

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TAWSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00 p.m.**

Present: - Councillor Bowden (Chair)
Councillors East, Jenkins, Knight, Lines, Lofthouse, Mason, Needham,
Norman (for minutes 120 to 126), Short and Tucker.

NDC Councillors Knight and Norman

DCC Councillor Henderson

M Isaac (Clerk)

In Attendance: Parishioner/Members of the Public – 25

109. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from NDC Councillor Renshaw and DCC Councillor Leaver.

**110. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE
CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY**

The following item was brought forward as a matter of urgency:

The Chair outlined the responsibilities of the three tiers of Local Government, the Parish Council, North Devon Council and Devon County Council.

She highlighted that Devon County Council was the Highway Authority and therefore the authority that was responsible for the bus gate. The Parish and its Councillors had no powers relating to highway issues or highway infrastructure. It can only act as a consultee relating to highway matters which was very similar to member of the public.

111. PUBLIC SESSION

Parishioners raised the following issues:

Bus Gate – Old Torrington Road

A Parishioner stated that they had submitted an FOI request for information regarding the Bus Gate but had no reply.

DCC Councillor Henderson stated that Devon County Council had made a mess of the matter. The North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) had approved the provision of the bus gate which the developer of the Larkbear development was responsible for providing and installing. The signage which had been an issue had now been sorted.

A Parishioner stated that if there was an accident on the A39 and with only one access and exit point would cause chaos. When the road had recently been closed there was a large back up of traffic.

DCC Councillor Henderson and NDC Councillor Knight agreed to meet residents to discuss the matter and concerns.

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest announced.

113. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence reported.

114. FINANCIAL MATTERS.

a) Payments

RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

North Devon Council Clerks Salary + Admin Fee	£623.44
M. Isaac Clerks Expenses	£7.70
Gavin Hendry – Grounds Maintenance	£1,398.00 and £1,362.00
Ucanstore.com Storage (Aug)	£26.00
Barnstaple Town Council Tower View Play Area Gate Repair	£71.20
G. Maynard New Noticeboard – Tower View	£997.00
P. Prouse Fixing New Noticeboard	£45.00

b) The current financial position at 4 August 2023 £43,647.98 (includes £8,615.37 ringed fenced for Tower View Project) and Business Reserve A/C £16,136.08 was noted.

c) Precept 2024/2025.

The Clerk reported the current financial position as at 31 July 2023.

115. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th August 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to minute 102 Tudor Park second sentence being amended to read the resident was willing to assist but required assistance from other residents rather than reference to ‘He was willing’.

116. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

117. DCC COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

(a) DCC REPORTS

DCC Councillor Henderson reported the following:

- That he had sent attachments for householders/property owners with overgrown hedges and details regarding the responsibility for drainage ditches/gullies to the Clerk.
- That a new cabinet member to drive Devon special needs improvement had been appointed. Council leader John Hart had promoted Okehampton Rural Councillor Lois

Samuel to the Cabinet with the lead responsibility of improving services supporting children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

- Support for children and young people (SEND) will undergo a ‘system-wide transformation’. The partnership responsible for services supporting children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) has listened to families and expanded its SEND improvement plans to create ‘system-wide’ change.
- That the Council had pledged to make care experience a protected characteristic. DCC had agreed to give care leavers – young people who had been in the care of the local authority – protected characteristic status. It was recognised that young people’s experience of being in the care system could be a potential source of discrimination similar to other protected characteristics such as race or disability.

In the absence of DCC Councillor Leaver the Chair presented her report.

It’s important to confirm that Tawstock Parish Council had no powers to make any decisions regarding the bus gate, or any highways matters. Those lay entirely with Devon County Council (DCC), which was the Highway Authority.

Confirmation was received yesterday that the signs on the bus gate had been updated so that they were in accordance with the Road Traffic Order. This means that enforcement of the restrictions could now take place by the Police, and drivers going through the bus gate in prohibited vehicles were most likely undertaking Moving Traffic Offences. The Police could now enforce the restrictions as the signs were correct.

DCC had been running a public consultation exercise about whether cameras should be used to enforce restrictions in traffic movements. This consultation had been a county wide exercise and included other locations in North Devon and elsewhere in the County. Decision making would take account of the responses from members of the public and others, for example the Police.

The recent consultation exercise was not about the principle of moving the bus gate from Gratton Way to Old Torrington Road. That decision had already been taken, and subject to a number of rounds of public consultation over the last few years. The cost of installing the new bus gate and traffic signs and the removal of the old and defunct bus gate on Gratton Way has been borne by developer of Larkbear Phase 1 – with no cost to the public purse.

(b) NDC Councillor Knight

Councillor Knight reported that there had been a large number of missed bin collections in the rural areas. Following a re-organisation of rounds some properties had been missed especially those on the boundary with Mid Devon. This was being sorted.

(c) NDC Councillor Norman

In the absence of Councillor Norman, the Chair presented his report.

- Consultation launched on use of HMO’s as Holiday Lets.
North Devon Council had taken a step towards addressing concerns related to the letting of rooms within licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) for short-term holiday rentals. The existing amenity standards for licensed HMOs, approved in 2022, did not explicitly cover the issue of short-term holiday letting of individual rooms within such properties. To ensure transparency and the best interests of the community, the council

was initiating a consultation process. The consultation would focus on whether rooms within licensed properties should be permitted for rental on a short-term holiday basis. The consultation process would begin from today and extend until Tuesday, 31 October 2023. It was open to public comment and engagement.

- **Forces Covenant**

North Devon Council had committed to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. The Council recognised the value of Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contributed to our business and our country.

- **Climate Action Team**

Following the May elections of Councillors, a new cross party working group had been launched along with a new Terms of Reference (available on the Council web site)

- **Formation of a Community Lottery for North Devon**

North Devon Council had agreed to apply for a licence to run a community lottery which would offer a valuable new income stream for the purpose of raising funds to support good causes, benefitting the residents of North Devon.

- **Street Marshal Scheme**

The role was primarily (security trained staff with first aid qualifications) to provide a warm, friendly welcome to residents and visitors and to provide assistance to both residents and businesses. The visible presence had been highly valued to members of public and businesses and the scheme in Barnstaple had been expanded role to include de-escalating situations that could lead to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The Safer Streets funding comes to end on 30 September 2023. The street marshals had been an unprecedented success, contributing towards a significant reduction in overall crime and incidents of ASB reported to the Police. In the 12 month period June 2022 to May 2023 compared to the same 12 month period the year before (2021-2022) reported crime had decreased by 18% a reduction of 382 incidents. Reported incidents of ASB had decreased by 34% a reduction of 145 incidents. North Devon Council has agreed to fund the scheme until the end of March 2024 to expand this to include Ilfracombe with a view to seeking a long-term partnership funding solution from April 2024.

118. HIGHWAY ISSUES

a) **Bus Gate - Introduction of Cameras - Consultation**

It was agreed that the Police be supported and enforcement cameras be installed at the Bus Gate in Old Torrington Road

b) **Sign junction Gratton Way opposite Larkbear: Update**

In the absence of Councillor Norman, the item was deferred to the next meeting.

c) **Maintenance of 3 verges in Tudor Drive.**

The Clerk reported that the Probation Service were willing to help with the maintenance of areas in the Parish. A date for the meeting needed to be agreed with Councillors Knight, Norman and Tucker to discuss possible areas for maintenance.

119. REPORT OF THE PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE ON APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED PRIOR TO THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Chair updated Council on the Planning Applications considered by the Planning Sub Committee.

120. PLANNING APPLICATION

- a) 70954 - Erection of 234 dwellings together with associated works (amended plans and reduction in number of dwellings from 252 to 234), Larkbear, Tawstock, Barnstaple

RECOMMENDED Refusal for the following reasons:

- i) The cumulative effect of the extra housing at the southern end of Old Torrington Road would lead to severe traffic congestion on a road network that has no additional capacity. The total amount of homes accessing Gratton Way as a primary access was considerably more than the original Larkbear development cited in the local plan. Gratton Way was never cited as the primary access for the development.
- ii) The views as expressed by the Royal Devon University Trust. Without a developer contribution (£121,208.00), the access to adequate health services would be rendered more vulnerable thereby undermining the sustainability credentials of the proposed development due to conflict with NPPF and the Local Development Plan policies.
- b) Invitation to attend NDC Planning Site Inspection re application 76784 North Devon Leisure Centre, Seven Brethren Bank, Barnstaple on Thursday 5th October at 4pm

It was agreed that Councillors Lofthouse and Norman be appointed to attend and represent the Parish Council.

121. TOWER VIEW RECREATIONAL AREA PROJECT

- a) Central Bank
- i) Species of trees to be planted on top of the bank.
Councillor Tucker reported that he had spoken to Andrew Moulton, NDC Parks Officer who had advised that rather than planting trees on the top bank it may be better to plant grass and wildflowers. If trees were planted approx. 150 beech trees would be required. Councillor Knight stated that there were a number of tree stumps on the top of the bank.

It was agreed to defer consideration to the Parks and Open Space Committee

- b) Lower Bank
- i) Spraying nettles and bind weed.

It was agreed to defer consideration to the Parks and Open Space Committee

- c) Provision of new goal posts/net.
Councillor Tucker reported that he had spoken to Mark Kentell, NDC Officer who had that subject to the net being properly anchored down and included in the play area inspection there would be no problems.

It was agreed that Councillors East and Tucker erect the net and that its future maintenance be added to the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

122. TAW AND TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM

Councillor Needham reported that the forum had agreed to look for landowners along the estuary to donate land for flooding.

He also reported that the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) was the responsibility of the two local authorities to look for appropriate land and then seek planning consent.

123. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

Councillor Mason presented a proposed Draft Social Media Policy and Facebook Group Policy (previously circulated). He had not received any comments from Members.

It was agreed that an informal meeting be held between Councillors Bowden, Knight, Lofthouse and Mason to discuss the proposed draft Social Media and Facebook group policies and report back to the Council.

124. DEFIBRILLATOR

Councillor Mason stated that he had some research. There were 2 funding options: The Department for Health and Social Care who have funding available for 1,000 AEDs and the British Heart Foundation (BHF)

With regard to a site, he had spoken with Holywell School who had received their defibrillator and were just wanting to liaise with the village hall to see about installing it there.

He considered that to have the most impact, it should be located in areas not already close to an AED. Harracott seemed to be an ideal location. It was miles away from the closest defibrillator, and there was a phone box next to the noticeboard which could be utilised for power etc and was roughly in the middle of a circle of other defibrillators and therefore satisfy a community need for the rural area.

With regard to equipment, BHF had a lockable cabinet which was the same as the one used on the Methodist Church available for £589.99 or an Automatic Defibrillator for £1,170. Total cost of £1,760 for equipment, plus installation.

It was agreed that Councillor Mason be authorised to submit grant applications for funding towards another defibrillator.

Councillor Needham stated that cars were parking right up to the defibrillator in the Methodist Church car park restricting access if required in an emergency. Councillor Tucker agreed to keep erect a sign and keep under control.

125. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING

The following item were agreed:
Old Torrington Road South Slip Lane onto A39
Invite Matt Colins, DCC Officer to a future meeting

126. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

It was noted that the next Parish Council meeting would be on Tuesday 17th October 2023 @ 7.00 p.m.

Chairman The meeting ended at 8.52 p.m.