

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

PUBLIC MEETING TO HEAR ABOUT THE ISSUES THREATENING THE POST OFFICE OUTREACH SERVICE IN WEST DOWN AND DISCUSS POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD.

Mr Terry King, Parish Hall Management Committee (PHMC), outlined the concerns regarding the Outreach Post Office. The Parish Hall has housed this service for many years without an increase in charges, and even reduced their costs in the past when requested. There has been no review of Parish Hall charges for some time but now, with inflation costs, and in particular energy, the Parish Hall have had to increase their charges to users and feel that this should be extended to the Post Office. Mr Colin Lincoln (Outreach Post Office) rang the PHMC to say he does not make any money out of this service and cannot pay any increase as he is already making a loss. Various other Outreach Post Office services were discussed regarding the hours they operate and venues. The increase in charges was postponed from September 2022 to October 2022 and the rates will have to be reviewed again in January 2023. Mr King explained that the reason for coming to this meeting was to see if the Parish Council would like to consider paying the shortfall in order to keep the Outreach Post Office in the village. He was concerned that if the service is reduced it depletes the service and people may not use it. Income from a number of transactions has reduced as people go online but some people do need the service. He was concerned that if the venue was changed the cost to move the lines would be expensive and might lead to the service being cut, as might a reduction in the hours. Mr David Ayre, Treasurer of PHMC, felt the Parish Hall had been very flexible with the Outreach Post Office and generous to them in the past. He has been Treasurer for a long time and has never seen so much uncertainty. Cllr Sue Ayre (Chair of West Down Parish Council) felt the Parish Hall were in a difficult position. They are doing their best to support a business and a service which could be threatened and she felt they need to be thanked for subsidising the Post Office Outreach Service for so long.

Mr John Stainer (PHMC) felt the dilemma is that if the Hall say they have to pay the new charges Mr Lincoln will leave or if they hold the current charges the Hall will lose money. Mr Stainer stated that the Hall do not want to be responsible for saying they have got to pay the charges and the Post Office then close. He felt that it was the PHMC's responsibility to bring this to the Parish Council to see if they can assist. Covid had a big impact on the Hall as several groups left entirely so they are starting from scratch with bookings. Charges need to be raised across the board with bookings.

Discussion took place about whether the current number of sessions are still appropriate given the number of people doing their business online and what the value of the service is to the village. Mr King felt that Mr Lincoln would be willing to carry on with the service as it is if the charges do not increase.

Cllr Ayre thanked Mr King and Mr Stainer for coming to the meeting and sharing their predicament.

Mr King left the meeting.

The Parish Council Meeting followed the public meeting.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), R Kenshole, S Squire, J Robinson, T Verney, H Knight, D Cllr M Wilkinson.

Also present: Val Ford (Clerk) and two member of the public.

Apologies/Approvals.

Apologies were received from Cllr M Reeves (Vice Chair) due to personal reasons and Cllr K Oades due to annual leave. Both apologies were accepted. C Cllr A Davis also sent her apologies but provided a report.

Cllr Ayre sent condolences from the Parish Council to Cllr M Reeves on the death of his wife, with everyone being very sad to hear of his loss.

4792. Declarations of Interest

Cllr T Verney declared an interest in the Small Grant Application for WDVGFA.

4793. Public Participation

Mr John Stainer attended the meeting to speak in support of the Small Grant Fund application submitted by WDVGFA. Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the Park being an open space for all of the parish to enjoy. Early next year they will be addressing safety concerns in respect of the Air Ambulance Service, with him expressing concern about the overhead cables being a serious landing hazard and the fact that there is no guaranteed power supply to the Emergency Landing Light, with this currently being on a private supply. WDVGFA are working with National Grid and he stated that it would be cheaper if all of this work happens together.

Mr Stainer stated that WDVGFA would have to pay for trenching and new cabling and certain other works. He felt this would ensure the long term future of the landing site. He felt the Air Ambulance Service benefits all of the village as anyone's family might need it in the future and he felt funding should come out of the precept to pay for a percentage of this.

Mr Stainer left the meeting.

4794. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 5th October 2022 Parish Council Meeting.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2022 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 5th OCTOBER 2022 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED.

4795. Matters Arising

4775. Matters Arising. (4659) Teasel Cottage. There was no information to report. (4741) The Asset Register had been signed by Cllr Oades and would now be put on the Website. (4760) IT/GDPR/Councillors Equipment. There were a couple of questionnaires still outstanding which the Clerk will chase. (4763) London Bridge Down. The wrought iron bench had been delayed again and will be delivered in

November. Cllr Verney had suggested a plaque be purchased for the bench out of the balance of the D Cllr Grant. The Clerk had looked into the cost which is approximately £45. Cllr Verney will look at the bench before the plaque is purchased to see if it will fit. D Cllr Wilkinson suggested the Parish Council contact Mark Keiff at Fircroft Signs at Woolacombe. (4764) Car Park. There was still nothing to report from Mr Triggs. (4770) A.O.B. a) Salt. The delivery of salt was awaited, with Mr Hookway to be contacted prior to delivery. b) Bradwell Mills. No information yet from Enforcement. g) Storage of historical Parish Council documents. The Clerk had contacted South West Heritage who are located above the Library in Barnstaple. They already have a document for West Down PC and are happy to add more documents. They do not charge for storage but they are grateful for donations. (4771) Parish Councillor Vacancy. Cllr Knight will give the Clerk the completed forms that had been sent to her. Her training had been set up which will be online

4796. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures. The newsletter was unavailable but PC Grantham reported that the figures for October were as follows:-

Recorded crimes 2 (Violence with Injury 1) (Public Order Offence 1)

Compared to the same period last year when 3 crimes were recorded this is a 33.3% reduction.

Total incidents recorded for the same period last year (whether resulting in recorded crimes or not) = 10. So a reduction in recorded incidents of 60%.

Cllr Kenshole referred to a lot of vandalism in Braunton so there is a need to be alert. Cllr Ayre felt that people need to be encouraged to dial 999 if they have any concerns.

4797. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis had sent her apologies. She provided a report which was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. (See Appendix A)

The financial situation all Councils are facing is very concerning.

4798. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson referred to the Community Land Trust (CLT) which he is convinced is the way forward.

With regards to the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, where a hotel in Ilfracombe had been proposed to house refugees and asylum seekers, the Chief Executive wrote to the Government and the proposal was withdrawn. Although D Cllr Wilkinson has sympathy for those individuals, Ilfracombe is the wrong place for them.

D Cllr Wilkinson felt it was positive that NDC are currently balancing the books but there is a predicted £2 million shortfall for next year. Ken Miles had reported that seven Parish or Town Councils are saying they need to look at their public conveniences which are not a statutory service. D Cllr Wilkinson referred to the toilets in Woolacombe being NDC or Parish Council toilets and felt residents can't be expected to have the precept raised just for holiday makers in the summer. He queried the impact on the regeneration of Barnstaple if it is down to the Town Council to manage the toilets.

D Cllr Wilkinson referred to Planning Application 76074 – Agricultural Barn at Higher Willingcott. He said a previous application had refused in the past and wished to be kept informed of this application. He felt the building in question was not visible and has sympathy for it.

Cllr Kenshole referred to a report on TV last month about some Mid Devon Parish Councils being asked to close down and amalgamate. D Cllr Wilkinson stated that there are no plans for any closures or amalgamations in North Devon as far as he is aware. There is an ongoing debate about the whole structure of Devon becoming a Unitary Authority but this has not gone far yet and John Hart is not in favour of this.

Cllr Squire referred to a big fence that had been erected at Bradwell Mills. Discussion took place about site access. D Cllr Wilkinson will look into this and how long the work will take.

With regards to the Post Office Outreach Service at West Down, D Cllr Wilkinson referred to Woolacombe and Morteohoe having three Post Offices but they are all associated with a shop and sell all sorts of things. The world is changing rapidly and the days of cash are disappearing as everything is now on cards.

4799. Planning Decisions

None.

4800. Planning Applications

76059 – Single storey extension to front and side, and first floor extension over garage including enlargement of rear dormer at Chapel Meadow, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NF.

Discussion took place about a similar extension next door which was allowed.

However, concerns were raised about parking, particularly if the owners are doing away with the garage. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that this application be approved with a comment to say that parking needs to be looked at to ensure it is adequate for the potential parking of extra vehicles. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Squire.** There was a majority agreement to this proposal with one abstention.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 76059 WITH A COMMENT REGARDING THE NEED FOR EXTRA PARKING PROVISION TO BE LOOKED AT.

76074 – Erection of an agricultural shed and associated works at Land at Higher Willingcott Farm, Woolacombe, Devon, EX34 7HN.

This property is on the cusp of the Parish on the junction from Willingcott. There are no near neighbours and a lot of agricultural sheds come in with prior approval. No one at the meeting could recall a previous application. **Cllr Squire recommended 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 76074.

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

None.

4801. Footpaths

a) To progress the tender document for footpath works.

Cllr Verney had investigated the work needed on Footpath 12. He had provided a written report and drawing which had been circulated to Councillors and sent to Simon Houghton. Mr Houghton had replied and made a few suggestions which

Cllr Verney will deal with. Cllr Verney had spoken to the landowner who was in agreement to the work required, with the new bridge to follow the path of the old one. It is now down to the P3 Team to deal with this as they are providing the funding.

b) To review any update on footpath surveys.

Cllr Ayre and Cllr Verney had walked four of the footpaths. Ros Davies had sorted out quite a lot of the work required and is talking about putting in a kissing gate at the end of Footpath 14. A gate post needs replacing. Cllr Verney will provide a write up. With regards to Footpath 14A, there is a need to contact the landowner as this is completely overgrown. No work was required on Footpath 15. One of the footpaths had a lot of horse restraining tape across it and the stile is difficult to use. Cllr Verney will liaise with Ros Davies about the possibility of putting in a little step.

Cllr Knight will now be taking on Footpath 3 (Stocklands) that Cllr Drew used to have responsibility for.

Cllr Robinson confirmed that he is okay to walk his footpath.

The Clerk will ascertain if Ros Davies needs codes on the Footpath Survey Forms. Cllr Verney will provide the Clerk with a copy of the Footpath Survey Form to circulate.

4802. Community Land Trust

Cllr Ayre referred to the CLT having a recent meeting. They are looking at holding a Public Meeting at the Parish Hall on the 23rd November to share where they have got to and to let people know about the Housing Needs Survey. The CLT are still looking around for plots of land with people coming forward. Cllr Ayre had liaised with the lady dealing with the Housing Needs Survey and advised her to go ahead. The grant money is in the Parish Council bank account for this.

Cllr Verney felt things are progressing well and the CLT are hoping more people will get involved following the Public Meeting.

4803. Emergency Planning

The meeting in September had been cancelled due to it being on the day of HM Queen Elizabeth II's funeral. A revised date of 23rd November had been suggested but no venue had been put forward as yet. Cllr Ayre and Cllr Verney would like to attend the meeting when it is confirmed. The Clerk will chase Fremington Parish Council to see if this meeting is going ahead and where it will be held.

4804. Parish Hall Insurance

The Parish Council needed to confirm that the level of insurance is adequate and that the premium had been paid. David Ayre (Parish Hall Committee) had provided paperwork in this respect and confirmed that Buildings Cover is £1,067,483. The premium had been paid by the renewal date. Public Liability is £5 million.

RESOLVED – THERE WAS UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT THAT THE LEVEL OF INSURANCE COVER FOR THE PARISH HALL WAS SATISFACTORY WITH CONFIRMATION BEING PROVIDED THAT THE PREMIUM HAD BEEN PAID.

4805. Tender for Grass Cutting and Cleaning of Bus Shelters

The Schedule of Works for 2022 had been circulated to Councillors prior to the

meeting. This will need to be incorporated into the new Tender Document for 2023. Discussion took place about any additions to the schedule. It was felt that the seat at the bridge entrance to Footpath 12 should be added with two cuts a year. The Clerk and Cllr Ayre will update the Schedule of Works. Discussion took place about what needs to go into the new Tender Document, including a suggestion that whoever gets the contract needs to email the Clerk when work is carried out.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CHAIR AND CLERK WILL WORK ON THE REVISED SCHEDULE OF WORKS FOR THE GRASS CUTTING AND BUS SHELTER CLEANING AND INCORPORATE THIS INTO THE NEW TENDER DOCUMENTS. - THAT THE CLERK WILL ADVERTISE THE CONTRACT ON THE PARISH COUNCIL AND VILLAGE WEBSITES AND ON THE PARISH COUNCIL AND PARISH HALL NOTICEBOARDS.

4806. Small Grant Applications

Application forms and accounts had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. On looking at the accounts, two were not the full twelve month annual accounts requested. This will need to be tightened up in the application process next year.

St Calixtus WD PCC - £1,300 had been applied for in respect of Grass Cutting and Maintenance of the Churchyard. The accounts were satisfactory. Their request had not increased from their application for last year. **Cllr Squire recommended this application be approved, which was seconded by Cllr Robinson.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE SMALL GRANT FUND APPLICATION FOR £1,300 FROM ST CALIXTUS WDPCC SHOULD BE APPROVED.

WDVGFA - £1,500 had been applied for to help secure the future of the Air Ambulance Service. The request was for funding towards putting in trenching for the emergency landing light cables to be put underground and fund a new electricity supply to the landing light.

Cllr Verney declared an interest in this application so did not participate in the discussion or voting.

The accounts provided were not the annual twelve month accounts. The meeting had heard the background in respect of this application earlier in the meeting from Mr John Stainer (WDVGFA). A lot of discussion took place about this application. A risk assessment had been carried out previously by the Air Ambulance Service who had not expressed a concern at that time about the overhead cables. However, an incident in South Devon had resulted in the Air Ambulance Service reviewing their sites and suggestions may be put forward in time that things need to change. It was also pointed out that the landowner who owns the electricity to the landing light is happy with the way things are at the moment. Discussion took place about whether this expense could be justified in the current economic climate if the changes are not mandatory or would not currently affect the viability of the Air Ambulance service. Concern was expressed about the possibility of the village being without the service for a length of time if the Air Ambulance Service decide to amend their rules and this work is not carried out.

Cllr Squire proposed refusal of this application which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole. There was a majority agreement with this proposal with one abstention.

Cllr Ayre put forward a counter proposal for £500 to be awarded for this application which was seconded by Cllr Knight. There was a majority agreement to this proposal with two abstentions.

RESOLVED – THAT THE SMALL GRANT FUND APPLICATION FOR £1,500 FROM WDVGFA BE REFUSED.

- THAT AN AMOUNT OF £500 BE APPROVED FOR THE SMALL GRANT FUND APPLICATION FROM WDVGFA.

WD PTFA - £650 for new play equipment.

The accounts were not the twelve month annual accounts that are required. This will be addressed in the application process for next year. It was felt that the Education system will have a tough time in the economic climate and that this application should be supported although concern was expressed about whether the funding requested would be enough to purchase the equipment they require.

Cllr Robinson proposed approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Verney. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE APPLICATION FOR THE SMALL GRAND FUND OF £650 SHOULD BE APPROVED.

4807. Review of Health & Safety Policy

The Policy had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED – THAT THE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY DID NOT NEED AMENDMENT AT THIS TIME.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL UPDATE THE WEBSITE WITH THE REVIEW DATE ON THIS POLICY.

4808. Review of IT, Email & Internet Policy

The Policy had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The new forms for Councillors to complete will be added to the policy and Cllr Kenshole referred to the GDPR information needing to be reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements.

RESOLVED - THAT CLLR KENSHOLE WILL AMEND THE IT, EMAIL AND INTERNET POLICY AND FORWARD THIS TO THE CLERK.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL PUT THE AMENDED POLICY ON THE WEBSITE.

4809. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurers Account as at 31.10.2022	£14,380.20
Balance in the Business Account as at 31.10.2022	£ 4,809.23

A refund payment of £385.00 had been received from DCC.

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
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72
		£331.42

North Devon Council	Dog Bin Emptying	£195.00
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Mrs V A Ford	Poppy Wreath	£ 23.98
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Total Payments **£550.40**

Cllr Squire proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Robinson. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED – THAT THE PAYMENTS TOTTALLING £550.40 SHOULD BE PAID.

The payment of the invoice for the Car Park has still not been paid as the Parish Council are awaiting information from Jon Triggs.

c) To discuss preparing the Budget for the next Financial Year.

The draft Budget had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Squire commended the Parish Hall for not applying for the small grant funding for this year. Discussion took place about the Village Website and whether this should still be part funded by the Parish Council. The Clerk stated that this website is still used to widen the publication of certain Parish Council items. The Budget will be amended to reflect the amended Small Grant Fund award to WDVGFA. **Cllr Verney proposed that the budget, once amended, be approved which was seconded by Cllr Squire.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE AMENDED BUDGET BE APPROVED.

- THAT THE BUDGET WILL BE CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO THE DECEMBER MEETING.

4810. Correspondence.

Correspondence raised at the meeting:-

a) David Ayre, Treasurer of WD Parish Hall Management Committee had sent a letter thanking the Parish Council for the second grant payment. This will be used towards the Grass cutting and the removal of trees that have ash dieback at the Parish Hall.

b) Braunton & Communities Forum – Cost of Living Group. Minutes dated 7.10.22, 13.10.22 and 20.10.22 circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Also information on Warm Safe Spaces.

c) New set of bus timetables circulated to Cllrs regarding Stagecoach buses.

d) Information from Vision Zero South West had been circulated to Cllrs regarding road safety and the 20 mph speed limit.

e) Councillor Advocate Seminar – Road Safety. Weds 7th December 2022. Barnstaple Hotel. Confirmation of attendance is needed as there are limited spaces

f) Local Flood Management Strategy Newsletter for October 2022 circulated to Cllrs.

g) Devon County Council – Financial position circulated to Cllrs.

h) Peninsula Transport Business Plan 2022-2023 – circulated to Cllrs.

i) Road closure at Iron Letters. Circulated to Cllrs.

j) Email from Carol King about the Village Fair on the 13th May 2023 was circulated to Cllrs. She will be looking to organise a Village Forum meeting.

k) Email from Mike Hunt about the damaged sign. Cllr Verney has been out to have a look. This needs to be cemented back together. All the stones are still there. He is happy to rebuild but needs some cement. Wicks have a premixed bucket for £11.00. **Cllr Ayre proposed that Cllr Verney buy the premixed cement to mend the village sign which was seconded by Cllr Squire.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT CLLR VERNEY WILL PURCHASE THE CEMENT AND REBUILD THE DAMAGED VILLAGE SIGN.

4811. Unresolved Questions

none

4812. Items to be added to next meeting Agenda.

- a) Consider Tenders received for Grass Cutting and Bus Shelter Cleaning and check insurance liability.
- b) Approve the Budget for 2023/2024 and fix the Precept.
- c) Garden Lane – Access due to cycling.
- d) Possible financial assistance for the Post Office Outreach Service.
- e) Footpaths
- f) CLT
- g) Emergency Planning.

4813. Any other business.

- a) Cllr Kenshole raised the need to increase the Budget if funding is agreed for the Post Office Outreach Service. The Clerk will collate the queries from Cllrs and endeavour to get further information for the December meeting. The Clerk will also look into whether the Parish Council have any Powers to help a business.
- b) The For Sale sign near the damaged village sign was a concern. Cllr Ayre had contacted the Agent about this. It is possibly a Highways issue that may need to be investigated.
- c) Pullen Bridge is getting overgrown. Cllr Verney was planning on tidying this up on Saturday if anyone would like to join him.
- d) Bikes being ridden down Garden Lane was a concern. Cllr Verney had been run into by a cyclist.
- e) December's meeting will commence at 7.00 p.m. for Cllrs prior to the 7.30 p.m. start of the Parish Council meeting.
- f) There is a figure in the budget for storage of documents. Cllr Ayre queried if Cllrs were happy for her to offload the documents to South West Heritage. There was unanimous agreement to this.
- g) Clerk's overtime. The Clerk had worked 49 hours overtime from June to October 2022 inclusive. **Cllr Verney proposed that 29 hours be paid now and 20 be rolled over until February. Cllr Robinson seconded this proposal.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL BE PAID 29 HOURS OVERTIME IN NOVEMBER WITH THE BALANCE OF 20 HOURS TO BE CARRIED OVER TO FEBRUARY 2023.
- THAT THE CHAIR WILL ADVISE PAYROLL PRIOR TO THE CUT OFF DATE OF 6 NOVEMBER 2022.
- h) The Poppy Wreath will need to be laid at the Remembrance Service on Sunday 13th November 2023. If no Councillors are available the Clerk offered to lay this.

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm