83. The first part of the precept, £2553.50 has arrived. Earmarked funds: Community Plan £511, Climate Emergency support £200, Defibrillator £17, Website £200, Office Equipment £200, Maintenance £100 and Election £40. Grants: CIL £1,402.84, Parish Path Partnership £291.44 Locality Budget £326.60.

Cllr Hanson checked the bank reconciliation for 31 March 2021 and it was in order.

Resolved The Council accepted the accounts. Proposed Cllr Hanson Seconded Cllr Sawyer All agreed

19.2 Approval of Expenditure

Zoom Pro monthly fee £14.39

Information Commissioner fee £35.00

DALC membership fee £70.04

Road cleaning £75.00

Payroll agent fee £75.60

Clerk's salary £750.61

Printer ink and envelopes £22.00

Replacement pads for defibrillator £147.60

Bus shelter repair £943.92

Insurance £267.43

Resolved The Parish Council approved the expenditures and the setting up of the direct debit for the Information Commissioner fee. Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Sawyer All agreed

20 To Discuss a Response for the Government Consultation about Local Authority Remote Meetings

There is a consultation about allowing remote meetings in England permanently. The temporary permission expired at the date of the meeting. It was discussed that although the Parish Council prefers face-to-face meetings as a general rule, there are circumstances when a possibility of holding remote meetings would be useful – e.g., to ensure that the meeting would be quorate.

Resolved It was agreed to send a consultation response which supports the possibility of holding remote meetings when the Parish Council sees it necessary.

Proposed Cllr Turney Seconded Cllr Hanson All agreed

21 Clerk’s Correspondence

The Clerk reported that HSBC refused to process the debit card application saying that the Parish Council needs to fill in a different form, which should be provided by their local branch. The Clerk pointed out that the online form was submitted after the Exeter branch insisted on filling in that form last September. The central team of the bank and the branch seem to follow different rules and the result is that the Council does not get proper service. It was agreed to obtain a paper form from the branch and ask for compensation for the delay.

22 Chairman’s Remarks

The Chairman thanked everyone for their participation.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.09 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date

APPENDIX

Annual Report from county councillor Jerry Brook.

As we draw to the end of the year and the end of a four years election term it is worth reflecting on what has been an extraordinary period.

The coronavirus has tested the resolve of everyone throughout the county and although we are seeing a way forward with the vaccination programme, some of those challenges will persist into the future. The county council has received considerable funding from central government throughout to help individuals and businesses and to co-ordinate with the NHS processes and schemes to assist in making the people of Devon safe. More latterly the vaccination program spread across various sites in the county has functioned well and has worked very efficiently. I think it is worth thanking the many volunteers who gave their time to make this possible. The

overall infection rate in Devon is the lowest in the country which I believe is testament to the people of Devon and their self-discipline.

The 2021/2022 financial budget is the first for ten years not to be influenced by the austerity measures that we have worked with since 2010. Over the ten years period the council has made savings of expenditure in excess of £280m and now receives £180m less funding directly from central government. The savings have been achieved through reorganisation of some services like the libraries and youth services. A massive reduction in staff numbers, mostly through natural wastage but not entirely, contributed to those savings. The contributions from council tax have increased year on year. This year's increase being the highest with 3% of the 4.9% increase being ring fenced for adult care provision. The increases overall have helped to mitigate the reduced funding from central government.

Adult care services and Children and young people's services continue to be led by demand. People in general are living longer, as they get older their needs inevitably increase and so does their vulnerabilities. To ensure they are cared for properly requires more intensified assistance and care.

Young people's services saw a considerable upward spike in the numbers of children entering the service. This I think could well be linked to the difficulties generated by the lockdown. Hopefully most of those individuals with the correct help will get through their problems.

The highways and waste service has continued to provide service throughout the year. Recycling centres reopened as soon as was practicably possible. A number within the county are to be enlarged to assist in the increase in recyclable commodities.

The highway network as we all know has been excessively damaged from long periods of continuous bad weather. The service during the first full lock down was unable to make repairs in the usual way. This put the system on the back foot for the remainder of the year. It meant that £7.5m destined for pothole repair remained unspent by the end of the financial year. That money has been brought forward to 2021/2022 budget year and will be utilised for the purpose intended. £75m of capital was invested into the highway network along with £50m in revenue. With 8000 miles of highway in the county that amount of revenue remains relatively low. Increases in the gully clearing services has helped with getting water off the highway, however, without proper jetting of connecting pipe work, sometimes that procedure can be ineffectual. Much of the drainage system is now aging and does require capital investment to get it working correctly. The council have though been successful in drawing down funding from special funds made available from central government to assist in road repairs. This has made possible the resurfacing of some of the minor road network that might not of been a priority. Tedburn, Dunsford and Hennock to name three of those parishes that benefitted from these funds.

Transport links are essential if the county is to become an economic force. Improvements to the rail network along the Dawlish line are progressing. The government have agreed to open the line to Okehampton which will be a great boost for that part of the county. The A361 north devon link road is to be upgraded in parts to make it safer. The pilot scheme in Newton Abbot to bring speeds down to 20mph will I'm sure be successful. This will enable safer driving but more importantly allow walkers and cyclists to commute in the confidence of being safe. On the success of that pilot I'm sure that will start a process to alter speed limits elsewhere in the county.

On education I have reported often the massive financial disparity in what the children receive in the education budget in Devon in comparison to what other authorities receive in other parts of

the country. We have been part of the 40 Group receiving the lowest contributions. This situation has improved slightly, due mainly to continued lobbying by James McInnes the portfolio holder and the educational team. This work needs to continue so that the school children of Devon receive the same financial support as other children throughout the country.

The climate emergency has become a very focal issue for all of us. The recent climate change strategy document that was out for ten weeks of consultation is the blueprint for the future. It clearly sets a timetable for the council and the people of Devon to meet carbon zero. More importantly though it will eventually create a sustainable environment for everyone. It won't come free or without massive cultural changes and sacrifices by all of us. The strategy though is well constructed with scientific support and I support it one hundred percent.

As many of you will be aware the county council owns about nine and a half thousand acres, divided into sixty farms across the county. I've had a significant role throughout my tenure as a councillor in the farm's estate. This service that is not unique to Devon, is though continuing to create opportunities for new entrants into agriculture. Many come to the estate with entrepreneurial ideas and environmentally sensitive farming systems. As agriculture progresses into the carbon neutral future these new entrants will be at the fore front of that aim.

In conclusion the year has been a massive challenge for the council from changing working practices to accommodate the pandemic, at the same time maintaining a solid financial situation whilst ensuring all service provision continued unimpeded. What ever the outcome of the election your county council is very fit for purpose. Jerry Brook