

NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council held at the Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford on Monday, 29th January 2024.

Present: Cllrs. Tribble (Chair), Carpenter (Vice Chair), Dalton, Malawana and Tillotson
Jacqui Baldwin, Parish Clerk
County Cllr. Jessica Bailey
District Cllr. Chris Burhop
Ted Swan, Parish Footpath Warden
Mark Burdus, MUGA Working Party
3 members of the public

Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and outlined Fire Regulations and Evacuation Procedure.

Public Forum

- a) Neighbourhood Policing report
No representation from the Neighbourhood Policing Team. Chair confirmed that the Winter newsletter issued by Sidmouth Police had been circulated to all Councillors.
- b) County Councillor report: Cllr. Jessica Bailey
Cllr. Bailey provided an update on flood recovery/prevention actions. Surveys have been carried out in Venn Ottery and a scheme design is in process. DCC hope to deliver the scheme during the summer. Consultants have been commissioned to carry out a hydrological survey in Burrow and this is expected to be published in February. The Environment Agency are carrying out an assessment of Back Brook and will be meeting DCC representatives during week commencing 5th February. A new drainage scheme for Four Elms Hill is being designed and work should commence in October 2024.
It is likely that the Red Bridge CPO will be discussed by Cabinet on 13th March. There will be an opportunity for a Parish Council representative to speak at that meeting. The footbridge at Dotton has been closed for public safety reasons whilst DCC investigate how best to resolve this issue. Cllr. Bailey expressed concern at the volume of work the Rights of Way team was being expected to deal with – with a huge area to cover and an escalating number of issues to resolve. This team needs more resources and Cllr. Bailey will raise this with Meg Booth, Chief Officer Highways and Cllr. Stuart Hughes. She encouraged the Parish Council to do likewise. Chair thanked Cllr. Bailey for her attendance and contribution.
- c) District Councillor report: Cllr. Chris Burhop
Cllr. Burhop provided some background on the Otter Trail Project. The group is seeking a commitment from Parishes crossed by the proposed trail to encourage EDDC to support the project with CIL Infrastructure funding (discussed at agenda item 23/092D).
Cllr. Burhop and Ted Swan had met a resident of King Alfred Way to survey Footpath 1. The footpath is not fit for purpose and is dangerous in places. Mr Swan has identified the work that can be carried out by parish volunteers and what DCC is required to do and has written to DCC accordingly. A request for volunteers to assist has been published in the PCC magazine.
Cllr. Burhop suggested that, as the updated NPPF gives “significant weight” to Neighbourhood Plans for a period of 5 years, Council should form a working party to commence a review of the current Neighbourhood Plan which was “made” in July 2021. Chair confirmed that this is part of Council’s Action Plan for the coming year. Finally, Cllr Burhop reminded Council that an open meeting concerning the Fireworks event should take place in the near future.
- d) Report from Ted Swan, Parish Footpath Warden
Mr Swan confirmed that the Annual Parish Footpath Survey had now been received from DCC. This is to be returned by 16th March and Mr Swan will work with the Clerk to complete the forms. Bridleway No. 37 which crosses Venn Ottery common has suffered serious erosion and has been closed for safety

reasons. No response has been received from DCC regarding Footpath 1 and the Chair agreed to follow up on Mr Swan’s behalf. The Chair also agreed to contact the landowner regarding a broken gate on the route of Footpath 3. Mr. Swan would like to be able to remove the gate entirely if permission is forthcoming. Significant erosion has also taken place around the footbridge in Webbers Meadow. Timber supports were installed by the parish maintenance contractor but there is now a large hole behind the supports. Clerk to follow up with Mr. Silver.

e) Report from the MUGA Working Party: Mark Burdus

A report from the MUGA Working Party had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr. Burdus confirmed arrangements for the opening event on 10th February. Members of the Working Party are engaging with the school and various events will take place during the afternoon. The Community Café will remain open to support. There has been interest from a number of organisations/clubs who are keen to use the facility for netball, under 5’s football, veterans 5v5 and 4v4 football and the WP is finalising a pricing structure which will reflect whether hirers are local, community groups, charities or commercial enterprises. It is hoped that funds can be raised to install floodlights in September 2024. WP is considering selling advertising space as a way of raising funds. It was noted that permanent advertising hoardings would require planning permission.

f) Report from the Climate Change Group

Chair noted that the January Report from the Climate Change Group had been circulated to Councillors in advance of this meeting. A tree has now been purchased and planted in memory of Cllr. Val Ranger.

g) Questions and representations from residents/parishioners:

Members of the public raised questions concerning the former surgery building and the Clerk’s remuneration. Chair advised that Council was still pursuing ways of utilising the surgery building for the benefit of parishioners and would be discussing its options later in the meeting. A gate had been placed at the entrance to the footpath to the building for security and health & safety reasons. Clerk confirmed that this work had been carried out by the parish maintenance contractor within his contracted hours. With regard to the Clerk’s remuneration the Chair advised that the matter was on the Agenda for ratification at this meeting.

Mr Swan suggested that the lifebuoys in Webbers Meadow may require replacement. Clerk to investigate and ascertain costs.

There being no further questions, Chair thanked all attendees for their contributions and questions and closed the Public Forum at 8.10pm.

Business of the Meeting:

		Action:
23/081	To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted:	
	Clerk advised that apologies had been received from Cllrs. Bisseker, Compton, Harrison, Hughes, Lipczynski and Walker. Chair proposed that these apologies be accepted. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton and resolved unanimously.	
23/082	Declarations of interest from members / Dispensations afforded:	
	Chair confirmed that all members present are, by definition, members of the NPPFF Trustee Board and declare a personal interest in that capacity. Cllr. Tillotson has a dispensation to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to Parish allotments. There were no additional declarations of interest.	
23/083	To consider any matters listed on this Agenda that Councillors consider should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960:	
	Chair proposed that Agenda item 23/092A be dealt with as confidential business and discussed in committee session. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved unanimously.	

23/084	<p>To consider and, if thought fit, approve the revised Minutes of the Council's Ordinary Meeting held on 27th November 2023 as previously circulated to members:</p> <p>Chair proposed that the revised Minutes be approved. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved unanimously.</p>	
23/085	<p>To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Council's Ordinary Meeting held on 18th December 2023 as previously circulated to members:</p> <p>Chair proposed that the Minutes of this meeting be approved. Seconded by Cllr. Tillotson and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>To consider any matters arising from those Minutes:</p> <p>a) Lower Way, Harpford – Flooding Cllr. Malawana confirmed that he had been in contact with landowner and provided him with videos and photographs. As the ditch has not been cleared another approach to the landowner will be made.</p>	
23/086	<p>To review the Minutes of the Council's Finance Committee meeting held on 15th January 2024 as previously circulated to members and, if thought fit, ratify recommendations made therein:</p> <p>a) Review of Cemetery Fees Cllr. Carpenter advised that the Finance Committee had recommended an increase in Cemetery fees of 10% but there was an argument for a larger increase to bring fees in line with EDDC charges. It was agreed that a vote on this matter should be held over to the February Council meeting.</p> <p>Clerk to place this item on the agenda for the February Council meeting.</p>	Clerk
23/087	<p>Correspondence received (not previously circulated):</p> <p>a) Invitation to the Official Launch of the Honiton Police Enquiry Office. Chair advised that she had accepted an invitation to join the Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez and Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Leaper to celebrate the official opening of Honiton Police Enquiry Office on 20th February.</p>	
23/088	<p>To consider matters pertaining to highways, speed reduction measures and road safety in the Parish:</p> <p>a) Wig Wag signage: Lights and signage have now been installed although the signage does not stipulate "20mph when flashing" as expected.</p> <p>b) 20mph Speed Limit Programme – third tranche 2024-25 Chair noted that DCC have advised that the eleven selected 20mph speed limit schemes in the first two tranches are underway or completed. There is now an opportunity for a third tranche to be progressed through the 2024-2025 financial year. The first two tranches received a significant amount of interest (152 submissions) and DCC propose to utilise the same scoring matrix as used for the previous years. Therefore, as Council has already submitted an expression of interest it is not necessary to do so again. Cllr. Carpenter asked whether the scoring matrix and results were in the public domain and Cllr. Bailey committed to provide this information to Council.</p> <p>c) Pedestrian Safety Chair noted that one of the items on Council's Action Plan is the improvement of pedestrian safety in Newton Poppleford. In July 2022 the East Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) discussed the contents of an independent report into pedestrian safety in Newton Poppleford carried out on behalf of Devon County Highways by WSP consultants. There were several "options for further consideration" in this report and it was recommended that a pedestrian survey should be carried out to provide further information on numbers and use of crossing points (refuges). The Minutes of the HATOC</p>	

	meeting held on 22nd July 2022 at Minute ref 32(c) state that as suggested by the consultants a Pedestrian Demand Survey should be carried out. To the Council's knowledge no such survey has taken place. Chair will raise this issue via County Councillor Jess Bailey.	
23/089	<p>To consider matters pertaining to footpaths and public rights of way in the Parish: To enable members of the public present to participate in the discussion Chair proposed the suspension of Standing Orders. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>a) Red Bridge: Ted Swan, Footpath Warden advised that he had contacted Simon Jupp MP about this issue as he is concerned at the dramatic impact erosion is having on the footpaths adjacent to Red Bridge. Drone photographs (shown at the meeting) indicate the extent of the erosion. Simon Jupp has committed to attend a site meeting.</p> <p>b) Footbridge at Dotton: A temporary closure notice has been received from DCC which indicates that this footbridge will be closed for a period of up to 6 months in the interests of public safety. Cllr. Bailey advised that DCC is having difficulty obtaining scaffolding poles of an adequate length to span the river due to the amount of erosion.</p>	
23/090	Planning Matters:	
	<p>a) To consider planning applications received prior to publication: 22/1812/FUL – Podbury's Cottage, Harpford – revised plans Chair advised that plans for the extension and detached garage have been revised to reflect the comments of the Conservation Officer who was not happy with some aspects of the original application which was considered by Council in September 2022. The extension has been reduced in size and height and windows have been removed from the detached garage/office. Cllr. Carpenter suggested that a site visit should be carried out before a decision is made. Clerk to contact the property owner and arrange a site visit.</p>	Clerk
	<p>b) To review planning applications received after agenda publication: None received</p>	
	<p>c) Planning determinations/decisions advised: 23/2607/PIP - Notification received on 24th January that this application has been refused by EDDC.</p>	
	<p>d) To consider Council's Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report: Update circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.</p>	
	<p>e) Tree Matters: Venn Ottery Village Green Chair reported that the mini tornado that swept through Tipton and Venn Ottery on 30th December brought down a tree on the Venn Ottery Village Green which Council has an obligation to replace. Fortunately, at the beginning of January, Council was offered a Landmark Tree from Devon Wildlife Trust on the proviso that the tree would be planted in a Community space. Council has subsequently taken delivery of a small leaf lime which Councillor Hughes is kindly going to plant to replace the fallen tree along with some additional trees donated by Bowhayes Trees.</p>	
23/091	Financial Matters:	
	<p>a) To consider and review Financial Reports to end December 2023 as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line.</p> <p>b) To consider and, if thought fit, approve payments for January as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line. Chair proposed that payment of invoices totalling £47,958.57 be approved. Seconded by Cllr. Malawana and approved unanimously.</p>	

		<p>Clerk to note and make payments on the due dates.</p> <p>c) Questions to RFO from members of Council relating to the financial reports. None raised.</p>	Clerk
23/092		BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED:	
	A	<p>To review Council’s position in relation to the former Surgery building and determine future actions: This agenda item was discussed in Committee session.</p>	
	B	<p>To receive an update on refurbishment proposals and costs from the Public WC Working Party: Cllr. Malawana apologised for the lack of progress on this item due to his absence abroad. A scope of works is required for contractors to quote against, but this has not yet been finalised. As a vote on the future of the facility is scheduled to take place at the February Council meeting it was agreed that an Extraordinary meeting may be required to consider quotations prior to that meeting.</p>	
	C	<p>To consider matters relating to the Multi-Use Games Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Official Re-Opening 10th February 2024 b) Bookings c) Floodlights d) Maintenance <p>Councillors received a verbal update on the above items during the Public Forum.</p>	
	D	<p>To consider a request received from the Otter Trail Group that this Council should “seek to ensure that EDDC adopts a policy of allocating future CIL/S106 funding generated by planning approvals towards the Otter Trail.” Chair noted that the Neighbourhood Plan states under Neighbourhood Plan Policy T3: "Proposals to improve and extend existing national and local routes and facilities with particular reference to routes from Harpford to Newton Poppleford, Sidmouth, Ottery St Mary and Budleigh Salterton will be supported." There is also reference to the ‘Future Parish Walking and Cycling Strategy’ which supports "provision of safe and continuous footpaths and cycleways such as reopening of the railway line between Newton Poppleford and Otterton and beyond" It was agreed that further information was required as to what form any support for the Otter Trail should take before a decision is made. Clerk to liaise with the Otter Trail Group and report to the next meeting.</p>	Clerk
	E	<p>To consider all alternative venues available for the holding of Council meetings in rotation to better provide access to members of the wider public and to reach out to the smaller districts within the Parish such as Harpford, Venn Ottery and Southerton: As the proposer, Cllr. Compton, was absent from the meeting this item to be brought forward to the February Council meeting. Clerk to note and action.</p>	Clerk
	F	<p>To receive an update of Council’s Action List 2024-27: Circulated in advance of the meeting.</p>	
	G	<p>To receive and note the annual reminder of Councillor’s obligations and duties in respect of NALC Legal Topic Note 30 (Defamation): Chair reminded Councillors that it is a requirement of Council’s Annual Risk Assessment that Councillors take note of the contents of this document.</p>	
23/093		<p>To consider matters viewed as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only: None so considered.</p>	
23/094		<p>Date of next Ordinary Meeting: Monday, 26th February 2024 at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford</p>	
23/095		<p>Chair proposed that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1972, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting</p>	

	<p>as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Chair thanked members of the public for their attendance and closed the meeting to the public at 8.50pm.</p>	
23/096	<p>Matters to be considered in committee session:</p> <p>a) To ratify the implementation of a recommendation from the Policies and Personnel Committee in respect of the Clerk’s remuneration: Chair declared that this matter had been debated at length, discussed with the Monitoring Officer and a report sent to all Councillors. Chair therefore proposed that the recommendation of the PPC be accepted. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>b) To review Council’s position in relation to the former Surgery building and determine future actions: Chair proposed that Cllr. Carpenter be requested to search Council’s archives once again for any documentation that may be pertinent to this matter and Council’s legal advisers be asked to provide an updated quotation for barrister’s fees as these were last provided in May 2023. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton and resolved unanimously. Cllr. Carpenter and Clerk to note and action.</p>	VC/Clerk

With no further business to consider, Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

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