

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

West Down Parish Hall (Main Hall) on
Friday 6th August 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice Chair), R Drew, S Squire, K Oades

Guest: D Maidment – Minutes writer

Apologies: Cllr M O'Halloran, Cllr T Verney (accepted), Clerk Vanessa Hunt, C Cllr A Davis, D Cllr M Wilkinson.

Cllr S Ayre opened the meeting by informing all attendees that the meeting was being recorded (sound only) and thanked D Maidment for taking the minutes for this meeting.

4417 – Public Speaking/Question Time

None.

4418 – Police Report

No report received.

4419 – Approve Minutes from last meeting.

The July 7th 2021 Minutes were unanimously approved and signed by Cllr S Ayre (proposed Cllr S Squire, 2nd Cllr K Oades).

4420 – Matters arising

4416 – John Hookway is happy to receive and distribute salt bags around the village. Cllr S Ayre will contact C Cllr A Davis about ordering the salt.

4416 – Diary item. May review Insurance and Pay

4421 – Report from County Cllr

Cllr S Ayre had received an email from C Cllr A Davis containing her report for July 2021.

- 1) Peninsular transport – shaping the future of transport across the South West
Peninsula Transport is the shadow sub-national transport body (STB), bringing together the five lead transport authorities in the Peninsula (Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay) to work directly with the Department for Transport (DfT) on the strategic transport priorities for the region.
- 2) Bus Back Better
In March, the government announced a new National Bus Strategy - Bus back better - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Alongside the delivery of this strategy, Devon County Council have committed to working with our local bus operators to form an Enhanced Partnership by April 2022 and to writing a joint Bus Service Improvement Plan by October 2021.
Both of the above will be backed up with consultations and C Cllr A Davis has asked that the PC would consider responding to the consultation
- 3) Funding available to help Devon's communities reconnect, rebuild and recover
Community-led facilities and activities, like many things, were quickly suspended during the onset of the national coronavirus lockdown.
As the country begins to return to some degree of normality, Devon County Council is keen to help local communities get back to doing the things they love safely and confidently, so we have created a special fund to support them.

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4) Coronavirus updates from Devon County Council

Residents can access the latest Covid updates in Devon by following an internet link to the Devon County website.

Cllr S Ayre to circulate C Cllrs A Davis's full report to all Parish Cllrs.

4422 – Report from District Councillor

Cllr S Ayre had received an email from D Cllr M Wilkinson containing various points he would like raised at this evening meeting as follows:

1. A.O.N.B. NATURE & CLIMATE CHALLENGE FUND

Morthoe PC missed the deadline for this fund but were assured by Laura Carolan that it would go ahead again next year. She also felt that the pot for this year would not be used up.

2. PLANNING ISSUES

There has been a surge in opportunist planning applications during the COVID pandemic. There has also been an increase in claims that existing schemes were now unviable to honour 106 agreements! We currently have one in Woolacombe that is contesting a commitment for over £500K.

3. NORTH DEVON SURFING RESERVE

We had a very productive meeting with officers from NDC about the designation of Northern Devon as a national surfing reserve. It was suggested that the name should be changed to Northern Devon Surfing Conservation Zone to reflect the environmental issues and benefits.

4. HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

Congratulations to Jon Triggs who has just been appointed as Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Resources and also to our own Mark Kentell who has been selected as Head of Environmental Enhancement as part of the restructuring of senior management at North Devon Council.

4. CHRIS WHITTY.

In Chris Whitty's annual CMO report he highlighted the deprivation and health issues in coastal communities. It is a lengthy document but well worth a read and raises some concerning issues.

5. STRATEGY & RESOURCES MEETING

At the recent S&R meeting I raised concerns about the effects of the 56-day license offered for camping. It is unfair on those businesses that operate throughout the year and pay licenses even when there is a much-reduced demand.

Cllr S Ayre to circulate D Cllr M Wilkinson's email to all Parish Cllrs.

Cllr S Ayre received another email From D Cllr M Wilkinson about planning applications received after the agenda for this meeting had been produced. He reminded Parish Cllrs that they are within their rights to ask for an extension to any of these applications.

4423 – Grant for Website.

Cllr M Reeves had two quotes with similar prices for producing a website – UpDate Website and WesternWeb.

Cllr M Reeves recommended WesternWeb to design and create a website platform for the Parish Council. Cllr Reeves had previously asked Parish Cllrs to check other Parish websites in the area (Fremington, Berrynarbor, Morthoe) and offer their opinions.

WesternWeb are quoting £550 to design a site with an on-going yearly management cost of approx. £195.

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A grant of £450 is available from North Devon Council and Cllr Reeves had spoken with Kate Johnson (NDC) who helped with answering various questions contained within an on-line application form.

If this was to proceed, the £100 shortfall in funding would have to be made up elsewhere.

A down payment of £150 was required by WesternWeb.

Lead-times = 6 weeks for NDC grant and 2 months for WesternWeb construction.

A proposal was made by Cllr K Oades to proceed with setting up the web site with WesternWeb. This was 2nd by Cllr S Squire. All Councillors present were in favour of the proposal.

Cllr M Reeves to complete the grant application and will need a set of last year's accounts to send to NDC.

4424 – Acorn Developments

Cllr S Ayre wrote to Mr Ken Miles (CEO North Devon Council) about whether S106 monies had been received. No reply for 6 days. Mr Ken Miles eventually confirmed the money had not been received.

Cllr S Ayre emailed C Cllr Andrea Davis at Devon County to find out if S106 monies had been received for the school and it was confirmed nothing had been received.

Devon County will try to contact NDC to find out why no monies had been received and to get confirmation that the trigger point of 13 homes had been occupied on the estate. Devon County often rely on Highways Department for information.

As of the 4th August neither NDC nor the PC had received any money and in effect Acorn were in breach of the 23rd June 2021 agreement.

Mr K Miles and the Planning Department have been in touch with Acorn to find why they haven't paid but have nothing to report.

An Acorn working party Zoom meeting was held with Mrs Teasdale (North Devon Council Customer Feedback/Service Improvement Officer) who is in the process of putting a report together regarding the complaint that has been made against NDC in the way they have mismanaged the Section 106 funding process.

There are three stages in the complaint's procedure

- Stage 1 – an investigation to be carried out by NDC's complaints department and Jo Teasdale
- Stage 2 – if not resolved an investigation to be carried out by Jo Teasdale's boss (who work for NDC).
- Stage 3 – if WDPC are still not happy we can then request an Investigation by the Ombudsman.

Our complaint is currently at Stage 1.

Mrs Teasdale has asked for the Parish Council to update their letter of complaint as the original letter was sent by Mrs V Hunt WD Parish Clerk and not the West Down Parish Council. Cllr S Ayre has drafted a letter to NDC stating that the complaint is transferred to the West Down Parish Council and Cllr S Ayre will be the contact along with Cllr M Reeves of WDPC along with Mr J Stainer who is a member of a working party who are closely following this issue. Cllr S Ayre read out the proposed letter to Councillors present who were all in agreement.

Mrs J Teasdale has also asked for detailed confirmation of all complaints being made by WDPC.

Cllr S Ayre considered it is important to continue with this complaint. A West Down resident had also made a complaint and had received compensation. All Councillors present agreed to continue with the action.

Selaine Saxby (MP) is aware of this issue and has asked to be kept updated with any developments.


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If WDPC wanted to submit a complaint against Mr K Miles, Mrs Teasdale would not be able to take on this complaint and would have to be made through M David Worden (Leader of the North Devon Council). WDPC need to consider whether a complaint is made against Ken Miles.

Cllr M Reeves said Mrs Teasdale stated that NDC had made a massive mistake and had presented Acorn with a loophole to get out of the section 106 agreement.

It had been noted that one and only affordable home on the development was back on the market at £198k. Cllr S Ayre had contacted Webbers Estates Agents and was told that the previous buyer had 'pulled out' at the last minute. The property would be sold on the same criteria as before but 3 months have passed and the property would be offered to any buyer in the Devon. Cllr S Ayre also found out from Webbers that one of the large properties on the development was a second home and a smaller property was for Air B & B.

As for a complaint against Ken Miles, the general consensus of the Councillors present was to proceed one step at a time, i.e. once complaint against NDC is resolved to then consider a complaint against Ken Miles.

4425 – Community Land Trust

The Parish Council need to make a decision on how to approach the Community Land Trust.

Cllr S Ayre asked councillors present for their opinions.

Cllr R Drew was concerned about a clash between CLT and affordable homes.

Cllr K Oades had reservations as to where the money will be coming from.

Cllr S Squire felt that the PC would not be serving the community if this was not investigated further.

Cllr M Reeves agreed with Cllr S Squire and would not support another development like Lower Broad Park. Some developers were quite keen on CLT's, with the help of grant aid, and has been quite successful in recent times. He felt that a survey should be conducted to establish local housing needs and also a public meeting about the possibility of setting up a CLT.

Cllr S Ayre felt the PC should investigate further as CLT may present a better means of providing affordable homes when compared with the current method where developers include affordable home within an estate build only to renege on their intentions at a later date (as has been the case recently with a local development) and is, apparently, not uncommon.

Cllr K Oades put a proposal forward to hold a public meeting first and then to conduct a survey on needs. This was 2nd by Cllr R Drew and all councillors present were in agreement.

4426 – Co-Option vacancy

The Parish Clerk had sent a circular to all councillors with details of Richard Kenshole's application to become a Councillor. Richard has lived in West Down for 27 years.

Cllr M Reeves proposed that Richard should be invited to join the Parish Council 2nd Cllr S Squire – all councillors present were in agreement.

Cllr S Ayre to let Mr Kenshole know his application has been successful.

The necessary paperwork to be arranged by Mrs V Hunt Parish Clerk.

4427 – Parish Clerk vacancy

Job specification produced and advertised on council websites and locally. Response was good with four expressions of interest and three applications. Friday the 13th August 2021 is the closing date for applications. Hard copies of applications and CV's will be circulated amongst councillors and

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interviews are to be held on 24th August 2021 during the day in the Parish Hall Room 2000 (exact time to be confirmed). Hopefully a successful applicant will be in place for the next PC meeting that will be held on 1st Sept 2021.

Interviews will be conducted Cllr M Reeves, Cllr S Squire, Cllr S Ayre and Cllr R Drew.

Cllr K Oades commented that to comply with the Data Protection Act all CV's and Applications should be destroyed.

4428 - P3/ Footpaths

The Parish Clerk emailed councillors to say that Cllr M O'Halloran had checked all footpaths and reported that they were generally in good condition, although some paths were overgrown with vegetation. Cllr O'Halloran asked whether there was a responsible person that tended to these footpaths – the response being no.

Cllr S Squire commented that it was down to landowners to maintain paths on their property.

Land owners to be informed of their obligations.

4429 – Dog Bins

This topic to remain on the agenda for monitoring purposes. No further complaints regarding dog fouling received.

4430 – Map case

The map case has been erected – now waiting for something to be displayed. It was suggested that a map (available from West Down Community Shop) showing local footpaths be displayed for the time being – Cllr M Reeves will arrange.

4431 – Community Award Scheme

Martin Hodsmen has been informed he will receive an award in the form of a plate. It is intended that the presentation will take place outside the Community shop on Saturday 14th August at 11am. Cllr S Ayre will make the invitation.

4432 – Review H & S Policy and annual inspection of property.

This topic has been prompted by an entry in the Parish Council's diary. Items in the Parish Council's asset register, including bus shelters and seating, need checking for safety issues.

Cllr S Ayre will review the health and safety policy and circulate her findings to all councillors.

4433 – Publicise and invite local groups and organisations to formally apply for financial support the Parish Council Small Grant Fund for the following financial year.

Cllr M Reeves said that the current policy needs to be reviewed. An application form is held on a computer and just needs updating with latest dates.

Invitations to Groups and organisations to apply must be out by 1st September and the closing date for applications will be 15th October (6 weeks to apply).

4434 – Village Forum

The Village Forum has been put on hold due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This topic to be kept on the agenda with the view of starting up the Forum at a suitable time. It was suggested that Mrs C King may be interested in steering this project. Cllr K Oades to talk to Mrs King.


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4435 – Parish On-Line training – nothing to report – on-going.

4436 – GDPR training – nothing to report – on-going.

4437 – Planning decisions from NDC

Application 73359 - Foxhill Farm approved by NDC

Application 73364 – 14 Lower Willingcott approved by NDC.

Application 73387 – Cherrytree Thorne Park approved by NDC

4438 - Planning Applications

- a) 73731 – Change of use – agricultural building to dwelling. Easter Ground West Down
Cllr S Squire declared an interest, entered her name into the register and left the room.
Cllr K Oades commented that the building was OK but access could be problematical due to flooding.
Cllr R Drew commented that there was nothing wrong with the drawings.
Cllr M Reeves agreed with Cllr K Oades comments.
Cllr S Ayre had concerns about access and approach road.
This application was unanimously approved with reservations about the long-term viability of access. Proposed Cllr K Oades, 2nd Cllr M Reeves.
- b) 73666 – Change of use – agricultural building to dwelling at West Hill Farm West Down
Cllr S Squire – no issues
Cllr K Oades – no issues
Cllr R Drew – no issues
Cllr M Reeves - no issues
Cllr S Ayre – no issues
The application was unanimously approved – proposed Cllr R Drew, 2nd Cllr K Oades
- c) 73667 – Conversion of at Trimstone Barn. At West Down to dwelling, erection of an extension and increase in curtilage area.
Cllr M Reeves - no issues
Cllr R Drew – no issues
Cllr K Oades – no issues
Cllr S Squire – no issues
Cllr S Ayre – no issues
The application was unanimously approved – proposed Cllr K Oades, 2nd Cllr R Drew.
- d) 73472 – creation of caravan storage area At Philip Dennis Mullacott Cross Ilfracombe
Cllr S Squire – no issues
Cllr K Oades – no issues
Cllr R Drew – no issues
Cllr M Reeves - no issues
Cllr S Ayre – no issues
The application was unanimously approved – proposed Cllr S Squire, 2nd Cllr M Reeves.
- e) Applications received after publishing of agenda
- i) Foxhunters – 73569 all Councillors present requested an extension.
- ii) Manor House – 73594 all Councillors present requested an extension.
- iii) West Haven – 73500 Cllr M Reeves declared an interest, signed the register, but was happy to discuss but not vote. This application was for a parcel of land that had been purchased and was to be added to an existing garden.
Cllr K Oades – no issues

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Cllr S Squire – no issues
Cllr R Drew – no issues
Cllr S Ayre – no issues
The application was unanimously approved – proposed Cllr S Squire, 2nd Cllr K Oades.

4439 – Correspondence

- i) Letter received from the Beaver Trust (Adrian Bryant) requesting contact details of landowners who may have land that waterways pass through. It was considered that such information should not come from the PC and the Beaver Trust will be informed accordingly.
- ii) An email (14.6.21) had been received from Carole King about promoting a 'Man/ Person Shed' within the community where villagers would be able to visit a communal workshop (outbuilding or container) with the view to repair items, make new items or pass on their handyman skills to fellow villagers. It was suggested this was passed over to the Village Forum for further discussions.
- iii) Cllr S Ayre had received an email from J Stainer (Chair Community Field) who wished to update the Parish Council with the latest costs relating to projects that would be funded by the section 106 grant associated with the Lower Broad Park development. The original letter of interest submitted by the Community Field was received back in 2017. Cllr S Ayre will forward a copy of the email to all Councillors and thought the Parish Hall, who also submitted a letter of interest back in 2017, should also update their costing. Cllr S Ayre to contact Mr T King who is the Chairman of the Parish Hall Management Committee. This item to put onto the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

4440 – Finance

Figures not available. Cllr S Ayre to email some balances to Councillors tomorrow.
Application form signed by Cllr S Squire and Cllr K Oades to include Cllr M Reeves on the online banking mandate has failed. The application was unsuccessful as one of the approved signatories on the application was not recognised under the existing bank mandate.
Cllr S Ayre will reapply.

4441 – Audit report from J Snooks (Auditor)

Mrs J Snooks normally provides a typed report but this time round she had provided a report that, in parts, was unreadable. Mrs V Hunt Parish Clerk wrote to Mrs Snooks and requested a typed-up report and a copy of the Practitioner Guide but nothing has been received. Cllr S Ayre, who found a copy of the Practitioners Guide, will forward a copy to all Parish Councillors. This topic to be discussed at next Parish Council meeting.

Mrs Snooks had provided a list of fees payable. Previously the Parish Council was charged £125 for the annual audit. If money in the parish Council bank account exceeds £25000 cost would be increased to £300.

4442 – Unresolved questions – nil.

4443 – Items to be added to next meeting agenda

Community Land Trust
Acorn Developments
Parish Council Small Grant
Parish Clerk Vacancy
Website
Health and Safety Policy
Village Forum
GDPR training
Lower Broad Park 106 Grant Funding – Community Field and Parish Hall.

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4444 – Any Other Business

- i) A white vehicle which is continually parking at the end of the Chapel garage is causing an obstruction. A polite notice will be posted to people in the vicinity asking the owner to park in the Thorne Park car park.
- ii) Cllr M Reeves said that the Village Emergency Plan needs to be resurrected. Implementation of this plan has been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.
- iii) Cllr S Ayre requested help with moving Parish Council current and archived paperwork from her garage once a new Parish Clerk has been appointed.
- iv) C Cllr A Davis will contact NDC regarding salt supplies for the forthcoming winter.

Next Parish Council meeting – 1st September 7.30pm in the West Down Parish Hall

This meeting finished at 10.16 pm

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