

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 3rd April at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice Chair), R Kenshole, T Verney, H Knight, and S Tanton.

Also present: C Cllr Davis, Val Ford (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

Apologies/Approvals.

Cllr S Whitby, D Cllr M Wilkinson, Mr & Mrs Bailey (applicants for the planning application for Gillards Farm - 78426)

5207. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Ayre declared an interest in Planning Application 78426 – Gillards Farm.

5208. Public Participation

None.

5209. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 6th March 2024 Meeting of the Parish Council.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th March 2024 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 6th MARCH 2024 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED

5210. Matters Arising

5188. Matters Arising. (5166). Steve Emery from Planning at NDC had gone through the files for Lower Broad Park and could not see any planning condition that mentions traffic calming should be installed on Ilfracombe Hill. Cllr Ayre had sent a letter to Stuart Bryant to inform him that the gateway type feature cannot be enforced.

5196. Planning Applications (c). Tracey Blackmore will attend the June meeting to talk about planning in respect of barn/outbuilding conversions and in particular “fallback”.

5199. Post Office Outreach Service. The Clerk had sent a letter to Mr and Mrs O’Halloran at the Crown Inn to thank them for allowing the Post Office to utilise their pub one day a week on a six week trial and wished them well.

5211. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

No crime figures had been sent for March 2024. The Clerk will chase these and report back to the May meeting.

5212. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis provided a report (see Appendix A). This was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. A copy of this report will be put on both websites together with the

photo of a visit to the Parish by SoS Transport Mark Harper. Included in the report was a link to The Devon Retrofit Guide as part of Devon County Council's work to improve the quality and speed of work to improve the energy efficiency of homes.

C Cllr Davis acknowledged that the Chair had recently highlighted the poor state of the A361 to her in the section between Dean Cross and Mullacott roundabout. C Cllr Davis has put in a request to Highways for drainage works and resurfacing to be done and also encouraged us to keep reporting safety defects so she can chase up on these as well.

Cllr Ayre thanked C Cllr Davis for all of the work she does for the Parish.

5213. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson had sent his apologies.

5214. Flashing Speed Signs

C Cllr Davis informed the meeting that some sites need to be identified to put some poles up within the 30 mph speed limit. There needs to be a minimum of two sites. It was agreed that Cllrs Reeves and Kenshole would meet to look at finding appropriate sites including the need for it to be safe to put up and take down the speed sign.

5215. Planning Decisions

78307 – Dean View, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NF. Approved.

5216. Planning Applications

a) To comment on the following planning applications.

78417 – Extension to agricultural barn at Barn at Higher Stowford Farm, Hore Down Gate, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8PH.

No concerns were raised about this application. **Cllr Verney proposed approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 78417.

Cllr Ayre declared an interest in the following planning application and left the room. Cllr Reeves took over the chair for this application.

78426 – Conversion of two redundant rural buildings to two dwellings and associated works at Gillards Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NH.

Cllr Kenshole had visited this site and looked at the two barns. He referred to the previous applications on other buildings which had been rebuilt with original stone and flagstone. Everything had been in keeping with the village style and he felt these buildings will enhance the whole area. Cllr Reeves referred to eleven Consultees being contacted with no comments forthcoming. **Cllr Kenshole proposed approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 78426.

Cllr Ayre returned to the meeting.

78415 – Conversion of agricultural barn to dwelling house at West Hill Farm Road from West Down School to Winsham Down House, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NF.

Cllr Reeves had looked at the comments from the Sustainability Officer and had no issues with this application. **Cllr Verney proposed approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 78415.

78436 – Listed Building consent for installation of an external stainless steel flue at The Chapel, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NQ.

Discussion took place about the height of the flue (less than a metre). There was nothing from the Heritage Officer and no comments from the neighbours. **Cllr Reeves recommended approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Tanton.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 78436.

Cllr Reeves had looked at the Decisions from the last meeting and had looked carefully at any Conditions to see if there was anything of note. He felt this needed to be looked at from time to time to make sure Conditions are being complied with.

b) To comment on any planning applications received after the Agenda was published.

None.

5217. Footpaths

a) To receive any update on the P3 Grant Funding Application submitted.

The Clerk had sent the completed P3 forms to the Public Rights of Way Department at DCC on the 8th March 2024.

b) Any other footpath matters.

Cllr Reeves had put the new No Entry to Vehicles sign up on Footpath 16 and the Clerk had notified Simon Houghton, Public Rights of Way Officer, and Mrs Watts. The old sign was left in the shop for Mr and Mrs Watts to collect.

Cllr Reeves had cut back a branch on Footpath 11 as it was right across the path at head height. Cllr Ayre thanked Cllr Reeves for doing this.

A report had been received from Mr Hunt (Always there). This was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Due to the adverse weather he had not been able to cut the grass as yet but he had managed to trim a few places and has been keeping an eye on the bus shelters. He mentioned the retaining duckboards along Garden Lane disintegrating but this has been dealt with by Gareth Hookway. Cllr Verney informed the meeting that most of the work has been done and Garden Lane is looking lovely. Cllr Ayre added that Mr Hookway has finished 90% of the footpath work he tendered for. Cllr Reeves referred to a Thank You being put on Facebook in respect of the work. Cllr Verney is still waiting for the weather to improve before putting the new finger sign posts up.

Cllr Ayre had been given a lot of photos of footpaths from years gone by which were

circulated at the meeting. There was a picture of the bench at Pembroke which is now rotten and needs dealing with.

5218. Emergency Plan

Cllr Kenshole felt the Emergency Plan is looking good. A couple of items are outstanding. There is a need to confirm who is holding the questionnaires as he and the Clerk need to work at getting the information on a spreadsheet. Also, all of the details of the vulnerable people need to be kept safely under GDPR. Andy Odell needs to be contacted when he gets back.

Cllr Ayre referred to the positive Table Top exercise. Cllr Kenshole referred to one scenario looking at an extended period of electric failure due to a cyber attack which is something that needs to be prepared for as it could result in weeks without power.

Cllr Reeves stated that Andy Odell has not finalised who will hold the master plan. One will be held by Devon Communities Together (DCT). Cllr Kenshole referred to the need for a list of where all the copies are so that when the master copy is altered they all are.

Cllr Ayre felt it had been an amazing piece of work and journey. A date needs to be chosen to review with Policy with Andy Odell. Cllr Reeves added that the Emergency Plan will be sent to DCT when final. The Parish Council had received the funding for the items purchased by Andy Odell and for the items he is still waiting for such as reflective jackets and ordnance survey maps.

DCT have hinted that the Parish Council might be able to apply for more funding in this financial year for walkie talkies

5219. Car Park Lease

Cllr Ayre referred to Samuels Solicitors waiting for NDC's Solicitors to communicate with them about the lease. Cllr Reeves felt that there was a need for the Parish Council to inspect the car park with someone from the District Council Maintenance Team before the lease is taken on. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Jon Triggs (NDC) asking for a site inspection and also notify Samuels about the request for a site inspection and ask for an update. Cllr Verney referred to some missing bricks at the car park which resulted in a young boy on his bike going into this hole.

Cllr Reeves had written to the two other Solicitors who had provided quotations for legal work on the lease.

5220. Parish Councillor Vacancies

Cllr Ayre referred to the drop in sessions that had been held at the Coffee Morning at the Parish Hall and one evening at the Crown Inn. No one came forward to join the Parish Council but someone from the Parish Hall expressed an interest in the Community Speed Watch Scheme and Cllr Ayre provided details of this to them.

Cllr Reeves referred to someone asking what was happening with the money put aside for the Post Office. He advised that this has yet to be looked at.

5221. Community Land Trust

a) To receive an update on this scheme.

Cllr Verney reported that the CLT has come to a bit of a halt as there is no funding from anywhere at the moment. This item will be put on the Agenda when there is something to report.

Cllr Ayre referred to the big article on local TV on Braunton's CLT.

b) To discuss sharing the DCT Housing Needs Survey on the Parish Council and Village Websites.

The Parish Council had approached Devon Communities Together asking if it was okay for the Parish Council to put the Housing Needs Survey on both of the websites in West Down. They were happy for this to take place. Cllr Kenshole could not see any reason why this should not now take place. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the DCT Housing Needs Survey be put on both websites which was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL PUT THE DCT HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY ON THE VILLAGE WEBSITE AND THE PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE.

5222. Air Ambulance Light

The Air Ambulance had sent the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which Cllr Ayre had circulated. The Community Park were also asked to consider the MOU. The insurance, asset register and funding for the light needs to be sorted out. Nigel Tinsley-Such is no longer on the Community Park committee but will be contacted to see who he has passed responsibility on to. This will be placed on the May agenda for further discussion

5223. Small Grant Fund

The Clerk had sent letters to the PTFA, WDVGFA and St Calixtus PCC on the 2nd April 2024 requesting receipted invoices for the 2023-2024 tax year and invited them to submit a report in writing or in person at the Parish Council AGM on the 1st May 2024.

5224. Review of Financial Regulations

It was agreed that this will be moved to the June Agenda following the decision made at the review last June. Cllr Ayre was happy to go into Lloyds Bank to see what needs to be done to take ex Cllr Squire off the cheque signatories following her resignation as a Parish Councillor.

5225. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurer's Account as at 31.3.2024	£11,052.34
Balance in the Business Account as at 31.3.2024	£ 4,868.92

b) To receive and agree the invoices received for payment.

North Devon Council Clerks Salary	£395.53	
Admin Charge	£ 7.72	£403.25
Total Payment		£403.25

Cllr Verney proposed that the invoice for £403.25 should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Ayre. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICE FOR £403.25 SHOULD BE PAID

c) To receive and agree the Parish Council Final Accounts for the 2023/2024 financial year.

The Clerk had circulated the Final Accounts prior to the meeting. Cllr Ayre thanked the Clerk for preparing these. **Cllr Verney proposed that the Final Accounts be approved which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE 2023/2024 FINANCIAL YEAR BE APPROVED AS CORRECT.

d) AGAR (Annual Governance Accountability Return)

(i) To complete and sign the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024.

The Chair read out the statements which were completed and the form was duly approved and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

(ii) To complete and sign the Accounting Statements 2023/2024. The Clerk had signed the Accounting Statements prior to presenting this form to the Councillors. This form was approved and signed by the Chair.

(iii) To confirm the Asset Register is up to date as at 31.3.2024. The Clerk had checked and confirmed this is correct as at 31.3.2024.

e) To claim VAT for the year 2023/2024.

The Clerk will be claiming a VAT refund in the sum of £2,225.11 for 2023/2024. This will be sent to HMRC once agreed by the Internal Auditor.

5226. Correspondence

a) The Climate & Environment Grant is now re-open for one more year. Information had been circulated to Cllrs on the 27th March 2024.

b) Councillor Advocate Scheme. Conditions of the Scheme had been received. The Parish Council need to reply by the 14th April to confirm their position and if we agree to the terms of the scheme. If we don't reply then our details will be removed from their database. Discussion took place about whether the Parish Council wished to continue with this scheme. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the Parish Council let this scheme lapse which was seconded by Cllr Tanton.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL NOT REPLY TO THE COUNCILLOR ADVOCATE SCHEME EMAIL AND WILL LET THEIR MEMBERSHIP LAPSE.

c) Funding for Rural Community Green Spaces. Grants of up to £75,000 will be provided to help communities to plant fruits, vegetables and trees. Funding will also be awarded to support the expansion of natural play facilities which encourage children to spend more time outdoors. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the Clerk send this information to the Parish Hall, WDVGFA and the Church to give them an opportunity to apply for this funding.** Cllr Reeves seconded this proposal with unanimous agreement being made to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL SEND INFORMATION ON THE GRANT FOR RURAL COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES TO THE PARISH HALL, WDVGFA AND THE CHURCH.

d) Two emails had been received from the Village Shop. During their Committee Meeting the possibility of obtaining a grant from the Parish Council was discussed following a Fire Safety Inspection as they need to purchase a Fire Proof Cabinet, an Automatic Door Closer and have some work done to the fire door. The first email was asking if this would meet the criteria for the Parish Council Grant Funding and the second email referred to them applying for the Community Councillors Grant instead. Cllr Reeves stated that there would be nothing to stop the Shop applying for the Parish Council Small Grant funding later in the year if there is something they need but this would be too late for the work they have referred to. The Community Councillor Grant the Shop have mentioned in their second email can be applied for by any of the village organisations directly. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the various organisations in the village to advise them of this and notify D Cllr Wilkinson that this has been done. The Clerk will liaise with Cllrs Ayre and Reeves as to who to write to.

e) Email received from Compass North Devon. They are fed up with the way that the country has been run in recent times. They are arranging a Spring Conference in the Assembly Rooms, South Molton on Saturday 27th April 2024 – 9.00 a.m. to 5 p.m.) Titled “Have your Say: The Democracy Repair Shop”.

g) Email received regarding the DALC Renewal Membership for 2024/2025. The fee is £231 with invoices being sent out shortly. The Parish Council need to complete the membership renewal form to continue with their membership. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the DALC Renewal Form be completed which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL COMPLETE THE DALC RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR 2024-2025.

h) Email received from North Devon Council about the reopening of the Community Councillor Grant Scheme.

5227. Unresolved Questions

None.

5228. Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda

a) AGM/Annual Parish Meeting/Election of Officers (Annual Parish Meeting will start at 6.45 pm).

b) Review of Parish Council Insurance and Pay Insurance.

c) Review Grant Fund Policy

d) Pay out 50% of the Small Grants following the first precept payment and Grant receipt for the new financial year.

e) Approve and Sign Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting.

f) Renew Code of Conduct.

g) Code of Conduct Training for Town & Parish Council for new Councillors.

h) Footpaths

i) Emergency Plan

j) Car Park

k) Air Ambulance

l) Flashing Speed Signs.

5229. Any Other Business

a) Cllr Verney referred to a local resident, Jack Williams, clearing up the debris at Stang Lane. He thanked him for doing this and Cllr Ayre had also commented and thanked him on Facebook.

b) Cllr Reeves referred to the Clerk notifying him and the Chair of the additional 10 hours she had worked leading up to the final accounts and audit process. **Cllr Reeves proposed that these additional hours be paid which was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL BE PAID FOR THE TEN ADDITIONAL HOURS SHE HAD WORKED PREPARING FOR THE FINAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT.

The Clerk had not been able to take all of her 40 hours a year holiday leave due to the volume of work. She suggested that eight hours be carried over for her May 2024 holiday. **Cllr Reeves proposed that eight hours annual leave be carried over to the 2024-2025 financial year for the Clerk which was seconded by Cllr Ayre.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL TAKE EIGHT HOURS ANNUAL LEAVE IN MAY 2024 FROM THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR.

c) Cllr Ayre referred to the photo of D Cllr Wilkinson on the Coronation Bench being sent to NDC which had already been published.

d) The free Portrait of King Charles III was awaited following the Clerk putting in the official order.

The meeting closed at 21.08 pm