

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 7.30.pm, at Bridgerule Village Hall.**

These minutes are provisional until signed by the Chairman at the next meeting.

**Present :**  Chairman: D Hale

Councillors, F. Cogdell, J. McDougall, K. Bowditch, S. Cholwill, K. James, J. Trayford

 In Attendance : Clerk.

**Apologies :** J. Philpott, S. Whatmore, M. Tape.

**Public :** x 3

**Declarations of Interests:** The Chairman asked that interests be declared as they arise.

**Public Session :**  Three residents of the Parish living at the new development, Meadow View wished to make the council aware of some issues they and other homeowners at the development were now facing and their situation as it . Nine properties have been built and are occupied, the Developer of the properties, Dlux Developments had gone into administration, and residents have been left with problems regarding Communal areas. A third company, Orchid Landscaping, were going to take over administration and management of the areas, as house owners pay a yearly sum for upkeep which was written into the property deeds. This has not happened and the Communal areas, which have been kept and maintained this year by the residents, and the Communal land had not been passed on or transferred by the Developers and the ownership of this land had been passed to the Administrators. Residents had been offered an option to buy shares of said land ,but this was not felt to be achievable as the quoted Management company do not own the land, are not trading and are non-existent. This land had now passed on to the Duchy of Cornwall, including the hedges, internal road, and the swale. The original plans for water collection from the Swale to go into a pond had been passed by TDC and a Variation of Planning condition submitted to them last year was still effectively awaiting a decision. A planning officer from TDC had attended the site and discussed the issue of the Swale. Residents had been advised to apply for retrospective planning permission for the Swale and are still waiting to hear further from the planning officer. Water from other streams and sources are also running into the Swale now. Roadside hedges, verges and boundaries had not been put back to what was originally planned and stated by the developers. DH asked if the residents had contacted the local MP, they had and had received a sympathetic response to their situation, the MP had suggested a ”Vesting Order” which could be used for the transfer of land. The residents would like to know primarily that the Swale as it is, is fit and adequate for purpose and have asked TDC, as the relevant authority who granted the developers permission and have asked TDC to organise and fund a survey. This would be the desired first step for the residents, before they could proceed in any way further, if at all. KJ said he would take this back to TDC and discuss with the Planning department and DH said that the Parish council could write a letter of support if the residents wished, clerk to write to TDC.

**3223. County Councillors Report :** No report received.

**3224. District Councillors Report :** KJ reported that he had recently been to a meeting in Exeter regarding Care-leavers and plans for them on attaining the age of 18. He would be attending a meeting in Bristol regarding funds from the Levelling- up Fund and the council is undergoing a peer review to evaluate how the council is currently functioning.

The Marine Project in Appledore and the new Environmental centre project have received £20 million from the Levelling-up Fund, TDC met the criteria for funding as Torridge is classed as a deprived area, with low educational achievement, low wages, and limited prospects. Work needed to be done to encourage young local people to stay in the area. TDC are looking at the possibility of development of the former Cattle Market into an area for businesses, production of Hydrogen as part of its green energy policy, and Seaweed and Seagrass use and production. In the rural Holsworthy area, technology projects for use in farming and rural occupations are also being looked at.

**3225. Council Meeting Minutes. :** The Minutes of 21st November had been circulated to councillors and the Minutes were agreed by councillors present and signed by the Chairman as correct. Proposed 1st JMD, 2nd KB, all councillors in favour.

**3226. Matters Arising:** No matters arising this month.

**3227. To Receive Correspondence :** Clerk had received:

Notice from TDC, regarding two vacancies for a Parish Representative on the TDC Standards Committee, FC said he would consider standing for this when has seen relevant information on what is required from individuals,

NHO regarding alternative sites for two poles for VAS rotation, DCC could not consider any site at present while the 20mph zones are being discussed and considered,

Email from Tamar Valley National Landscape – re feasibility study on invasive plant species in waterways and control of these plants. DH said that Himalyan balsam was often seen and present in the river flowing under the Bridge and downstream towards the Old Railway line near to Merrifield. Clerk to reply to inform of the invasives presence within the parish.

Email from resident regarding flooding at Mill Road since the new development of Macarthur Close. Correspondence had been sent to TDC as the problem was getting worse. KJ said that the road had been prone to flooding in the past, but it may be that the Culvert was broken. He would take back to TDC. FC said that the bank or hedge had been knocked back and not made good and this may be contributing to the problem. DH asked clerk to write to resident and put on Agenda for next month.

**3228.** **Chairman’s Report :** DH reported he had contacted the owner of the Campervan which was permanently parked in the Hall carpark and asked the owner to move the vehicle, the response he received was not favourable.

**3229.**  **Accounts and Accounts due for payment –**  Finance sheets had been circulated to councillors,

Items due for payment this month were :

No items due for payment this month, the Shop Donation and transfer to Deposit account had been put through and had been authorised. The amount to be deducted from the below balance would be £12,600.

 Current account balance on 7th December agreed at £22,509.43, as shown on the statement.

 Proposed 1st, DH, 2nd, KJ, all councillors in favour.

**3230.** **Highways, Vas Signs and Speedwatch :**

JT reported that contact had now been initiated by Speedwatch HQ for help and involvement when needed. Some further online training still needed to be completed by the volunteers and this work was ongoing. When done and verified, the group will become operational, hopefully as soon as practicable.

No Vas data to report this month, as the signs were not operating in this 28 day period as DCC policy.

Road closures at Road Jewells Cross to Littlebridge Cross, 21st to 23rd February, For Kier on behalf of South West Water, repairs to defects.

Road re-surfacing on the B3254, DH and SC reported that the road was being opened after 6pm to traffic, whilst repairs were being carried out.

 **3231. Charitable Grants for 2023:**  Seven applications had been received for a consideration for a payment from the Charitable Grants fund for this year, the total amount of requests amounted to £2950 and far exceeded the amount budgeted of £1900.00. DH suggested that £300 be given to Holsworthy Rural Transport, as this had been agreed previously. All councillors in favour of this. KB expressed thanks on behalf of the Shop who had been given a one-off donation towards the building costs.

After discussion the chairman suggested the following donations or grant amounts, £100 to Friends of Holsworthy Library, £100 to Devon CAB Torridge, who had assisted 23 residents of the parish, £600 to Bridgerule Parochial Council towards the upkeep of the Churchyard, £350 to FOBS for the school and £300 to Bridgerule Village hall. towards the rates and other expenses, and no grant for this year for the North Devon Records Office. JMD, SC and KB expressed an interest and refrained from voting. Proposed, the above amounts be paid, 1st FC, 2nd JT, votes for 4, Abstentions, 3, Motion Carried.

Clerk had not finished the proposed Grant policy wording yet, but it will be presented to councillors in the New Year for their perusal and any amendments they wish to make. KB said he had viewed a policy as an example and would forward to clerk for information. KJ said he would provide grants from his Torridge Councillor Fund as follows, £250 Bridgerule Community Shop Ltd and £150 to FOBS for the school and would be contacting them directly.

**3232. Planning:**

**1/0926/2023/FUL- Construction of 1 no: dwelling, Derril, Pyworthy- Application had been withdrawn.**

**3233.**  **New Unity Bank Account :**  Currently there are now 4 registered online users, with one more councillor to verify with the bank. Some initial problems had now been resolved with the former, although clerk had spoken to an advisory manager regarding the current mandate. Advice given by Unity was to amend the current mandate to allow and increase JMD to full permissions, whilst preserving the Council’s mandate of two to sign, as online transactions actually require involvement of 3 persons and to increase the number required for higher amounts to at least £1000. Currently it is set at £500, and advice given is that this existing condition will be counterproductive. Recommendations that the mandate needs to change to reflect this, and councillors agreed that clerk will request the necessary changes online and bring the new mandate for councillors to sign and approve at the next meeting.

**3234. Village Hall/Shop Update:**  A Puppet Show has been arranged for the hall shortly to raise funds. Part of the shop building has been rendered, but not all due to the recent inclement weather. It is hoped that the shop will be opened at the end of February, but money and the shop budget remain extremely tight.

 **3235. Clerks Report:** The Holsworthy’s RP teams meeting for December was due to be held this evening, Clerk had given apologies . No dates arranged yet for next year.

 **3236: Exchange of Information: -**.

Bus shelter , still needs repairs and completing,

 A replacement sign with the wording “No Campervans overnight” needed to be purchased, to replace the original one which was removed or stolen from the Car Park sign, clerk to source prices,

**3237: Meeting closed at 8.50pm.** Date of next meeting Tuesday 16th January at 7.30pm.

**Signed by Meeting Chairman : …………………………………………………………………………………..**

**Date of signing : …………………………………………………………………………………….**

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