

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 14th September 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

The Chair opened the meeting by reading a Statement in respect of the sad passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. This was followed by a two minute silence.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice-Chair), R Kenshole, K Oades, S Squire, T Verney & D Cllr M Wilkinson.

Also present: Val Ford (Clerk).

Apologies/Approvals.

Apologies were received from Cllr Robinson due to annual leave. Apologies accepted. Apologies were also received from C Cllr A Davis.

4748. Declarations of Interest
None.

4749. Public Participation
None.

4750. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 3 August 2022 Parish Council Meeting.
The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. **Cllr Squire proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2022 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 3rd AUGUST 2022 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED.

4751. Matters Arising

4728. Matters Arising. (4557) Disabled Bay in the Village Car Park. An email had been received from Jon Triggs (see Agenda Item 18). (4659) Removal of hedge at Teasel Cottage. Planning Enforcement are currently monitoring the site. Ms Gifford had met with the owners and they are aware that if they do not obtain planning permission then the hedgerow must be replaced. Planning application 74695 was refused but they are going to appeal so the outcome is awaited. (4705) Flashing Speed Sign at Foxhunters. An email had been received from Alex Bird (NDC). He had put in for the sign to be cleaned and raised it as a safety defect. He was going to look into the sign on the other side of the road. Cllr Verney reported that the speed sign was not working after it was cleaned. The Clerk will raise this on the Highways portal. (4720). Correspondence – Public Right of Way between West Down and Little Comfort Farm. Cllr Oades will raise this under Footpaths.

4739. Small Grant funding. The Policy had been amended.

4741. Parish Council Property. Cllr Oades had completed the property check. The Clerk confirmed that the property in her possession is in good working order. The Asset Register will be amended and given to Cllr Oades to sign.

4742. The Settlement Evidence Base Survey forms had been completed and returned.

4744. Correspondence. The obsolete benches in the park had been removed.

4752. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures. The newsletter was not available but PCSO Paul Grantham was pleased to report that no crimes had been recorded in the West Down beat area between 1.8.2022 and 31.8.2022

4753. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis had given her apologies for the September meeting.

4754. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson reported that he attended the CLT Public Consultation at Woolacombe last Friday. Funding is now in place and an application will be going in before the end of the year for 21 dwellings. This was an open consultation which was attended by 100 people. People with local residency were in favour of the scheme with the only objections coming from outside of the Woolacombe postcode area. He felt that the West Down CLT will be similarly received by local people.

D Cllr Wilkinson sits on the Strategy and Resources committee. The Government has called for evidence on Short Term Holiday Lets. There is concern about the impact this has on local housing needs. Morteheo has 1,336 dwellings of which 325 are holiday lets (24%), 308 are second homes (23%). West Down has 405 dwellings of which 59 are holiday lets, (15%) and 54 are second homes (13%) so 28% of the properties are not for locals. This should give power to the CLT. These figures should include Airbnb accommodation but owners of these are not as forthcoming. They rely on district front line facilities which residents are paying for. This needs looking into as it impacts on locals not being able to get housing as well as staffing. A positive move is the Considerate Holiday Let Charter due to the concerns short term letting causes, such as anti social behaviour and loss of a sense of community. Jon Triggs (NDC) is going to look at Council Tax data. It is positive that serious moves are being made about short term holiday lets.

Cllr Reeves raised the issue of electric vehicle charging stations in Council owned car parks. D Cllr Wilkinson felt this was a possibility for the future and West Down Car Park will be taken into consideration if so.

4755. Planning Decisions

75179 – Higher Aylescott Lane, West Down EX34 8NJ. Development of a glamping site with four bespoke partial underground warrens – **Withdrawn.**

75296 – West Hill Farm, West Down, EX34 8NF. Conversion of agricultural barn to a residential dwelling house – **Approved.**

75364 – Land adjacent to Easter Hill View, Aylescott Lane, West Down, EX34 8NJ. Change of use of land from agricultural to residential garden, erection of a timber outbuilding, and a new access - **Approved.**

75490 – Barn in Field west Trimstone Manor, West Down. Conversion of redundant stone agricultural barn to dwelling - **Approved.**

75520 – Cheglinch House, West Down, EX34 8NW. Erection of a frame and a roof building to cover existing yards. - **Approved.**

75554 – West Stowford, Barton Lane, past Stowford Farm, West Down, EX34 8PJ. - **Approved.**

Continued

75607 – Quicks Tenement, West Down, EX34 8NF. Conversion of outbuilding to holiday let unit – **Approved**.

4756. Planning Applications

a) To comment on the following planning applications:-

75697 – Conversion of redundant agricultural building to dwelling and associated works at Barn at Fairview (Known as Fullabrook Barn) West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NE.

One objection was read out at the meeting. A lengthy discussion took place about this application. Concerns raised were:-

a) The application is outside of the Local Plan development boundary for West Down.

b) It does not comply with all parts of policy DM27 as claimed, because:

(i) It is not felt it will have a positive impact on the area DM27(b).

(ii) It is not felt that highway access is suitable for a dwelling DM27(d).

c) Up until very recently this was not a redundant barn. It is not 20 years old as mentioned in the surveyor's report, but approx 6 years old. Previous planning application 59390 refers.

d) There is an anomaly on the Design and Access Statement. On page one it refers to one dwelling whereas two dwellings are mentioned on page 2.

e) There was a prior approval (71551) in 2020 allowing permission for a second barn but this has never been built. The Parish Council are concerned about the ongoing status of this.

The Parish Council acknowledge that this application is not under a Class Q determination, but they believe all of the preceding points are valid concerns on this full application.

In addition, the Parish Council would query why the FDA applicant is different to that of the planning applicant. **Cllr Squire proposed that this application be refused. This was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND REFUSAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER 75697.

75756 – Teasel Cottage, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NT.

Erection of a dwelling.

A concern was raised about this being outside of the Local Plan and in open countryside which could contribute to sporadic development. However, it was acknowledged that the amended plans and conditions are more favourable.

Cllr Reeves proposed that this application be approved which was seconded by Cllr Oades. There was a majority agreement to this proposal with one abstention. Clarification will be sought as to the length of the S106 agreement in respect of this being for local housing needs.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 75756.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL REQUEST CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE LENGTH OF THE S106 AGREEMENT FOR LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS.

75702 – Foxhunters Garage, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NU.

Approval of details in respect of discharge of condition 5 (Construction

Management Plan), 6 (Landscape & Ecological Management Plan) and 9 (Contamination Report) attached to planning permission 74331 (change of use from petrol filling station & workshop to caravan sales/commercial and maintenance thereof (classes E (a), B2 and B8), including the demolition of the existing forecourt and associated buildings, landscaping and associated works.

The Parish Council will email the Planning Department to advise them that they had no comment to make on this application.

75796 – Foxhunters Inn, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NU. Approval of details in respect of discharge of conditions 4 (CEMP) and 5 (Noise Impact Assessment) attached to planning permission 73569 (Conversion of the public house into two residential units).

The Parish Council will email the Planning Department to advise them that they have no comment to make on this application.

75723 – Badgers Drift, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NH. Application to consent for works to trees covered by a tree preservation order in respect of Beech trees.

It was agreed that the trees have got very large. A previous application for work was approved in 2017. **Cllr Kenshole recommended approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Oades.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 75723.

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

None.

4757. Tender Limit

To discuss the current tender limit and whether this should be increased. The Clerk had requested information from Rebecca Walker (DALC) regarding the procedure for changing the current level of £500 (if this was the decision). Her reply was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Reeves had prepared a document based on 'best practice' and was proposing two tiers. Firstly a quotation for work estimated to be over £500 up to £9,999 and a more formal tender process between £10,000 to £24,999. Work over £25,000 would need to be on an even more formal process and is unlikely to be applicable at this time. Cllr Reeves will circulate his document for Councillors to consider at the next meeting. **Cllr Squire proposed that the current starting quotation limit of £500 be retained which was seconded by Cllr Oades.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal. **RESOLVED – THAT THE CURRENT QUOTATION STARTING POINT BE KEPT AT £500.**

- THAT COUNCILLOR REEVES WILL CIRCULATE HIS DOCUMENT REGARDING THE QUOTATION/TENDER PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE OCTOBER MEETING.

4758. Footpaths

a) **To discuss the Specification and Tender Document for Footpath 12.**

Cllr Ayre read the email out from Ros Davies (P3) which mentioned the boardwalk

work for footpath 12. There is an Annual Parish Paths Partnership Autumn Workshop on the 18th October at West Down Village Hall which Cllr Verney will attend so he will hopefully get clarity on footpath 12 at this time. The Clerk will let Ros Davies know that Cllr Verney will attend. Cllr Reeves had looked up Devon County Council's procurement levels and processes which will be relevant in respect of the work for Footpath 12.

b) To discuss the Specification and Tender Document for other Footpaths

An invoice had been received for work to Footpath 14. Ros Davies advised the Parish Council that she requested this work be carried out. She will reimburse the Parish Council if they pay this invoice. The £820 allocated for work to footpaths will be looked at again in the October meeting.

An email had been received regarding Footpath 15 which is looking neglected. The landowners have a duty of care to keep this clear. The Clerk will make contact with the landowners requesting they cut back this footpath.

Cllr Oades referred to the footpath at Little Comfort Farm. He has had confirmation that there should be a kissing gate there. The Clerk will liaise with Simon Houghton about getting a new kissing gate, which the Parish Council can then arrange to have installed

4759. Community Land Trust

There was an online CLT meeting last week. The CLT were going to meet with two landowners and there is potential for a further one. The CLT are now considering holding a public meeting as they want to convey to the village what they have done and potential sites and proposals put forward.

Devon Communities Together will carry out the Housing Needs Survey. North Devon Council have now paid the money to the Parish Council rather than to Devon Communities Together who will now invoice the Parish Council. Things are looking positive, although progress is slow. Once the CLT have a bank account the set up money will be passed over to them.

4760. IT/GDPR/Councillors Equipment/Policy Update

Cllr Kenshole had expressed concern about the use of personal IT equipment for Parish Council work. He outlined the requirements needed to comply with GDPR. Cllr Kenshole will prepare a questionnaire for Councillors to complete and return in this respect. This policy will need to be put on the diary to be reviewed annually.

4761. Inspection of Property

Cllr Oades had completed his inspection of property on the Asset Register. The only item outstanding was the bench at Little Comfort Farm. The Clerk confirmed that the equipment kept at her home address was in good working order. The Clerk will update the Asset Register accordingly and ask Cllr Oades to sign this document. The updated register will then need to be put on the Parish Council website.

4762. Poppy Wreath

The Clerk reported that a 17 inch Poppy Wreath from the Royal British Legion is £17. **Cllr Squire proposed that this wreath be purchased which was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL PURCHASE A POPPY WREATH FROM THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION.

4763. London Bridge Down

Due to the sad death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, this is no longer relevant. Discussion took place about holding a Moment of Reflection and period of silence on the evening of the Queen's funeral where the Proclamation of the new King would be read out. It was agreed that the Parish Hall car park would be the best venue. The Chair will put information about this on Facebook and the Clerk will put information on the Parish Council and Village Websites as well as on the noticeboards.

A query was raised about when the wrought iron bench would be delivered as this is to go with the Platinum Tree. The Clerk will chase Black Country Metalworks in this respect.

4764. Car Park

The Clerk had received an email from Jon Triggs (NDC) about asking the Property Team for sight of the lease the Parish Council have for the Car Park so that he can understand the terms of the arrangement. He reiterated that the prioritisation of maintenance on council assets is a separate process to the annual income they receive from tenants. He will come back to us when he has the information the Parish Council have asked for.

4765. Option to opt out of the SAAA central auditor appointment arrangements

Parish Councils are being given the option to opt out of the central external auditor appointment arrangements. The Clerk had circulated information to Cllrs on this matter prior to the meeting. The Clerk could not see any benefit from opting out and recommended the Parish council continue with the central appointment arrangements. **Cllr Squire proposed that the Parish Council continue with the central auditor appointment arrangements, which was seconded by Cllr Ayre** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE WITH THE CENTRAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT ARRANGEMENTS.

4766. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurers Account as at 31.8.2022	£6,512.50
Balance in the Business Account as at 31.8.2022	£4,808.83

Monies for set up of the CLT had been received for £440.00
(included in the Treasurer's account figure above)

Payment to PFK Littlejohn for External Audit for £360.00 came out on 30.8.2022.
(Included in figure above).

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	£323.70
	Overtime	£299.04
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72 £630.46

Continued ...

Western Web	Parish Council Website	£182.40
GJ Hookway (This work was requested by Ros Davies and she will reimburse the Parish Council)	Footpath 14 works	£384.00
PFK Littlejohn (This invoice had already been paid on receipt of their invoice)	External Audit Fee	£360.00
Total Payments		£1,556.86

Cllr Squire proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Verney. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED – THAT THE PAYMENTS TOTALLING £1,556.86 SHOULD BE PAID.
- THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT ROS DAVIES ABOUT GETTING THE MONIES REFUNDED FOR THE WORK TO FOOTPATH 14.

c) External Audit.

PFK Littlejohn, External Auditor, had completed their review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for West Down Parish Council. In their opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practice and no matters had come to their attention giving them cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been made. They drew attention to the fact that in the prior year the Parish Council were exempt from their review, thus they have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR. The Parish Council now need to publish their report and notice by the 30th September 2022. It is up to the Parish Council to decide how long to publish the notice and documents for. (Used to be 14 days).

Cllr Ayre thanked the Clerk for her work on this audit. It was agreed that the External Audit documents should be published for fourteen days. The Clerk will get this on the noticeboard and Parish Council website as soon as possible.

Cllr Ayre had received a text from Lloyds Bank to say they had now removed Cllr Drew as a signatory in respect of cheques.

4767. Correspondence.

Correspondence raised at the meeting:-

- a) An email had been received from Paul Major (Committee Member of the charity “Dream-A-Way”). The concept of Dream A Way was read out at the meeting.
- b) An email had been received from C Cllr Andrea Davis about the Devon County Council Locality Budgets. Currently they have a budget overspend of over £30 million with the expectation of something close to another £10 million being needed to cover the increase in the salary bill of the Council. There is an immediate temporary suspension of Locality Budgets so projects planned cannot now happen for the foreseeable future.
- c) North Devon Community Emergency Planning and Flood Warden Training.

This meeting set for the 19th September had been postponed due to the death of the Queen.

d) A Website enquiry had been received requesting a sign be put up at the village car park saying “no ball games” in the car park”.

Discussion took place about this not being the Parish Council’s car park to put signs up. The Clerk will reply and advise that the enquirer contact North Devon Council if they wish to take this further.

f) National Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II – Sunday 18 September at 6.00 at St Peter and St Mary Magdaline Church, Barnstaple.

g) National Silence for Reflection – Sunday 18 September 2022 at 8.00pm.

h) Braunton & Communities Forum – Zoom meeting on Thursday 22nd September at 7.00. Information circulated to all.

i) Village Halls Audit. Devon Communities Together is carrying out an audit of Devon’s Village Halls. Their aim is to encourage Village Hall Committees to think about their buildings as multi use facilities that can support the health and wellbeing of their communities as well as the creation of a new Devon Community Asset map of village hall/community buildings to document and highlight the tremendous rural community assets that the over 450 village halls in Devon represent

The Clerk will forward this information on to the Secretary of the Village Hall, David Maidment.

4768. Unresolved Questions

None

4769. Items to be added to next meeting Agenda.

a) Out-turn/Mid Term Accounts as at 30th September 2022.

b) Pay out grants following the second Precept and Grant receipt of the financial year.

c) P3 – Walking of Footpaths (October to December)

d) Clerks Appraisal (Part B)

e) Emergency Plan

f) CLT

g) Tenders Policy

4770. Any other business.

a) Salt – Cllr Ayre will look into the issue of ordering more salt and she will contact the Clerk about this.

b) Hanging baskets have appeared on the bus shelters. Although these look attractive there is a query over who had put the wrought iron brackets on the wooden bus shelter and telegraph pole.

c) The road to Higher Aylescott is flooded to the extent where cars cannot drive through. The Clerk will liaise with C Cllr Davis on this once she returns from annual leave.

d) Parking in the chicane outside the Parish Hall is continuous and vehicles sometimes have to go over the pavement this side to get past. Cllr Ayre referred to Paul Grantham being asked to look at this. Also there is a car parked just past the shop that extends out into the road.

e) Bradwell Mills – the back of the house has been knocked out and a substantial

footing put in for an extension. There was no recollection of a planning application for this work. Cllr Ayre will have a look at this before this is reported online.

f) It was queried whether the Oak Tree for the Platinum Jubilee had been put on the Queen's Green Canopy Map. Cllr Ayre will see if she can get a photograph of the tree from someone to upload.

g) Cllr Ayre still had a large quantity of Parish Council paperwork in her garage including historical documents of the village. The Clerk will find out if North Devon Council offer secure storage.

h) Cllr Squire referred to people selling at doors without a lanyard. She thought Notice had to be given before this occurred.

l) Discussion took place about three youths being disturbed after coming out of the back of houses in the village. There is a need to be vigilant and the Police need to be called if there are any further concerns.

PART B – THE PUBLIC & PRESS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THIS PART OF THE MEETING.

4771. Parish Councillor Vacancy

Discussion took place about applications received.

Cllr Reeves proposed that Hannah Knight be co-opted on to the Parish Council which was seconded by Cllr Verney. There was a majority agreement to this proposal with one abstention.

RESOLVED – THAT HANNAH KNIGHT BE CO-OPTED ON TO THE PARISH COUNCIL.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT HANNAH KNIGHT INVITING HER TO JOIN THE PARISH COUNCIL.

Meeting closed at 10.30 pm