

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF TAWSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th MARCH 2021 AT 7.00 pm

Present: - Councillor Luggar (Chairman)
Councillors Blackman (In the Chair for minute 215), Bowden, Knight, Lines, Lofthouse, Short, M. Ward and S. Ward.

NDC Councillors Knight, Lofthouse and Saxby

M Isaac (Clerk)

In Attendance: Parishioner/Members of the Public - 1

200. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from DCC Councillors Edgell and Mathews

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

Councillor Blackman stated that she wished to tidy up the grass verge between Phillip Avenue and the Crematorium and create a wildflower area with possibly a blossom tree. She had contacted DCC who had informed that the area between the footpath and the road had to remain clear for visibility reasons but subject to regulations and health and safety issues there was no problem with a wildflower the area being created between the path and the boundaries of the properties. She would look to the project being volunteer/residents led and the advised costs of approx. £600 being raised by 'Go Fund Me'. She sought the views/support of the Parish Council.

It was noted that no structures would be placed on the area.

Councillor Lofthouse stated that he had 'official' posts and notices used for work on verges that he would pass on to Councillor Blackman.

It was agreed that the project be supported.

202. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no issues raised by Parishioners.

203. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Luggar declared an interest in item 15 on the agenda as he had been advised by NDC Solicitor not to take part in the consideration of Planning Applications as he was a Member of NDC Planning Committee and item 13 relating to Holywell School as his daughter attended the school.

204. DCC COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

a) DCC Councillors Reports

The Clerk presented a report from DCC Councillor Mathews:

- That at the HATOC meeting he had proposed, and Dave Knight seconded, that ‘the decision of the Planning Committee of NDC re the Bus Gate in OTR be implemented.’ This meant that the final design could be advertised for Public Consultation and the decision made after the results of the consultation. Any questions regarding exemptions, if any, and times and dates of operation could be decided at a later date. The most important matter was to get the gate in position and all other matters were ancillary.
- No update as to who was going to redesign the Shorelands Rd Roundabout.
- Lighting matters, pavements on OTR minor discussion. Matters were progressing but delays were down to BT, Open Reach and Wales/West Gas pipes and location of Medium Voltage cables had to be sorted.
- That the Recycling Centre was now operating summertime hours of opening.

b) NDC Councillor Knight

Councillor Knight reported that in relation to the bus gate DCC would be undertaking a public consultation. He was not sure if the Parish Council would be consulted directly. He stated that further to the last Parish Council meeting the hedge between the Crematorium and the Larkbear entrance had been cut and that the hedge from the Crematorium to Sandringham Gardens had been laid. When the pavement scheme was delivered this would hopefully alleviate any issues regarding the cutting of the hedge during bird nesting season. The area had been litter picked and the services in the area marked out. The pavement scheme was however, still waiting on BT.

c) NDC Councillor Lofthouse

Councillor Lofthouse had no issues to report.

d) NDC Councillor Saxby

Councillor Saxby reported that as requested she had requested that Planning application 72675 be called in and considered by NDC Planning Committee.

She also reported that she had had a written response from John Hart, Leader DCC informing that North Devon had had a disproportionate amount of road repairs completed and funded.

In answer to a question regarding the pot-hole fund she informed that she had met the Minister responsible for pot-holes’ and Westminster was aware of the issues in North Devon. The current settlement for this year, for 1 year only due to the pandemic, was unfortunately less than previous years but hopefully next years’ funding settlement would be for more than 1 year to allow DCC to better plan and be more cost effective.

205. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor M. Ward stated that the Parish Council also made contributions to the Village Hall which had not been mentioned in the minutes of the last Parish Council meeting. She also stated that the figure recorded in the minutes for the last meeting regarding the cost of laptops for the school were different to that stated in the letter requesting grant support.

The Clerk stated that the Parish Council contribution had not been mentioned at the last meeting and the figure recorded was the figure mentioned at the meeting.

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

There were no items to be discussed.

207 FIBRE BROADBAND.

The Council received a presentation from Clive Leworthy, Community Ambassador for Airband and Tony Watkins, Devon Business Development regarding the provision of Fibre Broadband in Tawstock.

Airband was an independent internet provider who had been appointed as the contractor to roll-out high-speed broadband to homes and businesses in hard to reach areas of North Devon, in partnership with Connecting Devon and Somerset.

Fibre to the premises would replace old copper broadband lines with fibre optic cables that would be run from the local exchange direct to the premises, bringing ultrafast speeds up to 1 Gbps. Typical costs would be installation normally £99 but subsidised to £24.99 and monthly package fees of £24.99 - £34.99.

In answer to a question from Councillor Knight regarding disruption to services during the installation/connection of the cables it was stated that the local operators would be aware of works being carried out and should inform people of a disruptions to service.

208. HIGHWAY ISSUES

a) Pavements/Footway Crossings Old Torrington Road

Councillor Knight reported that the shrubbery had been cut at Parish Council expense. DCC would not acknowledge that the bushes were obstructing the pavement and required cutting. He had also reported that the bushes in Gratton Way outside Gratton Court were obstructing the pavement to DCC but had received a response that they were 'not obstructing enough' to warrant cutting. He questioned the definition of 'not obstructing enough'.

Councillor Knight agreed to email Steve Short to get a definition.

Councillor Lofthouse agreed to measure the amount of available pavement.

It was agreed to include the matter on the next Parish Council agenda for discussion.

b) Pavement condition Old Torrington Road: Prioritisation of Maintenance.

Councillor Knight stated that he was unsure how to progress this matter. The pavement in Wrey Avenue had had a mixture sprayed over it. Apparently, there was no money left in the budget. The

pavement in the middle section of Old Torrington Road was in a dreadful condition and difficult to walk on.

Councillor Lofthouse stated that he hoped that further pavement re-surfacing was of a better standard than that done in Wrey Avenue and Westfield Road as weeds had already started to grow through.

209. TOWER VIEW RECREATIONAL AREA

- a) Rear garden boundary to the recreational fields. Dangerous loose corrugated iron sheets.

Councillor M. Ward stated that the rear of a property in Elizabeth Drive, adjoining the recreational field was open to the recreational field. The owner had erected corrugated iron sheets to protect the access. The corrugated sheet's, however, were loose and dangerous and had on several occasions blown into the recreational field and been put back by herself and residents.

It was agreed to send a letter to the owner informing that the Parish Council had a duty of care to users of the park and that the corrugated fence needed to be made secure.

- b) Tree roots penetrating a brick garden boundary wall. To consider a request from a resident to fell tree/s.

Councillor M. Ward stated that she had been contacted by a resident who had claimed that the roots of 3 trees in the Park were going under their wall and causing cracks.

It was considered that evidence was required, and Councillor Lofthouse agreed to contact the NDC Tree expert to investigate and advise on the situation.

- c) Phase 2 Draft Budget.

Councillor Knight stated that he had produced a draft budget of works for Phase 2 of the Tower View project, listing all the works he considered necessary and a rough estimate of the costs of £7,150.

He further stated that the Parish Council had previously agreed to meet the cost of tarmacking the lower path.

He considered that Phase 2 needed to be progressed and quotes sought and that an Extra Ordinary Parish Council meeting be held to discuss/agree the way forward.

It was agreed that an extra ordinary Parish Council meeting be arranged.

210 LOCAL SEWAGE NETWORK – CONCERNS.

Councillor Knight reported that complaints had been received regarding the digging at the top of Philip Avenue and the sewage pipe from Application 61119 Larbear was being dug up hill to Philip Avenue. He stated that approx. 30 years ago as part of the Roundswell Development Scheme the sewer line was replaced and progressed over the hill to the wider sewer network and to the pumping station at Ashford which was upgraded at the time, the only pumping station in the Barnstaple area. Since that time there has been a huge amount of development and he had serious

concerns regarding the capacity in the system to cope with all the new development at Larkbear and other developments in the area.

Councillor Lofthouse report that he, Councillor Knight, NDC Leader Councillor Worden and NDC Chief Executive were seeking a meeting with S W Water, DCC and the Environment Agency regarding flooding in Barnstaple and he would be seeking assurance from S W Water that they can deal with the additional sewerage from all the new developments.

Councillor Knight suggested and it was agreed that the Clerk submit a Freedom of Information request (FOI) to South West Water to request copies of the maps of the sewage network and how Philip Avenue and the Larkbear development connects to the wider sewage network and the capacity levels data.

211. PARISH GREEN AREAS: INSTALLATION OF TEMPORARY 'KEEP OFF THE GRASS' SIGNS

The Clerk reported that he had received a response from DCC. The posts would need to be placed 450mm back from the edge of the kerb and the Parish Council would be responsible for their maintenance and replacement and any liability claims.

He had also contacted the Council's insurance company and was awaiting a response.

It was agreed to defer consideration pending the response from the Council's insurer.

212. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

a) Information re Committee Members

The Council noted the membership of the Village Hall Committee and last years' accounts (previously circulated).

b) Installation of Broadband

Councillor Knight stated that he considered that there was currently no broadband connection in the Village Hall and that quotes should be sought to have it installed.

Councillor Lofthouse stated that if broadband was installed in Tawstock Village Hall it should also be installed in the other Village Halls in the Parish. He also stated that he believed that Open Reach had a Community Fund that may be available to fund the installation.

Councillor Short agreed to speak to Sue Denham, Head Teacher and ask her if she could speak to Open Reach regarding costs to install fibre broadband in the Tawstock Village Hall.

213. HOLYWELL SCHOOL.

a) Stolen sign.

Councillor Luggar reported that the sign that the school children and the Tawstock history group had developed and put outside the Holy Well for visitors and the community to read had been stolen.

The culprits had been caught on CCTV and the 3 'young' people since arrested and the sign retrieved.

- b) Grant Application for laptops.

The Clerk reported the receipt of a grant request from the Head of Holywell School towards the provision of laptops. Each laptop costs £479 + £60 for a case.

Councillor Lofthouse stated that the Hollamoor Fund was a Community fund that may be possible to use to contribute towards the laptop funding. He would look into the fund criteria and investigate the details of the funding.

It was also stated that there was a Government scheme available for children year 3 upwards who had to shield.

It was agreed that consideration of the grant be deferred to seek clarification of the increased price from that stated at the last Parish Council meeting, details of the school's accounts and to query the need as the children had now returned to school.

214. TUDOR DRIVE PLAY AREA. CONSIDERATION OF TENDERS AND GRANT APPLICATION.

The Clerk reported that the Coastal Recycling Community Funder had asked for the Council's agreed tenderer and the anticipated commencement date.

Members queried the costs regarding welfare and safety fencing included in the TK Play quote.

Concern was raised regarding the positioning of the Play Tower in respect of its height and overlooking into resident's gardens.

It was agreed:

- a) To defer consideration of the tenders to an extra-ordinary Parish Council meeting to clarify issues raised in respect of the tenders.
b) That Councillor Knight seek clarification regarding the Government rules for a possible site meeting to assess the location of the equipment.

215. PLANNING MATTERS

Councillor Luggar informed Council that he had been advised not to take part in planning applications as he had been appointed to the NDC Planning Committee. Councillor Blackman took the chair.

- a) 72946 Refurbishment of & link extension to buildings, Petroc, Old Sticklepath Hill, Sticklepath, Barnstaple

RECOMMENDED Approval

- b) 72964 Siting of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign, Lidl, Gratton Way, Roundswell

RECOMMENDED Approval subject to the sign being switched off when the store was

closed and to it being either an LED or Energy saving light.

- c) 72847 Demolition of existing extensions, erection of extensions & raising of roof ridge for additional accommodation to dwelling 48 Elizabeth Drive, Sticklepath, Barnstaple

RECOMMENDED Refusal as it was considered that the proposal was over-intensive and not in keeping with surrounding properties in relation to roof height and scale.

- d) 72957 External refurbishment & extension of building, Petroc D Block, Old Sticklepath Hill, Sticklepath, Barnstaple

RECOMMENDED Approval subject to the cladding being fire retardant.

- e) 72930 Siting of 1 non-illuminated sign at Land at 253136 131413 Roundswell

Recommended APPROVAL but expressed concern that the sign had been erected prior to planning permission being granted.

- f) 72227 Approval of details in respect of discharging conditions 3 (Materials) and 25 (Public Open Space) of Planning Permission 61119, Land at Larkbear.

The Clerk stated that he had been informed that there was no legal requirement to consult on discharge of condition applications.

Councillor Knight reported that the above application had been approved under delegated powers by NDC Planning Officers. The application was a discharge of conditions of application 61119 joining the Highgrove development via a cycle path.

He stated that the detail indicated that all the existing vegetation between the two developments was going to be cut down and new trees and grass being planted. This would not absorb all the water.

Councillor Lofthouse stated that all the water from the A39 and hillside beyond drains into this area and down through Lake into the river Taw. Any changes would make the area a mud bath and release CO2 into the air.

It was agreed that and following be agreed and sent to Jean Watkins, NDC Lead Planning Officer:

- i) The cutting down of all the established vegetation in the application site 72227 was unacceptable
- ii) Therefore, delivering a scheme that was more sympathetic to the environment and the established vegetation, bushes and trees was essential.
- iii) This would help reduce the risk of surface water run-off and decrease the risk of flooding downstream.
- iv) The scheme needed to respect the existing habitat that supported a variety of animals, for example local deer.
- v) The drainage problems in Highgrove needed resolving when the bank was cut through to deliver the cycle path that would connect the two developments.
- vi) A culvert detail needed resolving where the new cycle path crossed the main watercourse and left the culvert under the A39.

- vii) The cycle path needed to be substantial enough to withstand heavy vehicles servicing the overhead power cables.
- viii) At the western end of the application site the cycle path needed to be raised otherwise it would be under water as the ground was extremely waterlogged in this area.
- ix) That Councillors Lofthouse and Knight request a zoom/site meeting to look at these issues.

216. THE TRACKER

The Tracker was noted.

217. VIRTUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS: UPDATE.

The Clerk reported that at present the legislation only permitted virtual Parish Council meetings up until 7th May 2021. Pressure was being put on the Government by all local authority bodies to extend the date. At present this had not been agreed by Government. If this was not extended face to face meeting would commence after that date.

218. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from Barnstaple Town Council regarding consultation by Town/Parish Council's on major planning applications in adjoining Parishes.

It was considered that adjoining Parish Council's should be consulted on all major planning applications.

It was agreed:

- a) That a request be sent to NDC Planning Department that all adjoining Parish Council's be consulted on all major planning applications.
- b) That Councillor Luggar raise the issue of changing the current policy with the Chairmen of both the Policy Development Committee and Governance Committee and seek a change in policy.

219. FINANCE MATTERS

a) Payments

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

North Devon Council Clerks Salary	£568.74
M Isaac Expenses	£5.46
Zoom Upgrade Paid by Debit Card	£14.39 p. month
Chew Valley Trees Trees for Tower View (paid by debit card).	£136.44
Gavin Hendry Park clearance Tower View Project	£2,695.00
Gavin Hendry Cut Beech Tree Hedge	£195.00
C. Waldron Quarterly Web Site Maintenance Fee	£33.00

b) Current Financial Position

That the current financial position as on 5 February 2021 was Current A/C £41,563.66 and Business Reserve £16,002.31 be noted.

c) Draft Budget 2021/22

The Council noted and agreed the spreadsheet presented by Councillor Lofthouse detailing the draft budget for 2021/22.

Councillor Bowden raised concerns regarding the Village Hall. It was registered with the Charity Commission as the Tawstock Village Institute and had only one person as a registered trustee. Following research, she understood that a minimum of 3 were required.

The Trust was also required to have a Governing Document that outlined the borrowing and investment powers of the trust and the roles of its members.

She stated that the Parish Council was required to be transparent and do due diligence when giving grants to other bodies/groups.

It was also considered that the charging structure should be looked at as it appeared that the hall charges barely covered the electricity/heating costs.

Councillor Short as Chairman of the Village Hall Committee agreed to provide the Parish Council with a copy of the Governing Document and Constitution.

220. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next virtual Parish Council meeting would be on Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.