

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 1 March 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

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

Also present: Val Ford (Clerk). There were no members of the public present.

Apologies/Approvals.

None.

4884. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Kenshole declared an interest in respect of planning application 76661 – Peards House, West Down.

4885. Public Participation

None.

4886. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 1st February 2023 Parish Council Meeting.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2023 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Oades.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 1st FEBRUARY 2023 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED.

4887. Matters Arising

4865. Matters Arising. (4659) Teasel Cottage. Ms Giffard from the Enforcement Team had advised the Clerk that their records show the breach began in January 2022. (4763) London Bridge Down. The bench had now been put together and Cllr Verney will put this in place. (4764) Car Park. Still no reply from Mr Triggs. Cllr Reeves felt this should now be chased up. The Clerk will contact Mr Triggs and see if he has now had sight of the lease. There is also some trimming of shrubbery required in the Car Park which the Clerk will report to Mr Triggs and copy in Ken Miles as suggested by D Cllr Wilkinson. (4770) b) Bradwell Mills. A letter was received from Alan Kyle (Compliance Officer at NDC) advising that they do not intend to take any further action. (Letter was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting). Cllr Reeves confirmed that it is the 2009 planning approval they are working to. He questioned whether there is a chase up or follow up system on approvals, with no way of knowing if the work started in three years. However, a site visit was made and the matter is resolved at the moment. Cllr Ayre felt this highlighted a gap in the system.

(4810) k) Damaged West Down sign. Cllr Verney will do the repair when he gets time. (4821). Planning Decisions. Planning Application 75697 (Barn at Fairview). A meeting was held with Tracey Blackmore and Matt Brown (NDC) at the Planning offices on Thursday 23rd February 2023, which was attended by Cllrs Ayre and Reeves. They had been keen to understand the planning process and talked about the planning approval for 75697 as well Highways, Class Q applications and

redundant building criteria. A comparison with another redundant barn was discussed, which had been refused. They said if application 75697 had been presented over 10 years ago it would have been thrown out but now the government are keen to get more houses built and look at older buildings and derelict buildings that can be resurrected. Disused agricultural barns (of any age) were of particular interest to us. Stringent rules apply, i.e. they have got to be able to be comfortably converted, i.e. not structurally unsound. If redundant when looked at by the inspector they have to accept it. If another planning application like this comes in again then an alternative approach might be to look at what would make this acceptable to the community rather than whether it can be refused. Cllr Reeves referred to a planning application being approved in 2020 for another barn close to the barn at Fairview. This is being marketed as a separate piece of land and did not need prior approval. So the concern is that there is nothing that can be done and that there will be others. Tracey Blackmore offered to send information on the policies under which applications would be looked at. It was felt that the meeting had been fruitful and it now feels like the Parish Council are working in conjunction with the planners. Cllr Ayre had raised the issue of affordable homes being an issue at the meeting.

(4830) – no response had been received from the school about cycling in Garden Lane. (4838) AOB. The Clerk had prepared a follow up letter to Mr Stainer at Waycombe but this was not delivered as some work had been carried out.

(4860). AOB – a) Cyber Security Talk. The WI showed an interest in this following the Village Forum meeting. They are having a meeting on the 6th March 2023 when this will be discussed and if the view is favourable they would be willing to open out the meeting with Mick Harrison (Devon & Cornwall Police) to the wider community. c) Grit Spreader. Cllr Verney will assist Cllr Ayre in putting this together.

4871. A361, Knowle (50 mph Speed Limit Order). The Clerk had advised Devon County Council that the Parish Council welcome the speed reduction, would like to see a further reduction to 40 mph on one stretch of the road and requested a crossing be put in due to bus stops on both sides of the road.

4876. Climate & Environment Grant Fund 2022-2023. Cllr Reeves reported that the Grant Panel had not yet met to formally approve the applications. Cllr Verney will contact Susi Batstone to check the items are still available. Cllr Reeves stated that, if approved, 80% of the grant fund will be requested upfront, the same as last year.

RESOLVED – UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT WAS GIVEN TO PURCHASING THE ITEMS AS PER THE QUOTATION IF THE C & E GRANT IS APPROVED.

4878. IT Policy. The amended policy had been put on the Parish Council website.

4883. Any Other Business. a) Emergency Planning Meeting. This meeting is on the 28th March 2023 (not February). b) Speeding in Fariel Lane. Cllr Verney had asked the person involved to write a letter, which has yet to be done. c) Crown Inn. Concerns had been raised within the community as to what was happening with the Crown Inn which is currently closed. There was no news on this so “fingers crossed” all will be well.

4888. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

PC Grantham reported that as far as he can see, there are only two recorded crimes for the West Down beat area for February 2023. 1 x domestic assault and 1 x Driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs.

There was also only one recorded crime for the same area in January 2023 which was a Common Assault.

There were other incidents which police had attended but had not resulted in a crime being recorded, many of these were of a domestic/mental health related nature.

4889. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis had provided a report which was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. (See Appendix A). C Cllr Davis asked the Parish Council to let her know if they have any areas where they want to plant trees.

The bid had been submitted for the Tarka Trail, with the outcome awaited at the end of March 2023.

The budget was discussed with some concerns raised. It seems that services differ in other parts of the county which is not right.

The issue of Potholes was raised which are prioritised according to the category of road and speed. Concern was expressed about 5 people being seen to repair one pothole. C Cllr Davis advising the Parish Council to put any concerns in writing.

C Cllr Davis referred to the North Devon Link road. Parts of this are finishing at various times and there are a lot of road closures coming in. It should all be done by Christmas. She will arrange for the Parish Council to receive updates on the closures.

4890. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson stressed how important it was to get the public into the way of voting in the elections in May 2023. Photo ID is required (apart from postal voting).

D Cllr Wilkinson referred to finding out at short notice about a meeting with South West Water and the MP at Georgeham about the indiscriminate overflows into the sea and rivers. He felt this meeting should have been better publicised. SW Water have not had the answer to the capacity of sewers in local parishes for many years. He referred to the sewers in Woolacombe and new developments, with a need to know the capacity to give a reasoned response to any planning applications coming in.

D Cllr Wilkinson referred to the report being out for Pragmatix. This is a big commission by the LGA talking about the inequalities of the levelling up process. It links to all manner of things and unfairness on urban v rural. He was at a Tourist Information AGM today where Visit Devon is all about South Devon, with no mention of Lynton & Lynmouth. C Cllr Davis stated that it is historical that they link this area with Somerset.

On a positive note, at the full Council Meeting, D Cllr Wilkinson heard that Councillor Grants will remain for this coming year. They are £1,000 per councillor again. Also, there will be a one hundred per cent council tax premium on second homes which will raise £450,000 approximately, but this will not all be in North Devon although £45,000 will be ring fenced. The Budget gap was discussed, which

Jon Triggs had done well to keep at zero. However, if grants are not forthcoming, there will be severe cuts in the future.

Discussion took place about the hotel taken over in Ilfracombe for migrants. D Cllr Wilkinson stated that the Council have no say over it, they are just told by the Home Office. South Devon Council are taking legal action. By the airport 350 people have been moved into the Hilton Hotel. Concerns were raised about the ongoing impact of this situation on booking hotels, doctors appointments etc. Cllr Ayre stated that there is a high Police presence in Ilfracombe at the moment.

C Cllr Davis and D Cllr Wilkinson left the meeting.

4891. Planning Decisions

75702 – Foxhunter Garage, West Down. Discharge of Conditions. Approved

4892. Planning Applications

a) Applications on the Agenda.

76661 – Removal of condition 4 (upper floor) attached to planning permission 40880 (conversion of outbuilding to form annexe for additional living accommodation for use in conjunction with adjacent dwelling) to allow use of the mezzanine space as ancillary sleeping accommodation to the main dwelling) at Peards House, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NH.

Cllr Kenshole left the room whilst this application was discussed.

Concern was raised about why the application was in for removal of Condition 4 and what had changed. Parking there is horrendous and removing this Condition could bring in more people and at least one or two more cars. Cllr Reeves stated that the approval last time was the title of approving the annexe for additional living accommodation in conjunction with Peards House. They already have an area in the annexe described as recreational. As long as it is used in conjunction with Peards House it complies. The applicant this time did a pre-application and the officer concerned put in his comments that in his view there would be no objection to the removal of that condition which precluded the mezzanine being used for sleeping as long as it is in conjunction with Peards House. The owner does not need to be the applicant. **Councillor Reeves proposed that the Parish Council make a comment to Planning that there are concerns about parking and the potential for increased traffic movements from any extra occupancy. We note the pre-application officer's comments but would like to know what has changed since 2005 for the removal of Condition 4 as it was not allowed then. Cllr Oades seconded this proposal.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL MAKE A COMMENT TO PLANNING THAT THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT PARKING AND THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS FROM ANY EXTRA OCCUPANCY ON PLANNING APPLICATION 76661. THE PARISH COUNCIL NOTE THE PRE-APPLICATION OFFICER'S COMMENTS BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2005 FOR THE REMOVAL OF CONDITION 4 AS IT WAS NOT ALLOWED THEN.

Councillor Kenshole returned to the meeting.

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

76675 – Listed Building consent for the erection of a new floor and staircase in a full height barn attached to the rear of the property at Manor House, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NH.

Discussion took place about not all of the consultees being the same as for the previous planning application 73594 approved in February 2022. Also, there are usually two applications when a Listed Building is involved. **Cllr Ayre proposed that an extension to comment on this application at the April meeting be requested as well as why only one application has been submitted and why the consultees are not the same as for the previous application. Cllr Oades seconded this proposal.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT PLANNING AND REQUEST AN EXTENSION TO COMMENT ON APPLICATION 76675 FOLLOWING THE APRIL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

- THAT PLANNING WILL BE ASKED WHY ONLY ONE PLANNING APPLICATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED AS THERE ARE USUALLY TWO INVOLVING A LISTED BUILDING CONSENT.

- THAT PLANNING WILL BE ASKED WHY NOT ALL OF THE PREVIOUS CONSULTEES HAVE BEEN CONTACTED.

4893 Post Office Outreach Service

Email received from Wendy Climie (Chair to West Down Community Shop Ltd). (circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting). The conclusion is that the Community Shop would not be a suitable place for the Post Office. This proposal will go before the committee at their next meeting and Wendy will report back to the Parish Council once they have made their decision.

Cllr Reeves was in agreement with the comments on the email from the shop, but he wondered if there is scope for this to be reconsidered if Mr Lincoln would transfer the Post Office Outreach Service as it is run now. Cllr Reeves felt it would be positive if three or four scenarios could be put to Mr Lincoln, and possibly also his manager if deemed appropriate at this stage.

Cllr Ayre raised the concerns at the Village Forum. One parishioner offered to come forward as part of a Working Party to look at the way forward. A date is to be set for the Public Meeting which will need to be advertised well. It was agreed that this meeting should be held on Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 7.00 pm.

RESOLVED – THAT A PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE SET UP REGARDING THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE OUTREACH SERVICE ON WEDNESDAY 29TH MARCH 2023 AT 7.00 P.M.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT THE PARISH HALL, CHURCH, SHOP, VILLAGE FORUM, SCHOOL AND WI.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL ADVERTISE THE MEETING ON BOTH WEBSITES AND NOTICEBOARDS, WITH POSSIBLE LEAFLET DROPS AND INSERTION IN THE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER (IF THE DATE IS IN THE PUBLICATION PERIOD).

4894. Footpaths

a) To receive any Tenders for the work on the boardwalk at Footpath 12

One quotation was received from Gareth Hookway. This was in the sum of £4,800

plus VAT at the current rate. This was for labour only. Mr Hookway will need to collect the materials from South Molton so he will be contacted to get a revised quotation to include this. He will also be sent the Parish Council's Health & Safety Policy.

Cllr Verney had received an email from Ros Davies to say the materials had been ordered. She is waiting for the money to come in and will send the money for the Contractor direct to the Parish Council once the figure is finalised for the work.

Mr Hookway will be talking to the landowner about cutting down a tree before doing the work.

b) Any other Footpath matters.

The completed P3 forms had been sent to Ros Davies at Devon County Council. She confirmed that the forms were all in order so there would be no problem with her issuing a grant in the new financial year (April 2023). Ros Davies thanked the Clerk, Cllr Verney and all involved with Rights of Way in West Down and for all the help with the paths over the last year.

With regards to Footpath 3, Ros Davies will put some stick on signs in the post and contact the landowner to see if they will accept a large field gate.

4895. Community Land Trust

A draft letter and Housing Needs Survey form had been received from Devon Communities Together. This was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Reeves felt that it all looked in order but he felt the wording on the draft letter should say "Parish" rather than "Village" in the last sentence. Cllr Squire agreed with this alteration. Cllr Knight pointed out that the covering letter refers to "see email address above" but no email address had been provided and it says TBC on the envelope. Cllr Kenshole referred to the bottom of the form about signing off which needs to be made clearer, ie in large font. This says that unless someone is completing Part 3 they do not need to sign the declaration

Cllr Ayre will go back to Communities Together about these amendments. She will clarify if this is going to the whole Parish and not just the village as raised by Cllr Verney. Also when the start date will be.

Cllrs Ayre and Verney were not at the last CLT meeting but it seems they are just waiting for the Housing Needs Survey to be done and are still looking for land.

4896. Small Grant Fund

Cllr Reeves referred to Items 10 and 11 on the Grant Fund Policy (a copy of which had been sent to Cllrs prior to the meeting). This policy was amended in August last year with a requirement for copies of receipted invoices to be provided to the Parish Council on completion of the work the grant was for. Although the original policy did not refer to receipted invoices being a requirement, it was agreed to ask the recipients of grant funding for 2022/23 to provide these before the Parish Council AGM in May. Item 11 had not been implemented in the past about inviting the organisations to report on how they had utilised the funds and how it had assisted them. This can be in writing or in person at the AGM in May. **Cllr Verney proposed that the implementation of Items 10 and 11 be put into place as**

discussed above which was seconded by Cllr Squire. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL WRITE TO RECIPIENTS OF THE SMALL GRANT FUNDING FOR 2022/23 TO REQUEST RECEIPTED INVOICES IN RESPECT OF THE MONIES SPENT.

- THAT THE CLERK WOULD INVITE THE RECIPIENTS TO PROVIDE A REPORT ON HOW THE GRANT WAS UTILISED AND HOW IT HAD ASSISTED THEM, EITHER IN PERSON AT THE AGM IN MAY 2023 OR IN WRITING.

4897 Probation Service

Cllrs Ayre and Verney met with David Tomkinson from the Probation Service and had a walk around the village, visiting bridges and the stream. Mr Tomkinson was going to come back to the Clerk about the suggested first jobs and dates. An email was received just before tonight's meeting from Mr Tomkinson. He had asked his supervisor to bring the UPW group to West Down on Thursday 2 March 2023 so that he can show him what work is required. Work can begin around the Pulland bridge area at Easterground Lane.

Mr Tomkinson felt there might be other people who would volunteer for work, such as in the shop and if the Climate & Environmental Grant application is successful then they would be able to help lay the turf and other work. Cllr Verney was going to see how the work is going tomorrow.

4898. Update Diary

The amended Diary was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

4899. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurers Account as at 28.2.2023	£11,307.31
Balance in the Business Account as at 28.2.2023	£ 4,815.35

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 & O/T	£644.86	
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72	£652.58
Parish Hall	Shortfall in Hall Hire Charge for the Post Office		£ 88.00
Mrs V Ford	Printer Ink	£ 17.99	
	Printer Paper	£ 9.85	£ 27.84
Total Payments			£768.42

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 TOTTALLING £768.42 SHOULD BE PAID.

The invoice for the Car Park has still not been paid as the Parish Council are awaiting information from Jon Triggs. (See Matters Arising).

c) To receive the information in respect of the VAT reclaim

The Clerk reported that she will provide information on the VAT reclaim at the April meeting. The Diary will need to be amended to reflect that the VAT cannot be calculated until the end of the financial year. Julie Snooks (Internal Auditor) had mentioned a reclaim item missing for the last financial year. The Clerk will look into this and add it to this year's figure.

d) To receive information on the Audit for 2023.

Julie Snooks had emailed the Clerk with the list of requirements for the 2022/2023 Audit. She confirmed that she will be discounting the fee this year by £100 to £225. The date for the Internal Audit was awaited.

Cllr Oades will carry out the Parish Council's own audit of accounts once the Clerk has done the end of year accounts.

4900. Local Elections on the 4th May 2023

The Clerk had attended the online training Preparing for Elections which she had found very useful.

The Clerk outlined the timescales for this year's local elections.

a) The Notice of Elections needs to be published on the noticeboards and websites on the 17th March 2023. The Clerk had been advised that this can go up on the 16th March 2023 as she is on annual leave on the 17th.

b) Nomination forms need to be completed from the 18th March 2023 to 4.00 pm on the 4th April 2023. These have to be hand delivered to Lynton House, Commercial Road, Barnstaple, EX31 4DG. At the training it was strongly advised that Clerks should not deliver these forms. The forms are checked as they come in so ideally they should be taken in person.

At the training the importance of publicising the elections by the Clerk and Councillors was stressed to ensure that Parish Councils do not end up being inquerate through lack of candidates.

The Clerk will send the Nomination Forms to the Chair once they are received and they can also be downloaded and printed once the link is provided.

4901. Correspondence.

Correspondence raised at the meeting:-

a) Email received from C Cllr Davis about Devon County Council's bid to improve northern Devon's infrastructure. The Parish Council were asked for their support for the completion of the Tarka Trail to join Braunton & Ilfracombe. A letter of support was sent to C Cllr Davis on the 16th February 2023 a copy of which was circulated to Cllrs.

b) E-bulletin received from DALC which referred to the correct way to report Highway concerns. Information had been circulated to all. Cllr Kenshole referred to mud on the road from farm vehicles being a concern and creating a risk of accidents. He understands it is a legal responsibility that farmers should clear the roads or put signs up until this is done. As far as he is aware nothing is being done about this, especially at Dean Cross and Mullacott. The Clerk will contact C Cllr Davis to see whose responsibility it is to remind farmers of their responsibilities.

c) Email received from Beverley Triggs (NDC). If there are any events planned

locally to commemorate the King's Coronation we are requested to let her know so that it can be published on NDC's website) Braunton Forum – Newsletter circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. There is a zoom meeting on the 16th March at 7pm.

e) Email received from Sinclair Dalby Limited in respect of proposed Telecommunications Upgrade at Green Park Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, EX34 8NW. Letter and drawings are available if required from the Clerk.

f) North Devon Weekly Information Sheet circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting, There is a Pre-Election webinar on Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 12 noon to 1 pm. Confirmation of attendance is required as per the information sheet.

g) News Bulletin received from DCC with information on their Budget. Circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

h). Email received from John Stainer regarding West Down Community Park. He sent a copy of the Minutes of the AGM Meeting held on 27 February 2023. This was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Verney provided information on where the S106 monies had been spent. This included park benches, drainage, picnic ledges, bowls court, mowing equipment, event tables and marquees. £41,232.61 had been spent. £20,000 from the S106 money had been “grown” and this together with grants had been used to double itself. The main big project was landscaping of the park which cost just over £10,000 and Cllr Verney thanked Cllr Reeves for getting the Climate & Environment grant which went towards this. There is still £15,000 of the S106 monies left which Cllr Verney will try and “grow” again.

i) Invitation received from the Police & Crime Commissioner to a volunteer “thank you event” for Councillor Advocates. This will be held on Saturday March 25th in Plymouth. Details available if anyone wants to attend.

4902. Unresolved Questions

None.

4903. Items to be added to next meeting Agenda.

- a) VAT reclaim.
- b) Parish Council final accounts
- c) Financial Regulations and cheque signatories.
- d) Emergency plan
- e) Probation service – update on UPW.
- f) Community Land Trust
- g) Post Office Outreach Service
- h) Climate & Environmental Grant.

4904. Any other business.

a) Cllr Oades referred to Bradwell Lane (South side). Someone has routed out a huge hedge. Discussion took place about whether this is to do with Willingcott Village. Cllr Reeves felt they might have got permission for this in the original planning application. This needs checking and, if necessary, Alan Kyle from the Enforcement Team will be contacted.

b) Cllr Squire referred to the footpath at Roborough/bridge up across the field. This is fenced off and an electric fence runs along one side. Cllr Kenshole stated that the gully is included in the width. The landowner needs to be told that the gap should be 1.6m wide from the gully to the fence and also ask what the pipe is for. Cllr Ayre and the Clerk will sort out a letter to the landowner.

c) Cllr Kenshole queried whether the Parish Council meetings could be commenced earlier than 7.30 p.m. It was suggested that a 7.00 pm start should commence in May 2023.

The meeting closed at 22.06.p.m.