

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 7 December 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice-Chair), K Oades, S Squire, J Robinson, T Verney and H Knight.

Also present: Val Ford (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

Apologies/Approvals.

Cllr R Kenshole due to work commitments (accepted). C Cllr A Davis and D Cllr M Wilkinson.

4814. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Knight declared a personal interest in Flooding in Aylescott Lane. Cllr Oades declared an interest in West Down Parish Hall in respect of the Post Office Outreach Service.

4815. Public Participation

None.

4816. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 2nd November 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 2nd November 2022 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Robinson.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

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

4817. Matters Arising

4795. Matters Arising. (4659) Teasel Cottage. There was no information to report. (4760) IT/GDPR/Councillors Equipment. Cllr Oades was given a new form to complete. (4763) London Bridge Down. Wrought iron bench. This was due to be delivered later in the week. The plaque will be ordered once the fitting is checked. (4764) Car Park. No reply as yet from Mr Triggs. (4770) A.O.B. a) Salt had been delivered satisfactorily and put around the village b) Bradwell Mills. No information yet from Enforcement. g) Storage of historical Parish Council documents. Cllr Ayre had completed the forms for SW Heritage and will deliver the files on the 15th December. They are on loan so can be retrieved if necessary. (4771) Parish Councillor Vacancy. Cllr Knight had completed her new Councillor forms and given them to the Clerk. She had attended the Good Councillor training with DALC which she had found helpful.

4801. Footpaths. The Clerk will chase outstanding survey forms. The Clerk will ensure the landowner has been contacted about the new bridge on Footpath 12.

4806. Small Grant Applications. There is a need to tighten up the account information on the Policy Document. This will be put on the January 2023 Agenda.

4807. Health & Safety Policy. The Clerk had put the updated policy on the website.

4808. IT, Email & Internet Policy. Cllr Kenshole had updated this Policy which the Clerk had put on the website.

4809. Finances (c) Budget. The Clerk had sent the amended budget to Cllrs.
4810 Correspondence. e) Cllr Ayre had attended the Councillor Advocate Seminar which was very good. k) The work to the damaged West Down sign had not been repaired as the weather had been too wet. Cllr Verney will deal with this when the weather is suitable.
4813. Any Other Business. b) The For Sale sign had been removed. g). The Clerk had received her overtime in her November salary. h). The Clerk laid the Poppy Wreath at the Remembrance Service.

4818. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures. PC Grantham reported that the figures for December were as follows:-

Violence without injury – 4 *

Theft – 1

* Three of the violent crimes recorded were from one incident in a domestic environment and involved a person in mental health crisis who had caused slight injury to Police Officers whilst being dealt with. There was no risk to the general public in this incident and the crimes were raised as a matter of course for statistical purposes according to the national crime reporting guidelines. PC Grantham said he can reassure the public that there is not a spate of violent crimes in the West Down area

4819. Report from County Councillor.

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

4820. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson had sent his apologies.

4821. Planning Decisions

75697 – Barn at Fairview (known as Fullabrook Barn), West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NE. - Approved.

A lot of discussion took place about this decision as the Parish Council had recommended refusal. Cllr Ayre had received a number of calls from aggrieved locals following this decision. Cllr Ayre contacted D Cllr Wilkinson with concerns about this decision and he suggested contacting Head of Planning (Tracey Blackmore). Concerns raised included the barn only being six years old, with the applicant claiming it was redundant. Concern was raised about this opening the floodgate for more applications of this nature. This came in as a full planning application whereas under a Q application a building has to be redundant for ten years. The application is outside the boundary and not in keeping with the local area. There were also concerns about prior approval for a second barn and the ongoing status of this.

RESOLVED THAT THE CLERK AND CHAIR WILL DRAFT A LETTER TO THE PLANNING OFFICER OR HER SUPERIOR RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT THE DECISION ON PLANNING APPLICATION 75697, POINTING OUT THE PARISH COUNCIL'S CONCERNS ABOUT WHAT CONSTITUTES REDUNDANT AND GUIDANCE ON Q PLANNING AND PROPERTIES OUTSIDE OF THE BOUNDARY.

- THE LETTER WILL BE CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO SUBMITTING THIS TO THE PLANNING OFFICER.

4822. Planning Applications

None.

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

None.

4823. Post Office Outreach Service

A large amount of information had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. A number of emails in support of assisting the Post Office Outreach Service had been circulated to the Councillors before the meeting.

Cllr Ayre had provided a summary of the information from the Parish Hall MC and Colin Lincoln (Post Office Outreach Service). This had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. There will be a shortfall of £1,144 in the room Hire charge in the next financial year, without any additional increase in charges in January 2023.

There was a lot of discussion about how savings could be made, including a possible relocation to a different venue, whether the Parish Hall are looking to make a profit from the rental of the room to the Post Office Outreach Service, energy charges and if the sessions need to be altered. **Cllr Reeves proposed that the Parish Council pay the £22 per week shortfall in room charges, initially for six months from the 1st April 2023 upon receipt of the first precept payment, with a plan needed to review the whole situation before the next six months. The money would need to be ring fenced by the Parish Hall for the Post Office Outreach Service, with a proviso that the funding for any unused sessions comes back to the Parish Council if the service discontinues for any reason. This was seconded by Cllr Robinson.** There was unanimous agreement to this decision (Cllr Oades did not vote as he had declared an interest in the Parish Hall).

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL PUT ASIDE (BUDGET) £1,144 FOR THE SHORTFALL IN THE PARISH HALL CHARGES FOR THE POST OFFICE OUTREACH SERVICE FROM 1 APRIL 2023 FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

- THAT FIFTY PERCENT OF THE MONEY WILL BE PAID TO THE PARISH HALL TO BE RING FENCED FOR THE POST OFFICE OUTREACH SERVICE. IF THE SERVICE DISCONTINUES FOR ANY REASON THEN ANY UNUSED MONEY WILL NEED TO BE RETURNED TO THE PARISH COUNCIL.

- THAT A PLAN OF ACTION WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE END OF THE INITIAL SIX MONTH PERIOD BEFORE THE BALANCE OF THE MONEY IS PAID FOR THE HALL CHARGES FOR THE POST OFFICE OUTREACH SERVICE.

4824. Footpaths

a) To receive any update on Tender for Footpath 12.

Cllr Verney had emailed Ros Davies his plan for the bridge. Ros Davies had sent the plan off to the suppliers to get a quote but had not yet come back to him.

The Clerk had written to Mr Charles Street asking for permission to carry out the strimming around the bench at the end of the bridge on Footpath 12, which has now

been added to the schedule of grass cutting works.

b) To receive footpath survey forms.

Cllr John Robinson had submitted the survey form for Footpath 5 and 17. Cllr Squire had not completed a form as she had no concerns for Footpath 6. Cllr Ayre reported that the stile was still broken on this footpath. Cllr Ayre referred to Cllrs Knight and Kenshole joining her at Stocklands. A lot of work is required on the diversion (way markers, posts out of the ground, green signs with arrows faded). A discussion had taken place with Cllr Verney about getting Ros Davies to walk the footpath. Cllr Verney will email her to see when she is coming out. Cllr Ayre gave her survey forms to the Clerk.

Cllr Ayre had updated the starred footpath list which had been circulated to Cllrs.

The Clerk will complete the P3 forms once all of the survey forms have been received. The Clerk will chase for any outstanding survey forms.

Cllr Verney will make contact with the Probation Service about their offer of assistance, including cleaning bridges.

4825. Community Land Trust

a) To receive any updates on the CLT.

Cllr Ayre referred to the CLT having a second public meeting on the 23rd November 2022. They wanted people to purchase shares, which was successful. They are still looking for pieces of land and have "some irons in the fire". Cllr Verney referred to there being 26 members of the CLT now.

b) To discuss the Housing Needs Survey start date and the Contract

The Contract had been circulated to Councillors. Cllr Reeves felt this looked satisfactory. The Contract now needs to be completed and returned, with a start date of the beginning of January to be requested.

4826. Emergency Planning

A new date for the North Devon Community Resilience Planning and Flood Warden Training workshop had been received. This will be on the 28th March 2023.

4827. Tender for Grass Cutting and Cleaning of Bus Shelters.

A tender had been received from Alwaysthere for £825.00. The revised schedule of work had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. This includes the strimming around the bench on Footpath 12 and a requirement for the Clerk to be notified when work is carried out. **Cllr Squire proposed that the tender from Alwaysthere be accepted, which was seconded by Cllr Verney (upon receipt of up to date Public Liability Insurance).** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE TENDER FROM ALWAYS THERE FOR £825 BE ACCEPTED UPON RECEIPT OF THE UP TO DATE PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE.

4828. Climate & Environmental Grants Fund 2022-2023

Information had been circulated to Cllrs before the meeting. Further planting at the Community Park was suggested. Cllr Verney had some ideas, including more wildflower matting, and he will put something together to enable the application form to be completed. **Cllr Reeves proposed that the Climate & Environmental Grant**

application be used for planting at the Community Park, which was seconded by Cllr Verney. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT PROPOSAL FOR 2022-2023 SHOULD BE USED FOR PLANTING AT THE COMMUNITY PARK.

- THAT CLLR VERNEY WILL PUT A DOCUMENT TOGETHER FOR THE PLANTING.

- THAT THE APPLICATION FORM WILL BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED.

4829. Parish Hall Committee Members

An email had been received from Terry King, Chair of West Down Parish Hall MC. The Parish Council are Custodial Trustees of the Parish Hall and their constitution states that two Parish Councillors should be appointed each year to the Parish Hall MC to help run the hall and report regularly to the Parish Council. Cllr Oades has been the sole representative in recent years. Mr King referred to Cllr Oades doing a lot for the Parish Hall and requested the Parish Council appoint a second representative. Discussion took place about this, with Cllr Reeves pointing out that this will initially be a six month role due to the local elections in May. It was agreed that a copy of the Trust Deed will be looked at and this item will be put on the Agenda for January 2023. The Clerk will advise Mr King accordingly.

4830. Garden Lane

Cllr Verney had been knocked over by a child on a bicycle. This is a public footpath and discussion took place about how to deal with cyclists. A “No Cycling Sign” was suggested and Cllr Verney will liaise with Ros Davies to see if she has one that can be used. Children do Cycling Proficiency at the school so it was suggested that the Clerk contact the school to see if they can help. There was unanimous agreement to these suggestions.

4831. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurers Account as at 30.11.2022	£13,829.80
Balance in the Business Account as at 30.11.2022	£ 4,809.74

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	£361.34	
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72	£692.76
DALC (Good Councillor Training – Cllr Knight			£ 18.00
Total Payments			£710.76

Cllr Verney proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Reeves. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PAYMENTS TOTTALLING £710.76 SHOULD BE PAID.

An email had been received from Payroll at NDC requesting approval that the Clerk should receive the SLCC Pay Award for 2022/2023 backdated to April 2022.

NDC needed this confirmation by 1st December 2022. This confirmation was required for their auditing purposes. The Chair had emailed Councillors for their approval, with unanimous agreement being given and the Chair had notified NDC accordingly.

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 approve the Budget for the next Financial Year and set the Precept.

The amended Budget had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Following the discussion about the Post Office Outreach Service, it was felt that the Precept should be set at £18,000. The Parish Council need to keep a year's running costs in reserve, as previously advised. **Cllr Verney proposed that the Precept be set at £18,000 which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PRECEPT FOR 2023/2024 BE SET AT £18,000.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL RETURN THE FORM REQUESTING THE PRECEPT TO NDC.

4832. Probation Service

Information had been circulated to Cllrs about the Community Payback Scheme. The Probation Service help people on probation change their lives for the better and reduce reoffending by carrying out a wide range of unpaid work that directly benefits their communities. They do not charge for the work. A supervisor always oversees the work of service users on probation. Cllr Verney felt work on Pulland Bridge, and another bridge in the village would benefit from this work. He will email the Clerk a list of work so that she can put this forward to the Probation Service.

4833 Dates of Parish Council Meetings for 2023

Dates of meetings for 2023 had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk had respectfully requested the September meeting be held on the last Wednesday in August to accommodate her annual leave in September. There was unanimous agreement to this request.

4834. Correspondence.

Correspondence raised at the meeting:-

a) A letter had been received from David Ravenscroft (Treasurer of St Calixtus West Down PCC) thanking the Parish Council for the £650 grant towards the graveyard maintenance.

b) Six month rule – Local Elections May 2023. No election is to be held for a casual vacancy that occurs within six months of the day on which a councillor whose office is vacant would regularly have retired. In these cases the vacancy is usually filled at the next ordinary election (unless more than one third of the authority seats are vacant). The day of retirement for councillors is four calendar days after the ordinary day of elections. For the 4 May polls, this is Monday 9 May 2023. This includes the bank holiday for the King's Coronation on Monday 8 May 2023. Parish Councils may co-opt someone to fill the vacancy.

c) DCC Autumn Briefing with John Hart. Opportunity to hear from John Hart, Leader of Devon County Council, on what the Council is doing and what is likely to come in the budget for the next financial year. This will be on Tuesday 6th December 2022 from 5.30 to 7.00 pm. Information was circulated to all.

Cllr Ayre had attended this briefing and stated that Mr Hart recommended that if a bus comes into a community they should be encouraged to use it, and libraries, as DCC will be looking at usage so it is a case of “use it or lose it”.

d) Offer of a free Cyber Security Talk. Email received from Mick Harrison, Devon & Cornwall Police. This is to raise general awareness concerning phishing emails, bogus websites and telephone scams. It was suggested that a request be made for them to give a talk to the Parish Council prior to one of their monthly meetings. The Clerk will contact them for a date.

e) Grant and Community Newsletter - Safe Warm Spaces – Grant available of up to £1,000 to provide a warm safe space. Information circulated to all. Cllr Squire referred to the Iron Room having a sign outside referring to it being a Warm Space. The Clerk will contact David Ravenscroft to see if they want to apply for funding.

f) Email received from Funding Officer at Rural Devon CAB. Citizens Advice is a local charity that offers free and impartial advice to local residents. In the current economic climate they are appealing for support.

g) Aylescott Lane – Copy of email received from Sarah & Steve Tanton regarding the pipework and soakaway they were forced to put in the hedge owing to the flood along Aylescott Lane that stopped them reaching their home for nearly two weeks. Mr Short from the council had asked them to supply a written copy of the landowner’s consent. A copy of this email had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. A copy was also this sent to C Cllr Andrea Davis who advised the Parish Council not to get involved and leave this to the Highway Department.

h) Internal Audit Services. An email had been received from Microshade VSM who are expanding their internal audit service and are contacting Councils throughout Devon to find out if they are seeking an internal auditor or considering a change. It was agreed that the Parish Council are happy with Julie Snooks and will get a discount next year.

g) Braunton & Communities Forum. Cost of Living Group Notes had been circulated to Councillors.

h) Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Consultation – Public Consultation on 9th November and 16th December 2022. Information circulated to all.

i) Notification of External Auditor Appointment for the 2022-23 financial year. PKF Littlejohn had been reappointed. Information circulated to all. No fee on expenditure under £25,000 if a Certificate of Exemption is submitted.

j) A letter of resignation had been received from Cllr Robinson. This was read out at the meeting. Cllr Ayre thanked Cllr Robinson for the contribution he had made whilst on the Parish Council.

4836. Unresolved Questions

None.

4837. Items to be added to next meeting Agenda.

a) Complete P3 Footpath Survey

b) Advertise for tenders for Footpath work (if required)

c) Annual review of Clerk’s salary

d) Annual Review of Equal Opportunities Policy

e) Small Grant Funding Policy – look at tightening up information on accounts required

f) Parish Hall Committee Trustees.

Continued ...

- g) Emergency Planning
- h) Community Land Trust (CLT).
- i) Post Office – plan going forward.

4838. Any other business.

- a) Foxhill is a mess. The hedge has not been done and there is a branch in the road. A suggestion was made to contact Mr Stainer at Weycombe.
- b) Resignation of Cllr Robinson. It was agreed to leave filling the vacancy until the local elections in May.
- c) There is still £34,000 sat in Devon County Council's account ring fenced for the school. The Clerk and Chair will liaise about contacting Sue Carey.
- d) Queens Platinum Jubilee Tree. A photo had been put on the Parish Council website and the Clerk will arrange for this to go on the National Map.
- e) Highway salt – Cllr Ayre had reported a few bins online and already topped them up as she felt there will be a cold snap. If there is a number under the bin lid this can be filled up.

Cllr Ayre wished everyone a very Happy Christmas.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm