

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 2 March 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice-Chair), R Drew, R Kenshole, K Oades, S Squire, T Verney and J Robinson. D Cllr M Wilkinson and Maria Bailey NDC

Also present: Mrs J Oades (Lower Broad Park), 1 member of the public and Val Ford (Clerk).

Cllr Robinson said a prayer for the people of Ukraine.

Apologies/Approvals.

Apologies were received from C Cllr A Davis

4594. Declarations of Interest

None

4595. Public Participation

Mrs Oades represented the residents of Lower Broad Park and talked about the issues facing residents. The site is still to be completed by Acorn Developments and all attempts to contact them have been ignored. Following Maria Bailey (NDC) providing names at North Devon Council, Devon County Council and South West Water, contact was made with South West Water and Devon Highways. South West Water replied stating there is no Section 104 agreement in place and therefore no bond with Acorn Developments so they are unable to help. The residents are now dependent on Acorn to fulfil the pumping station and drainage work needed to meet SWW's standards when they may be able to adopt them. Devon Highways are unable to help as Lower Broad Park is a private road. The residents are therefore in limbo until Acorn either says the work is complete, when it is hoped enforcement officers will be able to pursue them to satisfactorily complete the work, or Acorn abandon the site.

4596. Maria Bailey (NDC Planning Department)

Maria Bailey (Planning Manager at North Devon Council) introduced herself and spoke about the problems that the planning department had encountered during the pandemic. The council have had difficulties recruiting and there was a 40% increase in planning applications. She acknowledged that communication had been an issue, with improvements being made, which are ongoing.

The Parish Council put a number of questions to Ms Bailey, which she responded to. (See Appendix A).

4597 Approve & Sign Minutes of the 2nd February 2022 Parish Council Meeting.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Cllr Oades proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2022 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Verney. There was unanimous approval to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 2ND FEBRUARY 2022 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED.

4598. Matters Arising

4574. Matters Arising. (4537) Parish Council website. This is on all search engines apart from Google. This will be rectified shortly once the duplication with the village website is sorted out. (4557) Work had been carried out on the disabled parking bay, with a new ramp and chevrons. Repainting of the existing faded bay markings is still outstanding. (4569) Any Other Business. Hedge removal at Teasel Cottage. Cllr Reeves had some photos regarding the concerns that remain about the caravan and mobile home, access and entrance which he will forward to the Clerk. **Cllr Verney proposed that these concerns be reported again online to Planning Enforcement which was seconded by Councillor Squire.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PLANNING CONCERNS ABOUT TEASEL COTTAGE BE REPORTED AGAIN ONLINE TO PLANNING ENFORCEMENT.

4576. Report from County Councillor. Cllr Oades had put some of the potholes on the NDC portal. Cllr Ayre had also put the white lines in the square on the NDC portal again.

4582. Training. Cllr Robinson had completed his training. Cllr Kenshole starts his training this week and the Clerk had attended the Audit and Accounts training which she had found very helpful.

4599. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures. The Newsletter had not been received in time for the March meeting.

The Police were unable to attend the meeting but PC Paul Grantham had provided a report. Apart from the break in at the storage facility at Mullacott Industrial Estate at the end of January, there have only been two other crimes recorded for West Down. An assault in a place of work and a domestic related malicious communication. Investigations into the commercial burglary at Mullacott are ongoing. This made the crime figures look worse than what they actually were as each storage unit had to be treated separately.

4600. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr A Davis sent her apologies. She had nothing to report.

4601. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr M Wilkinson sent his apologies for the April meeting as he will be at a full council meeting. He referred to the issue of second homes raised a few months ago. There are a lot in the Ward with council tax on 560 of these and business rates on 323. Croyde has 282 and West Down has 59, with Willingcott representing a lot of these. He referred to the £150 government aid regarding rising energy costs. Letters will be sent out with Council Tax bills. D Cllr Wilkinson referred to the motion about sewage, with another motion put to Strategy and Resources last week. This is linked to work on coastal issues, with few authorities including anything to do with the ocean. He referred to coral beds and reefs and the idea is for all coastal authorities to come on board to compliment climate decisions.

4602. District Councillors Grant 2022/23

Cllr Reeves referred to plans to help the village green field with a bench out of the District Councillors Grant. The application form is not available as yet. Cllr Verney had emailed councillors with information on a suitable wrought iron bench to go alongside

the Platinum Jubilee Tree. D Cllr Wilkinson confirmed this will fit the criteria for the grant. **Cllr Robinson proposed that the District Councillors Grant be applied for to purchase the wrought iron bench, which was seconded by Cllr Oades.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GRANT FOR 2022/23 BE APPLIED FOR TO PURCHASE A WROUGHT IRON BENCH TO GO WITH THE PLATINUM JUBILEE TREE ON THE VILLAGE GREEN FIELD.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM FOR THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GRANT ONCE IT IS AVAILABLE.

4603. 20 mph Speed Limit

The possibility of a 20 mph speed limit in the village was raised by C Cllr A Davis at the last meeting. In order for this to be considered, a Community Speed Awareness group would need to be set up. Cllr Ayre was given permission to talk about this at the recent Village Forum meeting, with five people approaching her who would be willing to get involved. The pros and cons of this speed limit were discussed. **Cllr Oades proposed that the Parish Council put in an Expression of Interest in the 20 mph speed limit which was seconded by Cllr Squire.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WOULD PUT IN AN “EXPRESSION OF INTEREST” TO COUNTY COUNCILLOR A DAVIS FOR A 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT IN THE VILLAGE

4604. Footpaths.

The new owner of Easterground had acknowledged the letter sent to landowners about their responsibilities regarding footpaths on their land. Footpath 12 falls in his land and he confirmed that he is aware of his responsibilities.

a) Report on the Footpaths Grant application

The P3 Parish Paths Partnership Finance Forms were submitted to Ros Davies on the 11th February 2022. Acknowledgement of receipt was received on the 14th February. Ros Davies said she would be in touch once the forms had been assessed regarding a grant for the coming year. £2,000 had been paid into the Parish Council bank account on 8 February 2022 for Footpath 12 from last year’s application.

b) To discuss the timescale for the Footpath Survey for the 2022/2023 year.

Discussion took place about altering the timetable in respect of footpaths. It was suggested that walking of the footpaths should take place between October and December each year. Tender work (if applicable) could then be carried out in January before the forms are submitted in February for the P3 funding. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the diary be amended to take into account the suggested new timescale, which was seconded by Cllr Squire.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL DIARY WOULD BE ALTERED IN RESPECT OF FOOTPATHS TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR WALKING OF THE FOOTPATHS, TENDERS AND P3 FUNDING.

c) To discuss getting tenders for Footpath 12

The bridge on Footpath 12 needs attention. Some of the treads need replacing, as well as rails and bearers. It was suggested that a full walkway be considered as there is a gap in the middle of the bridges which gets muddy. Consideration needs to be given to this being on private property so the landowner will need to be contacted. Discussion took place about the need for a detailed tender document,

with Simon Houghton being suggested in this respect. **Cllr Oades proposed that Mr Houghton be approached regarding drawing up a tender document which was seconded by Cllr Drew.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED – THAT SIMON HOUGHTON BE APPROACHED REQUESTING HELP IN DRAWING UP A TENDER DOCUMENT FOR THE WORK REQUIRED TO FOOTPATH 12.

- THAT THE LANDOWNER OF FOOTPATH 12 BE APPROACHED REGARDING THE TENDER DOCUMENT AND WORK REQUIRED.

4605. Community Award

Cllr Verney reported that the voting form went out in the Village Newsletter. Five or six forms have been returned so far. Cllr Verney will put this back on Facebook, with a deadline for the forms to be returned. A poster will be put on the village noticeboard. Cllr Squire felt this award needed to be reviewed in future years if there are not that many nominations.

4606. Community Land Trust (CLT)

There had been a further meeting of the CLT on the 17th February 2022. Rick Tucker had been appointed as Chair, Lynda Hunt as Treasurer and Susy Bailey as Secretary. Forms are now being filled in for registration of the CLT which will be known as the West Down Community Land Trust. The potential pot of funding from North Devon Council was discussed, with Alison Ward from Middlemarch to send over some forms regarding the criteria. The Parish Council can then look at applying for this on behalf of the CLT as they do not have a bank account as yet. Alison Ward did not feel there would be any comeback on the Parish Council in applying for this. The next meeting will be on the 17th March 2022.

4607. NDC Climate & Environmental Grant

Cllr Reeves informed the meeting that the application for this grant had been successful. The grant is for £3,040, with discussion taking place with NDC about the possibility of applying for 80% to be paid upfront. The Claim Form needs to be returned by the 12th March, with invoices then to be submitted once the project is completed to claim the further 20%. Cllr Verney had been busy sorting out the plants needed which will include 45 fruit trees and lumped wildflower matting. The fruit trees are being kept in the fridge as they have to be planted by the end of March. **Cllr Squire proposed that the Parish Council apply for 80% of this fund upfront, which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WOULD CONTACT NORTH DEVON COUNCIL REGARDING THE NDC CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT GRANT AND REQUEST 80% BE PAID UP FRONT, WITH THE BALANCE OF 20% TO BE PAID ON COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT ONCE INVOICES ARE AVAILABLE.

The possibility of residents/children adopting and planting a tree and also the need for publicity around this grant funded project was raised.

Discussion then took place about paying the invoices for the plants once 80% of this funding had been received. **Cllr Oades proposed that the invoices be paid once the grant money has been received from NDC, which was seconded by Cllr Drew.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES FOR THE PLANTS BEING FUNDED FROM THE NDC CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT BE PAID ONCE THE PARISH

COUNCIL RECEIVE THE FUNDS WITHOUT HAVING TO WAIT FOR APPROVAL AT THE APRIL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

4608. Platinum Tree (Queens Green Canopy)

a) Update on the planting of the tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Cllr Verney informed the meeting that a ten foot tall English Oak tree had been planted on the village field on Monday. The guard for this tree is still awaited.

b) Information on funding from C Cllr A Davis towards the tree and plaque.

The Clerk had submitted the application form to C Cllr A Davis for funding towards the tree and plaque in the sum of £200 on the 16th February 2022. Once this funding has been received the plaque can then be ordered.

4609. Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Cllr Ayre reported that the Village Hall Committee had met, with a sub-committee/working party being formed in respect of plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Cllrs Robinson and Verney were on this working party. Cllr Robinson stated that there was a lot of enthusiasm to start with, with a view to claiming funds from the Arts Council. Unfortunately, the criteria was not met as the Village Hall is not a big enough organisation. A professional fund raiser in the village mentioned the possibility of being able to raise £2,000. There was another meeting within days but less than half of the sub-committee turned up. Discussions had taken place about whether the proposed plans being put forward would be affordable. One of the members suggested a programme from the Thursday to the Sunday that would not cost a penny. The sub-committee aren't doing anything further until they know if they can get funding for the more expensive option. Cllr Ayre wished the sub-committee/working party the best of luck with their arrangements. They will report back in due course.

4610. Dog Poo Bins

Following concerns at the last meeting about the cost of dog bin emptying, Cllr Ayre had carried out a review of the invoices from the last twelve months. West Down Parish Council has four dog poo bins, three of which are emptied once a week and one twice a week. These are located at the school, parish hall, triangle and field. Cllr Ayre had worked out that the cost was £3 (including VAT) per bin to empty. Cllr Ayre offered to email her report to Councillors if they request this.

4611. Village Emergency Planning

Cllr Reeves felt that a Village Emergency Plan would have to be Parish Council led but should not be down to the Parish Council alone. In view of the recent storms, he felt it was important to take this matter forward. A lot of villages have a plan, with a wealth of information being available for the Parish Council to use. Cllr Kenshole felt that a risk assessment was the starting point. A meeting had been held at the Primary School just before the pandemic which had been well attended. It was agreed that Cllrs Ayre, Kenshole and Reeves would look into this further and then present their findings to the village.

4612. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Business Account as at 28.2.22	£4,808.47
Balance in the Treasurers Account as at 28.2.22	£4,775.58
(£2,000 received from DCC on 08 February 2022)	

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

The Clerk had emailed a list of payments to the Councillors prior to the meeting.

North Devon Council	Clerks Salary	£318.24)	
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72)	£325.96
West Down Parish Hall	Hire of Parish Hall		£ 90.00
Devon Association of Local Councils – Training Cllr Robinson (Part 1)		£ 18.00)	
Devon Association of Local Councils – Training Cllr Robinson (Part 2)		£ 18.00)	£ 36.00
Total Payments		£451.96	

Cllr Squire proposed payment of these invoices, which was seconded by Cllr Drew. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £451.96 SHOULD BE PAID.

c) VAT Claim

The Clerk had started work on the VAT reclaim for 2021/2022. It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should submit this once the plants had been paid for in respect of the NDC Climate & Emergency Grant.

Cllr Ayre reported that Cllr Reeves is now up and running with the online banking. The confidential waste has now been collected, with a certificate being issued. An invoice will follow.

4613. Planning Decisions

74185 – Mobile Home, Highlands, West Down.

Approved.

73594 – Manor House, West Down.

Approved.

74718 – Barn at The Brackens, West Down.

Approved.

74628 – 15 Lower Willingcott Valley, Woolacombe (Variation of conditions)

Approved.

4614. Planning Applications:

a) To comment on the following Planning Applications:-

74776 – Conversion of outbuilding to form dwelling at Smithcott, West Down, Ilfracombe, EX34 8NQ.

A few issues were raised and discussion took place about the pre-application last year which was favourable. **Cllr Verney proposed that this application be approved, which was seconded by Cllr Robinson.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 74776.

74695 – Erection of dwelling and detached garage at Teasel Cottage, West Down, Ilfracombe, EX34 8NT.

Concerns were raised about access, the mobile home/caravan on site and hedgerow removal. These concerns had been reported on the planning enforcement portal.

Cllr Reeves proposed that this application be accepted but felt the concerns should be raised again as per the planning compliance reference 13236.

Cllr Verney seconded this proposal. There was a majority agreement to this proposal, with one abstention.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE OF PLANNING APPLICATION 74695 BUT RAISE THE ISSUES OF CONCERN AS PER THE PLANNING COMPLIANCE REFERENCE 13236.

b) Applications received after publishing of this agenda.

74872 – Construction of a private menage at Hilltop Barn, Willingcott Valley, Woolacombe, EX34 7HN

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

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 74872.

4615. Correspondence.

Correspondence raised at the meeting:-

(a) A significant number of newsletters and bulletins had been received and circulated to those on the mailing list. This included information on the Levelling Up Fund and S137 funding which has increased from £8.41 per elector to £8.82.

(b) Cllr Ayre had received an email from David Maidment about the Village Website google analysis. Over the past 30 days the website had been visited 517 times with 1,281 pages being viewed. The average session was 1 minute and 53 seconds. The most visited pages were the Parish Council, Events and History. Most of the visits were from the UK but they came from as far away as USA, Canada, Australia and China. The Parish Council was the top hit. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that the Parish Council information should be removed from the Village Website, with just a link to the new Parish Council Website. This was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WOULD WRITE TO DAVID AND RONNIE MAIDMENT REQUESTING THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION BE REMOVED FROM THE VILLAGE WEBSITE, WITH JUST A LINK TO THE NEW PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE.

(c) Minutes had been received for the Village Forum Meeting.

(d) An email had been received from the PTFA querying when payment of the Parish Grant would be available. The Clerk had emailed them to say this would be paid in two amounts once the precept had been received.

4616. Unresolved Questions.

The information heard earlier about the problems residents at Lower Broad Park are experiencing with Acorn Developments was felt to be concerning.

4617. Items to be added to next meeting Agenda.

- Community Land Trust
- NDC Climate & Environmental Grant
- Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree

- Village Emergency Plan
- Diary Events
- Parish Council Accounts for year end
- Review Financial Regulations (April list on diary).
- Parish Grant Funding Policy.

4618. Any other business.

- a) Cllr Drew had been asked by a Parishioner why there were no signs to tell people where they are in the village. This was to be raised with the C Cllr at the next meeting.
- b) The Parish Council Website should show up on Google once the Parish Council information is removed from the Village Website.
- c) Cllr Ayre had topped up the grit bins.
- d) SOS Ukraine. There will be a Service at St Calixtus Church on Sunday 6th March 2022. A poster will be put up on the noticeboard about this.
- e) A new poster will also be put on the noticeboard regarding the AED location.

PART B

4619. Clerks Annual Leave Arrangements 2021/2022

It had been difficult for the Clerk to take all of her annual leave due to the volume of work since she came into post. **Cllr Reeves proposed that six hours be carried over, as well as two days at Easter, if the Clerk does not take any further leave before the end of March 2022. This was seconded by Cllr Squire.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

The Meeting closed at 10.50 p.m.