

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 10th January at 7.00 p.m.

Present: M Reeves (Vice-Chair), R Kenshole and T Verney.

Also present: C Cllr A Davis, D Cllr M Wilkinson, Val Ford (Clerk) and 0 Members of the public.

Apologies/Approvals.

Cllr S Ayre, S Whitby and H Knight.

Cllr S Squire had tendered her resignation from West Down Parish Council with effect from the 30th December 2023. A letter of thanks had been sent to Cllr Squire for her long service as a Parish Councillor at West Down. Cllr Reeves also wished to record his thanks to Cllr Squire for what has been over 25 years of service and for what Cllr Squire had contributed and he wished her well.

Cllr Kenshole confirmed that he had removed Cllr Squire's details from the Parish Council email system.

5140. Declarations of Interest

None.

5141 Public Participation

None.

5142. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 6th December 2023 Meeting of the Parish Council.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th December 2023 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 6th DECEMBER PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED

5143. Matters Arising

5084. Public Participation. Heavy goods vehicles using Stang Lane. Highways looked at the road sign as did the Parish Council. C Cllr Davis was going to West Down on Monday to look at the flashing signs so she will have a look at the signage in Stang Lane at the same time. Cllr Kenshole referred to turning right at North Buckland where there are signs to say ignore sat navs. C Cllr Davis did not feel these signs were legal.

5117. Matters Arising. (5041) C Cllrs Report. The Clerk had emailed D Cllr Wilkinson to see if he had got any more information from Mr Emery about the gateway type feature on Ilfracombe Hill. D Cllr Wilkinson will talk to Mr Emery about this.

5134. Finances. Cllrs Ayre and Reeves had organised an email to Payroll at NDC about correcting the clerk's salary per hour. A copy of this needed to be sent to the other Parish Councillors.

5144. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

The crime figures for December 2023 for Morteohoe, Woolacombe & West Down (including Mullacott & Bittadon) were:-

Violence less Serious	5
Theft (Other)	1

5145. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis provided a report (see Appendix A). She talked about the construction of the missing link on the Tarka Trail, which is very good news. C Cllr Davis referred to the Cedars Crossing Scheme in Barnstaple which is expected to cause severe traffic congestion.

In addition to her report, C Cllr Davis will send the Clerk a link to the Expression of Interest for the 20 mph which is being reopened.

Devon County Council are looking for sites for EV charging points in car parks. Again C Cllr Davis will send the link to the Clerk for this.

The North Devon Link Road (A361) has had two overnight closures with more coming up.

5146. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson had attended the NDC planning committee meeting about Teasel Cottage, with the planning application being approved unanimously. There was a lot of debate from officers as this is outside the development boundary, with the application being passed as a local needs dwelling. The suitability of the design was passed. The applicants will not use the caravan now which will be put round the corner.

The previous meeting of Strategy & Resources looked at the Consultation about HMOs and the request for these to be used as short term lets. There were a lot of responses, with there being no way this is going to happen which is positive.

The Bus station in Barnstaple will hopefully open by Easter. It is hoped that someone will be running the cafe, with the public toilet to be open during the opening hours of the cafe.

The planning application for Bay View Farmers Caravan site in Morteohoe was recommended for refusal and enforcement requested. The site had been operating without a licence but is now in the hands of enforcement.

D Cllr Wilkinson expressed concern about the amount of redundant agricultural buildings coming up for conversion, with a lot of these in West Down. He wondered if the Parish Council could send a letter of concern to the Planning Officers and he will ask Morteohoe Parish Council to do the same. Cllrs Ayre and Reeves had a meeting with Tracey Blackmore and Matt Brown from Planning last year about a redundant barn. They said the barn application in question would probably have been thrown out 10 years ago but Planning don't have so much of a say now, providing basic criteria are met.

5147. Car Park Lease (Brought forward from Item 14).

An Email had been received from Mr Triggs providing answers to the queries from the last meeting. A copy of this was circulated to Cllrs on the 19th December 2024.

With regard to legal costs, Cllr Reeves had emailed his Solicitor to get an idea of the cost. His fee would be £1,200 plus VAT. It was felt that two more quotations need to be sought, which Cllr Reeves will deal with.

If the Parish Council opt for the 21 year lease, they would also be responsible for the shrubbery. It was suggested that Jon Triggs be asked to give an estimate for the work to be done in the next financial year. Cllr Verney added that the Parish Council could go out to tender and get quotations for the work.

It was hoped that the Parish Council will be in a position to make a decision on which lease option to take next month.

The Parish Council will need to check with Julie Snooks if they go down route 1 and build up funds (for future maintenance) to see whether this will cause a problem. This would eventually probably result in an external audit being required.

Jon Triggs mentioned the resurrection of the Climate & Environmental Grant Fund. Cllr Reeves asked him if electric vehicle chargers would be suitable. Mr Triggs could not see any reason why not. C Cllr Davis felt the way forward was to offer up West Down Car Park for EV chargers once her link is received as this is a County Council matter. C Cllr Davis felt it would be good to get some EV chargers in rural parishes. Cllr Reeves added that if this can be dealt with by DCC then maybe the NDC CEG fund could be used for something else, possibly a charger at the Parish Hall.

Cllr Kenshole queried whether all the residents of West Down are happy to pay for the car park. He queried whether the Parish Council can get money back if an EV charger goes in. C Cllr Davis doubted this and added that it will need to be a fast charger otherwise cars could be there for hours.

D Cllr Wilkinson felt Mr Triggs was very fair at the meeting about the car park lease and keen to make the lease work. NDC just want to regularise it. With regards to the shrubbery, D Cllr Wilkinson mentioned the active gardening club in West Down.

Cllr Reeves stated that the payment of £800 is about to be paid to cover the Parish Council's contribution for the car park until the end of 2023/2024.

Discussion too place about the surface of the car park, which is in good condition. This is confirmed in an email from Jon Triggs. If the surface is damaged the Parish Council would be liable for this on Option 1. The Parish Council do not need to use an NDC approved contractor for any surface work.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL WRITE TO JON TRIGGS TO ADVISE HIM THE PARISH COUNCIL ARE PAYING THE £800 FOR 2023/2024

- THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL ARE SEEKING QUOTATIONS FOR LEGAL COSTS.

- THAT A QUOTATION WILL BE REQUESTED FOR CUTTING BACK THE SHRUBBERY ONCE A YEAR BY NDC.

5148. Flashing Speed Signs (Brought forward from Item 11).

The Clerk had written to C Cllr Davis about the sign at Braunton that had been turned around. C Cllr Davis stated that this will be dealt with on her site visit.

5149. Planning Decisions

77834 – Application for a Lawful Development Certificate - Teasel Cottage, West Down EX34 8NT. - Approved.

5150. Planning Applications

a) Applications 77977 – Conversion of a redundant rural building to one dwelling and associated works at Barn C, Greenpark Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NW.

Discussion took place about the Parish Council approving the other barns at this site, which were also approved by the Planning Dept. Cllr Reeves referred to the Sustainability Officer being worried about bat mitigation but planning will look into this. Cllr Kenshole mentioned access to and from all of these barns but this will be down to Highways. **Cllr Verney recommended approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT PLANNING APPLICATION 77977 BE RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

77976 – Conversion of a redundant rural building to one dwelling and associated works at Barn B, Greenpark Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NW.

The Parish Council felt the comments above also referred to this application. **Cllr Kenshole proposed approval of this application which was seconded by Cllr Verney.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT PLANNING APPLICATION 77976 BE RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.

77957 – Demolition of barn and erection of a dwelling, water purification building and associated works (fallback to planning permission 75697) at Huckleberry Barn, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NE.

Cllr Reeves referred to the earlier application being looked at a year ago. The Parish Council had some concerns but the application was approved after changes were made to the access and visibility. The property now has new owners and they are using fallback, which refers to an existing planning application being used for an alternative scheme. The new owners want to knock the whole thing down and build a completely new dwelling on the same footprint, with a garage as well (not in the previous application). Cllr Reeves had read the structural survey which was identical to the previous one, except the date had changed. The main reason given for the application to knock the barn down is to replace the cladding, which the previous application did not mention any concerns about. The structural survey says it is all in good order. This new application is for a totally different design and no longer looks like a barn conversion. Cllr Reeves felt there was no need to knock the building down. He was also concerned about the additional new windows and light pollution.

Cllr Verney stated that the Parish Council refused it before as it was outside the

local development boundary and did not comply with the local plan. Cllrs Reeves and Kenshole added that the Parish Council did not believe it would have a positive impact on the area before and this new design is not in keeping with the local area. Cllr Kenshole referred to the water treatment plan and queried why this was part of the application.

Cllr Kenshole proposed that this application be refused which was seconded by Cllr Reeves. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT PLANNING APPLICATION 77957 BE RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL DUE TO THE STRUCTURAL CONDITION OF THE EXISTING BARN BEING IN GOOD ORDER, AS IS THE CLADDING, AND SHOULD NOT NEED TO BE KNOCKED DOWN.

- THAT THE CURRENT NEW DESIGN IS NOT IN KEEPING TO COMPLIMENT THE AREA.

- THAT THIS NEW APPLICATION HAS A GARAGE AND ADDITIONAL WINDOWS, WITH LIGHT POLLUTION BEING A CONCERN.

77945 – Prior approval for change of use of agricultural building to a dwelling (Class Q(a)(b) at Building 4, Moore Farm, Dean Cross, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NT.

Cllr Reeves referred to there being a lot of previous planning applications at Moore Farm and at least one in respect of this property, with the previous one being refused. One other outbuilding application (for a dwelling) had been previously approved (on appeal). Cllr Kenshole could not see anything different with this new application from when it was refused previously. Cllr Reeves suggested the Parish Council make a comment about their concerns.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL COMMENT ON PLANNING APPLICATION 77495 AS FOLLOWS:-

i) Concern about the planning application structural survey being five years old and whether the building has deteriorated further in that time and if it is still suitable for conversion.

ii) This application could give rise to more sporadic development.

iii) There is a need to know exactly what farming support is needed.

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

None.

5151. Footpaths

a) Complete P3 Footpath Survey.

Discussion took place about which Footpath Comment Forms were outstanding. Cllr Verney will be walking his footpaths shortly. Footpath 6 has had a lot of work on it and any concerns will need to be cross referenced with work currently being carried out. If extra work is required the Parish Council can put in a bid for financing. The Clerk had not received the P3 Forms yet but will send a copy of these to Councillors and complete them accordingly.

b) Advertise for Tenders for footpath work (if required).

This will be revisited at the February 2024 Parish Council meeting.

c) Any other footpath matters.

(i) Mr and Mrs Watts confirmed they have no problem with the current sign on

footpath 16 being changed to a No Entry to Vehicles sign. Cllr Kenshole will do some more research on getting the sign, which ideally needs to be 24cm x 36 cm in rigid plastic.

(ii) Mr Belton had advised the Clerk that the blue pipe is just water that he pumps from the stream for the horses. Nothing is going into the stream. With regards to Footpath 15, he was going to do some work on this over Christmas. He put the piece of wire up as people were not sticking to the footpath. He will cover the gully with hardcore which will hopefully make access wider and easier. Anything the Parish Council can do to remind people to stick to the footpath would be appreciated. Cllr Kenshole will have a look at the footpath.

(iii) Mr Hunt, Always there, was happy with the revised footpath schedule of works for 2024.

5152. Emergency Plan

Cllr Kenshole referred to Andy Odell doing a great job with the Emergency Plan. The final draft has been revised, with a few things to look at. Mr Odell was dropping letters off to residents, including a survey to see what people can offer. The forms will be returned to the shop and the pub. A spreadsheet will then be put together and data loaded in. This will be kept in line with other Parish Council documents as it needs to be GDPR compliant. There is a public meeting next week where the plan will be explained, together with the risk assessment, and who is on the Emergency Group. The Clerk will ensure the public meeting is put on the Parish Council website.

The final stage of the plan will see two copies, one with and one without sensitive information, and there will be live desk top trials in March 2024.

Cllr Verney was going to check the grit bins and email Cllr Ayre with his findings. There needs to be a new home for the grit spreader as the Parish Council do not have a key to access where it is currently.

5153. Air Ambulance Light

Cllr Ayre had received emails from the Community Landing Site Team. With regards to the ongoing maintenance and related costs of any CLS site, this is always down to the site themselves to manage. This is something that should have been made clear at the time the light was installed and apologies were given if this was not the case. They only ever part fund the initial grant. With regards to the LED unit, it seems MAT Electrics who originally supplied the site have some replacement lights. Mr Coates is more than happy to have a Teams call with the Parish Council in the new year if required. Cllr Reeves read out the email where it said the Air Ambulance Team are not planning to come out to do a survey until April 2024. The Clerk will copy the emails to D Cllr Wilkinson.

Nigel Tinsley-Such, WDVGFA committee member, had mentioned to Graham Coates that they fitted a new driver unit to the LED unit and it didn't solve the problem. It is also apparent the LED lamp is faulty. The existing light is obsolete with a replacement being £300.18.

Cllr Verney referred to the Air Ambulance Team now using night vision goggles so if the light is not working they know where the site is. He felt if this is the case the light may not need fixing and possibly taken down.

Cllr Kenshole queried if Mr Tinsley-Such had confirmed funds would come from WDVGFA. Cllr Reeves said this was not the case and needs to be discussed further. Cllr Verney felt it still needed to be decided whose responsibility the light is.

As Cllr Ayre and Mr Tinsley-Such have been the contact point for the Air Ambulance Team, Cllr Reeves suggested that the Clerk email Cllr Ayre to see if she can write to the Air Ambulance Team to see if the light is still needed if it is a dark site and they now use night vision goggles, with a copy to go to Mr Tinsley-Such.

5154. Post Office Outreach Service

An email had been received from Mr Keith Oades, Parish Hall Committee Member, advising that the Post Office Outreach days are being substantially reduced to two hours a week on a Tuesday from 8.15 am to take effect from the 23rd January 2024. Cllr Ayre had replied to say how disappointed she was after all the help and support the Parish Council have offered the Post Office Outreach service, with there being no direct contact from Colin Lincoln or his Manager.

Cllr Reeves stated that the Post Office issued a poster regarding the new hours and this is on the village website. Although the Post Office are within their rights to make this decision, it is concerning that no explanation has been given. He felt it would only be courteous for the Post Office to let the Parish Council and the Village Hall know the reason after 15 years. He wondered if the working party should be resurrected to briefly discuss this matter but it was subsequently decided not to do this at the moment.

The Parish Hall hire charges for the new hours were discussed. Cllr Reeves understands that fees are being discussed at the Parish Hall Management Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL TRY AND FIND OUT THE NAME OF THE AREA MANAGER AND WHO THE PARISH COUNCIL SHOULD WRITE TO AT THE POST OFFICE ABOUT THE CHANGE IN HOURS FOR THE OUTREACH SERVICE.

- THAT CLLR AYRE (CHAIR) WILL BE ASKED TO WRITE TO THE POST OFFICE REQUESTING AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE HOURS ARE BEING REDUCED.

- THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL’S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE HIRE OF THE PARISH HALL SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING

5155. Community Land Trust

Cllr Verney informed the meeting that there had been no CLT meeting for a while. They are still waiting for Middlemarch to come back with details of the company they are hoping will be dealing with funding. They have sent emails on this.

It was agreed that the Clerk will liaise with the Chair about when this next needs to go on the Agenda.

5156. Review of the Equal Opportunity Policy

Councillors had been asked to look at this policy online prior to the meeting. Cllr Reeves could not see anything that needs changing. Cllr Kenshole was concerned about the Parish Council’s legal standing if the policy is legally out of date as he does not have the expertise on the latest legislation. Cllr Verney was due to go on a

training course at work shortly so he felt anything new will be flagged up.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT REBECCA WALKER AT DALC TO SEE IF THEY CAN ADVISE HER OF THE LEGAL SITUATION WITH THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY AND IF THE CLERK CAN BE UPDATED AS CHANGES OCCUR.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL UPDATE THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY WITH THE DATE OF THE REVIEW AND MINUTE NUMBER FOR THE WEBSITE.

5157. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurer's Account as at 31.12.2023	£14,606.02
Balance in the Business Account as at 31.12.2023	£ 4,853.18

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	£362.77	
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72	£ 370.49
North Devon Council	Dog Bin Emptying		£ 195.00
Parish Hall	Shortfall in Hire Charge (PO) (December)		£ 88.00
North Devon Council	Car Park contribution (2023)		£ 800.00
	Total Payments		£1,453.49

Cllr Verney proposed that the invoices totalling £1,453.49 should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £1,453.49 SHOULD BE PAID

c) Precept Form.

The Clerk had returned the form requesting the Precept for West Down be set at £20,000 for 2023/2024. Confirmation had been received outlining the impact of this on Band D properties. The Band D Council Tax contribution will be £67.37 p.a. The Clerk needed to return the second form confirming the precept by the 29th January 2024.

Cllr Reeves reminded the Parish Council that DALC recommend the Parish Council have a year's running costs in reserve.

- RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL RETURN THE SECOND PRECEPT FORM TO MR SQUIRE AT NORTH DEVON COUNCIL.

5158. Correspondence

a) An email had been received from Avice Yeo in respect of Lower Broad Park. She had copied the Parish Council into her email to Highways at Devon County Council. This was about surface/rain water running into their private unadopted estate road. Videos were attached showing the problem. All of this was circulated to Cllrs. Another email was received from Ian Davies, resident of Lower Broad Park, who asked if a solution can be found to this and speeding by delivery drivers by way of a

speed bump angled in such a way to redirect water away from Lower Broad Park. Cllr Ayre could not be at the meeting but she felt this would be a matter for Highways and the developer to resolve. Cllr Kenshole echoed Cllr Ayre's view and added that there had been unprecedented rain.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT MRS YEO AND MR DAVIES NOTING THAT THE EMAIL ABOUT SURFACE WATER RUNNING INTO LOWER BROAD PARK HAS BEEN SENT TO HIGHWAYS AND THE PARISH COUNCIL LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING ABOUT THE OUTCOME AS THERE IS NOTHING THE PARISH COUNCIL CAN DO ON THIS MATTER.

- b) An email had been received from John Stainer, WDVGFA, thanking the Parish Council for the grant funding which will be a huge help towards developing the facilities at the Park for the benefit of the residents of West Down.
- c) An email had been received from a local resident about not being able to park in the car park due to cars/vans being left there. Cllr Ayre had emailed the resident to say that the Parish Council will do its best to retain and maintain the car park for the village in the future.
- d) An email had been received from Councillor Advocate regarding some dates for seminars. This was circulated to Cllrs.
- e) An email had been received from Councillor Advocate about Devon & Cornwall Policing priorities enclosing a survey to complete. This was circulated to Cllrs. The form is for individuals to complete.
- f) The Dog Control PSPO had been renewed for 2024 following public consultation. This was emailed to Cllrs prior to the meeting.
- g) An email had been received from C Cllr Davis about the draft Transport Strategy Consultation by Peninsula Transport. This was circulated to Cllrs.
- h) An email had been received about North Devon Ring & Ride Service (headquarters in mid Devon) requesting financial support. This had been circulated to Cllrs. Cllr Reeves had looked into this and noted that West Down is not currently on the list.
- i) An email had been received from Elizabeth Harrison, an anthropologist at the University of Sussex, regarding a research project about onshore wind farms and the one at West Down. This had been circulated to Councillors.
- j) An email had been received from DALC about the subscription fees in 2024/25. Ours will be increased to £232.01. Information circulated to Cllrs. (The Parish Council had budgeted £250 for this).
- k) Ilfracombe Police Station front desk is reopening. The Parish Councillors were invited to this on Thursday 22nd February 2024. Attendance would need to be advised.
- l) Cllrs Ayre, Reeves and the Clerk were attending a Parish Forum on Planning on the 31st January 2024.

5159. Unresolved Questions

None.

5160. Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda

- a) Complete P3 Grant Funding Application.
- b) Advertise for tenders for Footpath work (if required). (Carried over from January)
- c) Annual Review of IT Policy.
- d) Flashing speed signs.
- e) Emergency planning.

- f) Car Park Lease.
- g) Post Office Outreach Service
- h) Footpaths.
- i) Air Ambulance Light.

5161. Any Other Business

- a) Cllr Kenshole queried whether Enforcement had come back about the breaches in Planning. The Clerk will look into this and report back at the February meeting.
- b) Cllr Reeves expressed concerned about the lack of Councillors on the Parish Council. Discussion took place about how to address this. The Clerk will redo the poster for both websites and noticeboards. This will be put on the Agenda for February 2024.

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

5162. Annual Review of the Clerk's Salary

The Clerk left the room whilst this item was discussed.

Cllr Reeves had spoken to Rebecca Walker at DALC as the Clerk was at the top of her current scale. The Parish Council were informed that increases are at the Parish Council's discretion.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK'S SALARY WILL BE INCREASED TO SCP18 - £15.21 PER HOUR.

The Clerk thanked the Parish Council for this increase.

The meeting closed at 21.46 pm