

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES  
West Down Parish Hall  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice Chair), R Kenshole and S Tanton.

Also present: D Cllr M Wilkinson, Val Ford (Clerk) and 1 Member of the public.

Apologies/Approvals.

Cllr S Whitby due to work commitments and Cllrs H Knight & T Verney due to illness.  
Accepted. C Cllr A Davis.

Steve Tanton was welcomed on to West Down Parish Council and signed his Declaration of Office which was witnessed by the Clerk.

5185. Declarations of Interest

Cllr R Kenshole declared a Registrable Interest in respect of Lynch's Barn, West Down and the alleged breach of planning permission.

Cllr M Reeves declared a Registrable Interest (ORI) in any discussion on funding relating to the Post Office Outreach Service

5186. Public Participation

None.

5187. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 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 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Ayre.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal (although Cllr Reeves added that he was not at the last meeting but he had had significant input before the meeting).

**RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED**

5188. Matters Arising

5166. Matters Arising. (5117) Matters Arising (5041). C Cllr Report. Gateway type feature, Ilfracombe Hill. Cllrs Ayre and Reeves had been to an on-site meeting this morning with D Cllr Wilkinson and Mr Emery (Planning Officer NDC). This was on the plan submitted with the original planning application for Lower Broad Park. However, when the application was approved, the approval listed a long list of documents but the Gateway feature was not mentioned on the approval so it was difficult to enforce. No one had picked up on this so it cannot be enforced now. Cllr Ayre expressed appreciation that Mr Emery and D Cllr Wilkinson came out to look. Stuart Bryant raised this issue with the Parish Council so Cllrs Ayre, Reeves and the Clerk will draft a reply to him to let him know the outcome of the Parish Council's enquiries. (5161), Any Other Business. Lynch's Barn. Alleged Breach of Condition 4 attached to planning permission ref. 66175. Information was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Condition 4 was imposed in order to ensure adequate parking facilities for both London House and Lynch's Barn and to avoid traffic danger. The Enforcement Department consider non-compliance with

Condition 4 attached to planning permission ref 66175 to be an unacceptable breach of planning control. To remedy the breach they have requested the owner of the land to provide the parking spaces in accordance with the approved details submitted as part of the planning application within two months and no later than 12 April 2024 when they will go back and check this has been done. (5169). District Cllrs Report. Ilfracombe Harbour Master's name should be noted as George (Georgina) Carlo-Paat.

5168. C Cllr Report. EV Chargers – The Clerk had submitted the Expression of Interest to Devon County Council for EV chargers to be considered for the village Car Park. An email was received to say the sites submitted have been reviewed for eligibility. If we do not hear from them we can consider that the site is deemed eligible for this programme at the moment. There was also an invite to a short online Q & A session on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024. (All circulated to Cllrs).

5179. IT Policy – Annual Review. Ex-Cllr Sue Squire had given written confirmation that all Parish Council matters have been deleted on her iPad as well as hard copy documentation.

5184. AOB. Mud on the Road coming down towards the village via Ilfracombe Hill. The Clerk had written to the landowners asking them to deal with this matter. No reply had been received but the road is clean now.

5189. Police Report

**Monthly Crime Figures.**

The crime figures for February for the West Down beat area was one. Theft of vehicle number plates in the Mullacott Cross area. The lady who used to compile the Police Reports has retired so Paul Grantham is waiting to see what happens regarding any such publications in the future.

5190. Report from County Councillor.

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

Cllrs Ayre and D Cllr Wilkinson referred to potholes which had been reported at Burland Cross and Ossaborough but there are still problems with these.

5191. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson had been to a meeting/presentation regarding Devolution. This is coming out for consultation, with a very real proposal being put forward. Although there are benefits, North Devon is looked at as an 'outback' compared to South Devon. It is not a fair deal, so there is a lot of work still to be done.

He attended a Policy Development meeting last week about water quality. SW Water were there and were asked some very searching questions. There were good presentations from everybody and he will go to any further meetings on this. SW Water said Parish Councils, as consultees on planning applications, and District Councils ought to have knowledge about the capacity for the sewage systems in their areas.

Discussion took place about planning applications sometimes getting approved with conditions attached, with the Parish Council not being informed of what the conditions are, although D Cllr Wilkinson said they are online. It was queried who is responsible for bringing the conditions that may not have been met to the planner's

attention to consider enforcement. The Parish Council have brought a few forward and it appears that sometimes conditions can be forgotten or ignored and it takes someone else to highlight it. Discussion took place about how to work with the Planning Department to ensure the conditions are met. D Cllr Wilkinson felt NDC are very fortunate in having a good and interested Planning Officer in Mr Emery and if the Parish Council pick something up to go to him. It was decided that when the Clerk reads out the Planning Decisions at the monthly meetings, if potential concern is raised then this will need to be noted, investigated further in due course and taken back to a future meeting for discussion.

D Cllr Wilkinson attended a meeting looking at the Street Marshall Scheme. This has been in operation but D Cllr Wilkinson would like to see it go on later into the evening. He would also like to see this extended from just Barnstaple and Ifracombe to other areas and would like to see flexibility written into the scheme. The same committee meeting looked at car park charges for the next financial year, which are going to stay the same. It was agreed that there is a real problem regarding parking for workers in Woolacombe and Croyde in particular. It is positive that Woolacombe Bay Hotel is going to have a barrier system which will allow hourly rates. This subject needs to be looked at by NDC to help staff and businesses.

5192. Air Ambulance Light (Brought forward from Agenda Item 15 so that D Cllr Wilkinson could be part of the discussion).

Cllr Reeves referred to a meeting a week ago with himself, Cllr Ayre, Graham Coates from the Air Ambulance Service, together with a representative from the Community Park. This was to try and find a way forward as one bank of lights was not working. This means that the site at West Down has to be classed as a 'dark site' due to not functioning to its full capacity of lights. Responsibility for the lights had been an issue but documents state that when the Grant was given to put the lights in, the then Chairman of the Parish Council and the Chairman of the Green Field Association both signed the document with the Terms & Conditions dated October 2018. This stated that the Parish Council and the Green Field Association would endeavour to ensure adequate maintenance would be provided to avoid any eventualities that might stop the air ambulance from landing. This light is probably not on anyone's Asset Register, which it should be as it is a community asset. The replacement lights do not have to come from Mat Electrics who are expensive. Although the site at West Down does not have to have the light as the Air Ambulance can still land with night goggles and landing lights they would prefer for this to be a lit site.

There is still an issue with 3G on all sites but BT have told the Air Ambulance it is still working at the moment. Mr Tinsley-Such is going to cost what is needed to repair the light and discussion will then be needed as to how to fund this. The light needs to be turned on once a month for an hour, with Mr Tinsley-Such offering to deal with this. The light will need to go on someone's asset register and insurance and the field should have it in their agreement to test once a month.

Mr Coates advised that the Air Ambulance Service have no Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the field. He is happy to draft one for approval and distribution if required. This would cover the management of the site. Mr Coates did not envisage the maintenance of the site would be expensive and felt that a budget of £100 p.a. would be adequate. D Cllr Wilkinson felt the light should be repaired

and put back into working order.

5193. Flashing Speed Signs

C Cllr Davis had visited the village potential sites and noticed there was no suitable pole in place for the Flashing Speed sign. This has to be within the speed limit, cannot be on a telegraph pole or on the existing speed limit sign. It was agreed that this will need to be carried over to the next meeting when C Cllr Davis is at the meeting. Cllr Reeves will email C Cllr Davis before the next meeting.

5194. 20 mph Community Assessment Form – Expression of Interest

Discussion took place about the tight points based criteria by DCC to get a 20 mph speed limit. Cornwall have made it their policy to reduce speed limits from 30 mph to 20 mph on residential roads and built up areas but Devon do not have this policy. Given that the communities previously approved for the 20 mph limit had 14/15 points, and West Down's starting point would be -3, West Down are a long way short of meeting the criteria. Wales have reduced their speed limit in such areas to 20 mph so it is possible this may be ruled in England in time. Cllr Reeves added that West Down are registered with an organisation called 20's Plenty and are on their map so the Parish Council have not just ignored this issue. Cllr Kenshole felt a visual sign would help to advise people what speed they are doing, with there being no pre-warning when coming down the hill into West Down. Cllr Ayre added that despite putting posters up, again no one has come to her about the Community Speed Watch. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that West Down Parish Council do not complete the 20 mph Community Assessment Form which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL WILL NOT COMPLETE THE 20 MPH COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FORM – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST DUE TO FALLING WELL SHORT OF THE NUMBER OF POINTS REQUIRED TO MEET THE CRITERIA SET BY DCC.**

5195. Planning Decisions

**77945 – Building 4, Moore Farm, Dean Cross, West Down, EX34 8NT. - Approved.**

**77976 – Barn B, Greenpark Farm, West Down, EX34 8NW. - Approved.**

**77977 – Barn C, Greenpark Farm, West Down, EX34 8NW. - Approved.**

5196. Planning Applications

**a) To comment on the following planning applications.**

**78307 – Demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension at Dean View, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NF.**

Following discussion about the new extension and no comments from neighbours having been received to date, **Cllr Reeves proposed that this application be approved which was seconded by Cllr Ayre.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION 78307.**

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

None.

**c) Discussion on the rising number of recent barn/outbuilding conversion to dwellings applications/approvals from information provided by Cllr Reeves.**

Cllr Reeves sent an email to Tracey Blackmore (Planning – NDC) expressing the concerns raised about the increase in barn conversions in the last four years. Tracey Blackmore sent a reply which was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Reeves referred to the very comprehensive reply from Tracey Blackmore. Barn conversions have to satisfy national and local policies. West Down have had around 23 in the Parish in the last four years, all of which have been approved in one way or another. Tracey Blackmore's recommendation is to look at the criteria and try to make the applications more acceptable, which the Parish Council have done on some of the applications. The recent 'Fallback' application was discussed where a new application can be put in but if this is not accepted then it reverts to the previous approved application. **Cllr Reeves proposed that Tracey Blackmore be invited to a Parish Council meeting as soon as possible, with particular reference to Fallback. This was seconded by Cllr Tanton.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT TRACEY BLACKMORE (NDC PLANNING DEPARTMENT) BE ASKED FOR DATES AS TO WHEN SHE CAN ATTEND A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AT WEST DOWN TO DISCUSS BARN CONVERSIONS AND FALLBACK IN MORE DETAIL.**

5197. Footpaths

**a) Complete P3 Funding Application.**

The Clerk had completed the funding application and sent this to Cllrs Ayre, Reeves and Verney to check. This needs to be returned to the Rights of Way Department by the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024. **Cllr Ayre had looked at the completed documentation and proposed that the application be submitted which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT THE COMPLETED P3 FUNDING APPLICATION BE SUBMITTED TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THE ANNUAL GRANT FOR FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE IS RECEIVED.**

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

Cllr Verney had sent an email to say that work was required on Footpath 12 for cutting back the vegetation under the boardwalk later this year.

Cllr Ayre had seen Gareth Hookway the other day. He had not been able to carry out the work on the Tender for footpath work due to conditions being so wet. There was also an issue with chippings but this is now resolved. He is hoping to do the work shortly.

**c) Any other footpath matters.**

Cllr Tanton was given Footpath 13 to keep an eye on and check annually. Cllr Ayre will take on Footpath 6.

The No Entry to Vehicles sign for Footpath 16 was discussed. Cllr Reeves recommended the more hard-wearing aluminium composite sign in the sum of £37.57 plus VAT (£7.51). This has an extra layer of protection and customised size. **Cllr Reeves recommended this sign be purchased which was seconded by Cllr Ayre.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL CONTACT VIKINGS SIGNS AND PURCHASE THE NO ENTRY TO VEHICLES SIGN FOR FOOTPATH 16 IN THE SUM OF £45.08 INCLUDING VAT.**

5198. Emergency Plan

Cllr Reeves reported that Andy Odell has been brilliant as the co-ordinator of this plan and also Nigel Tinsley-Such. The Parish Hall and Iron Room will be used as the two available Incident Control Points (ICP's) and the Parish Hall could be the Evacuation Assembly Point (EAP) if required. There is going to be an Emergency Desk Top exercise this Saturday (9<sup>th</sup> March) and the final Plan, once approved, will then be published on Devon Communities Together's website and in the village.

The Parish Council had been able to apply for funding of £250 last year for hire of the Parish Hall for the meetings regarding this and for refreshments. The second stage had been to apply for up to £1,500 for the equipment required in an emergency. Andy Odell provided a list of the equipment required which he kindly purchased and provided an invoice for £1,190.66 which the Parish Council will pay once approved in the usual way. There are a few other items to purchase, which will be invoiced separately, with the total being £1,413.72, which has been grant approved. Walkie Talkies were not applied for at this stage, with the school kindly offering the use of theirs for now in an emergency.

Cllr Kenshole referred to Andy Odell saying this plan will need to be reviewed annually so this will need to be diaried once finalised. Cllr Kenshole will also speak to Andy Odell about the documentation the Parish Council will need to keep in line with the Parish Council's Data Protection Policy.

5199. Post Office Outreach Service

Cllr Ayre informed the meeting that the Post Office Outreach Service decided to withdraw their service without any prior notice, apart from being put on Facebook. This was felt to be very unfair as a lot of support had been given by the Parish Council and Parish Hall.

An email had been received just before the meeting from Mr and Mrs O'Halloran from the Crown Inn. They had been approached to ascertain if they would be able to support the mobile set up within the Parish and the local area. After checking the remote set up would be successful they have agreed in principle to allow the Post Office to utilise the Pub one day per week on a six week trial basis. They are allowing this to happen because if they don't support this the village may lose this service indefinitely. The service will commence on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 from 08.15 am to 10.15 a.m.

Following discussion it was agreed that this is a good outcome but if it does not work out it is concerning what would happen next. Cllr Reeves stated that the Post Office cannot remove the service completely without a six week consultation.

It was agreed that the Clerk will write to Mr and Mrs O'Halloran and thank them for their kind offer and to wish them well. Hopefully this will be well advertised in the village to ensure the six week trial goes well which is now between the Post Office and the Crown Inn.

The money put aside in the precept to support the Post Office Outreach Service at the Parish Hall will be used to support the community in some way.

5200. Car Park Lease

Jon Triggs (NDC) had replied to the email from the Clerk about the shrub bed maintenance in the Car Park. The Parks Team had confirmed the cost for 2024/2025 would be £105 per visit. It was felt that the Parish Council can either get NDC to do the work or use a local contractor.

Cllr Reeves had initially contacted three legal firms for quotations for the legal costs in respect of the lease. Samuels Solicitors were chosen as the preferred firm so Cllr Reeves offered to write to the other two firms, which the Parish Council were pleased to accept and thanked him for this and asked him to proceed.

The Clerk was asked to instruct Samuels Solicitors to act for the Parish Council in respect of the Car Park lease, with Option 1 being chosen which was for a twenty one year lease to retain the use of the car park for the village long term. The Terms of Business letter had been received from Samuels and the Chair and the Clerk had completed the forms and provided the necessary ID. Jon Triggs at NDC was advised of this with further information awaited from the NDC Legal Team and Samuels Solicitors.

5201. Parish Councillor Vacancies

The Clerk had received a notice to put up regarding the resignation of Cllr Sue Squire and was awaiting the go ahead to co-opt this vacancy. Drop in sessions were discussed at the last meeting about how to increase numbers on to the Parish Council. The Parish Hall were more than happy for the Parish Councillors to come to their Coffee Morning on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and the Crown Inn were happy for a drop in session on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 between 8.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. Both sessions had been advertised and will be a chance for anyone to attend and ask questions and find out more about what the Parish Council do.

5202. Finances

**a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.**

Balance in the Treasurer's Account as at 29.02.2024	£ 4,863.55
Balance in the Business Account as at 29.02.2024	£11,617.67

**b) To receive and agree the invoices received for payment.**

North Devon Council	Clerks Salary	£402.28	
	Additional Hours	£194.35	
	Admin Charge	£ 7.72	£ 604.35
Mrs V Ford	Black & Colour Ink		£ 38.37
Mr A Odell	Emergency Plan Equipment		£1,190.66
Viking Signs	No Entry to Vehicles Sign		£ 45.08
Shaw & Sons	Receipts & Payment Book		£ 99.60
	<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>£1,978.06</b>

**Cllr Reeves proposed that the invoices totalling £1,978.06 should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £1,978.06 SHOULD BE PAID**

**c) Receipts & Payment Book.**

The Clerk needed to purchase a new Receipts & Payments Book. This lasts for years. A like for like book from Shaw & Sons is £83.00 plus VAT. **Cllr Ayre proposed that the new book be purchased which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL PURCHASE A NEW RECEIPTS & PAYMENT BOOK FROM SHAW & SONS.**

5203. Correspondence

a) A free framed picture of the King is available as outlined in the DALC news bulletin. The Clerk provided details of this to the meeting. Applications have to be in by the end of March 2024. **Cllr Ayre proposed that this picture be ordered which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL ORDER THE FREE FRAMED PICTURE OF THE KING.**

5204. Unresolved Questions

None.

5205. Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda

- a) Complete Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 ready for the annual return.
- b) Claim VAT.
- c) Receipted Invoices – have they been received for the Small Grant Fund.
- d) Review Financial Regulations and cheque signatories and online banking authorisation.
- e) Asset Register – review for the Audit.
- f) Community Land Trust.
- g) Flashing Speed Sign.
- h) Car Park Lease
- i) Emergency Plan.
- j) Footpaths.
- k) Parish Council Vacancies – update.

5206. Any Other Business

a) Cllr Kenshole referred to the opening in the hedge at Pulland Bridge. Work has started with a big opening being cut. He was concerned that a big drain has been put in with a pipe sticking out. He was not sure if this was on the original planning application so this needs to be kept an eye on.

The meeting closed at 21.33 pm