

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TAWSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.00 p.m.**

Present: - Councillor Bowden (Chair)
Councillors East, Jenkins, Knight, Lines, Lofthouse, Mason, Needham,
and Norman

NDC Councillors Knight and Norman

DCC Councillor Henderson

M Isaac (Clerk)

In Attendance: Parishioner/Members of the Public – None

215. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Short and DCC Councillor Leaver

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

There were no issues brought forward by the Chair as a matter of urgency:

217. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no questions from Parishioners.

218. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

219. CO-OPTION VACANCY

The Clerk reported that the formal procedures had been undertaken by North Devon Council and the Council was now able to co-opt.

220. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence reported.

221. FINANCIAL MATTERS.

a) Payments

RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

North Devon Council Clerks Salary + Admin Fee	£666.93
M. Isaac Clerks Expenses	£7.65
Ucanstore.com – Storage	£26.00
Sticklepath Methodist Church – Hall Hire (Nov-Jan)	£140.00

b) Financial Position

The current financial position at 5 February 2024 Current A/C £41,340.35 (includes £7,527.62 ringed fenced for Tower View Project) and Business Reserve A/C £16,253.72 and the itemised accounts were noted.

c) Budget 2024/2025.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the draft budget for 2024/2025 (previously circulated) be approved and adopted
- ii) That the draft budget in future be considered at the October meeting each year

222. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

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

There were no matters arising.

224. DCC COUNCILLOR REPORT

DCC Councillor Henderson reported the following:

DCC Budget 2024/2025

- DCC had agreed a 4.99% increase in Council tax for the coming financial year. It comprised of 2.99% for general services with an extra 2% for adult care. It would mean an extra £1.56 a week for the average Band D householder to £1,715.67 per year.
- There would be increases of 10.4% in spending on children's services, 6% on adult services and 4.7% on climate change, environment and transport.
- An extra £1.5 million had also been agreed to boost regular road drainage since the target budget was set last month to tackle the increase in potholes caused by this winter's heavy rainfall.
- There would also be an extra £716,000 to bring the homelessness budget back up to £1.45 million to support the work of district councils and homeless organisations for another year.
- Devon's revenue spending on services would increase from just under £700 million to £743 million in 2024/25. This was an overall rise of 6.3% in spending.
- In addition, a capital budget of over £155 million had been agreed for investment in infrastructure such as schools and roads.
- The budget included savings, alternative funding and additional income of £49.6 million. The budget had been approved by 34 votes to 14.

Devolution

- A six-week public consultation was launched on Monday 12 February on the draft proposal to create a Combined County Authority (CCA) for Devon and Torbay to oversee new powers and funding transferred from Government.

- The deal announced by the Levelling Up Minister last month, proposed to create the CCA, which would be a formal partnership of elected members drawn from the councils of Devon and Torbay, including district councils, together with representatives from business and education.
- People were being invited to have their say on how the CCA would work, the powers that it would have and the functions it would be responsible for. These include investment in local economic growth, delivering affordable housing, improving public transport, and meeting net zero ambitions.
- Establishing the CCA would not mean removing or merging local councils and did not require a Mayor for Devon and Torbay.
- All councils would continue to exist and would still be responsible for public services in their area. Among the Devon and Torbay devolution deal proposals are:
- The new body would have direct control of adult education to create up to 50,000 new training and retraining opportunities by 2030. Through Local Skills Improvement Plans, the proposed CCA will work with business and education leaders to create a stronger, joined-up relationship between employers and schools, colleges and universities to provide the skilled workforce the local economy needs for the future.
- Over £16 million of new funding would be invested in new green jobs, homes, skills, and business growth to accelerate Devon and Torbay's transition to a net-zero economy, capitalising on the area's world-leading expertise in green science and technology.
- There would also be a stronger partnership with Homes England, working closely with district councils in Devon to create a joint action plan for affordable housing schemes for local people as well as reducing homelessness. The proposal includes additional land assembly and compulsory purchase powers and would facilitate greater Community Land Trust-led delivery.
- The joined up local transport planning by Devon County Council and Torbay Council would be strengthened to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of public transport. There was also an ambition to introduce a single ticketing system for public transport passengers.
- From 2025 the Government was also offering to transfer responsibility for planning and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to Devon and Torbay, engaging with Devon's district councils, to support high growth business sectors as well as funding town centre enhancements.
- The results of the consultation would be considered by both Councils in April. Devon County Council and Torbay Council would consider whether they wanted to submit the proposal to Government, either with or without amendments, or not at all.
- The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities would examine any submission and make a decision.

Other Matters

- That he had met with the owners of the property affected by the proposed re-alignment of footpath 2 (agenda item 14) who had expressed concerns regarding the moving of the footpath onto the driveway. He would be speaking to the Footpaths Officer.
 - That he had raised the matter of the lack of a bus shelter at the bus stop on Old Torrington Road (by the Bus Gate) and the need for a shelter with DCC Officer Matt Collins and the possible use of s106 funds from the Larkbear development or his locality budget.
- Councillor Knight stated that the Bus Stop may need to be removed and should be raised with the NDC Planning Officer

- That a Parishioner had contacted him following his property Biddendon Cottage in Tawstock, being hit by a vehicle. He had requested that the provision of signage be looked at Umberleigh advising unsuitable road for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes.
- That the recent traffic chaos caused by the Cedars Roundabout works which had been badly thought through had been exacerbated by works on the A39 which had now been stopped. Works at the Bishops Tawton Roundabout were required on health and safety grounds to take down some trees.

225. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

a) NDC Councillor Knight

Councillor Knight stated that Tower View Recreation Area would be policed and monitored for dog fouling and additional signs would be erected when the weather improved. It was agreed to put the information of the Facebook page.

b) NDC Councillor Norman

Councillor Norman reported the following:

NDDC Budget 2024/25

- The Council had a legal duty to prepare a balanced budget. Unlike several other Council across the UK who are facing severe budget challenges. NDC have managed to do this, without the need to cut any services. Despite unforeseen pressure on the budget due to a higher-than-expected pay award, the ever decreasing, in real terms, grant from central government and like everyone else the pressure caused by unexpected high inflation. One of the highest financial risks was the homelessness services, which are under extreme pressure. Providing temporary accommodation has doubled in cost since 2020, due to pressure and availability of housing. Buying our own properties for temporary housing is mitigating some of the pressure, but not enough to avoid the need to buy in extra.
- As part of the budget plan
 - (a) The Council would expand its face-to-face customer service offering by relocating to a vacant unit at Green Lanes Shopping Centre. The new hub would give the council a more visible presence in the town centre in an area with more footfall and passing trade. It would allow the Council to extend its face-to-face opening hours to Monday to Friday, 9am until 5pm, and the new hub would have working spaces which will enable staff from various council services to assist customers where needed. Devon and Cornwall Police had also provided a commitment to occupy the premises alongside the Council on a daily basis,
 - (b) Funds had also been identified to continue the street Marshal scheme in Barnstaple.
 - (c) There would be an increase of 2.99% in the level of Council Tax charged by North Devon Council for 2024/25.
- **North Devon Crematorium**
North Devon Hospice was the latest charity to benefit from North Devon Crematorium's role in a national metal recycling scheme. The hospice was presented with a cheque for £14,000 on Monday, 5 February. The donation had been generated from the proceeds of the recycling scheme run by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICMM), which enabled metals from cremated remains to be safely recycled.

- **New guidance to help farmers through planning process.**

Farmers in northern Devon could now benefit from new guidance before submitting planning applications thanks to a new document from North Devon and Torridge District Councils.

The councils had produced the Planning Advice for Farmers guidance document to assist those in the agriculture industry with the submission of planning applications, as well providing advice on permitted development for farm businesses.

It gave advice on what applications required and what a good planning application looks at with respect to new farm buildings, slurry storage and engineering operations.

- **Community Funding**

That the NDC Strategy and Resources Committee on 5th February 2024 agreed to release s106 funding which included :

£13,788.07 for Tawstock Village Hall for the purchase and installation of battery storage units to accompany their recently installed solar panels.

226. HIGHWAY ISSUES

a) Community Self Delivery of Highway Improvements Initiative/DCC Community Enhancement Fund application.

It was noted that highway schemes under the Highway Improvement Initiative would have to be self-funded by the Parish Council/Community.

It was agreed that Councillors Knight contact DCC Councillor Leaver regarding the DCC Community Enhancement Fund.

b) Signs at the Bus Gate

Councillor Jenkins stated that the 'No Entry' signs needed to be more prominent on either side of the Bus Gate.

It was noted that the current signs were legal and that any additional/new signs would require the permission of DCC.

227. PLANNING APPLICATION

RECOMMENDED REFUSAL for the reason previously submitted and agreed

228. 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.

229. PLANNING APPLICATIONS 72227 AND 61119 LARBEAR PLANS OF THE PLAY AREAS/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THE TIMESCALES FOR THEIR DELIVERY.

The Clerk reported that he was still awaiting a response from the NDC Planning Authority with regarding to information as to what play areas/open space areas would be delivered via Planning applications 72227 and 61119 with plans of the play areas/open space areas and the timescales for their delivery.

230. TAWSTOCK FOOTPATH 2 ALIGNMENT.

The Council considered a consultation from the DCC Public Rights of Way Officer regarding the re-alignment of Tawstock footpath 2. As part of the consultation 3 options were available. (Previously circulated).

It was recommended that Option 1 with a deviation between B and C to avoid the garden (going around the edge of the garden boundary on the right as you look at the plan) be agreed.

231. TAWSTOCK VILLAGE HALL: GRANT

In the absence of Councillor Short the above matter was deferred to the next meeting. The Clerk reported that he had secured a £1,000 grant from DCC Councillor Hendersons Locality Budget on behalf of the Village Hall Committee towards the project. The monies when received would need to be transferred to the Tawstock Village Hall Committee.

232. BURIAL FEES

The Council considered the burial charges and plan of phases 2 and 3 of the Burial Ground (previously circulated).

It was agreed:

- a) that the current burial charges be re-affirmed but that there be 'no charge' for a person at the time of death whose age did not exceed 18 years.
- b) that plots 169 – 173 in phase 2 be removed from the interment area creating 2 additional rows for the burial of ashes.

233. TOWER VIEW PLAY AREA/TUDOR PARK

The Clerk reported the receipt of a grant of £1,600 from DCC Councillor Leaver Locality budget towards the provision of anew slide and repair to the roundabout. It was noted that the work would be undertaken by the end of February/beginning of March.

It was agreed that the location of the new bench in Tudor Park be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Councillor Knight.

234. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Deferred to the next meeting and that Councillors Norman and Mason look at the current Health & Safety and Environmental & Sustainability Policies

235. TAW/TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM: UPDATE

Councillor Needham reported that he had been re-appointed Deputy Chair and Treasurer and that no fees would be requested or honorarium paid.

The Forum was planning work to object to the White Cross Planning Application due to the effect on the Estuary and also engage with young people in the conservation of the Estuary to raise its profile.

236. PARISH NOTICEBOARDS/QR CODES

Councillor Bowden stated that a way forward to inform residents of what works was going on and planned in the Parish would be the provision of QR Codes.

Councillors Knight and Mason agreed to research the provision of QR Codes on the noticeboards

237. DEFIBRILLATOR

It was agreed that authority be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Councillor Mason to obtain and agree a quote from an electrician to install the defibrillator in the Phone box in Harracott up to a maximum of £350 excluding VAT.

239. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING

The following issues were raised:

Parish Survey – Councillor Mason

Policies – Councillor's Mason and Norman

Provision/purchase of an aluminium noticeboard for Eastacombe - Clerk

S106 funding bids – procedure. Councillor Norman/Knight

Lifevac – Councillor Mason

214. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

It was noted that the next Parish Council meeting would be on Tuesday 19th March 2024 @ 7.00 p.m.

Chairman The meeting ended at 9.07 p.m.