

NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of **Newton Popleford and Harpford Parish Council** which took place at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Popleford at 7pm on Tuesday, 27th June 2023.

Present: Cllrs. Bisseker, Carpenter (Vice Chair), Dalton, Harrison, Hughes, Lipczynski, Malawana, Tillotson, Tribble (Chair) and Walker
Cllr. Jessica Bailey, County Councillor
Cllr. Chris Burhop, District Councillor
Mr Ted Swan, Honorary Footpath Warden
14 members of the public.

Chair welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting and outlined the Fire Regulations and Evacuation Procedure.

Public Forum

- a) Neighbourhood Policing report
Clerk advised that PC Titherington was on duty and unable to attend the meeting. The June issue of the Sidmouth Neighbourhood Policing newsletter had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.
- b) County Councillor report: Cllr. Jessica Bailey
Chair welcomed Cllr. Bailey to the meeting. Cllr. Bailey advised that she had made £2,300 available to the Parish Council from her Locality Budget to support the installation of wig wag signage. The signs will be located on the A3052 at Otter Reach and King Alfred Way and will flash "20 mph" between 9am - 10am and 3pm – 4pm on schooldays. Although it is not the blanket 20mph limit that the village wants, the new signage should improve road safety on the A3052. Chair thanked Cllr. Bailey for her generosity and support for the parish.
Cllr. Bailey expressed her frustration at the lack of progress in relation to Red Bridge. Despite repeatedly tabling questions on this subject no information has been forthcoming and it is impossible to know whether there has been any real progress since February. Cllr. Bailey reported that she had been successful in ensuring that proposed cuts to the Adult Social Care budget are properly discussed and a meeting will take place on 27th July. Finally, Cllr. Bailey extended her sympathy to those impacted by the flooding and said that she remained available to provide support if needed. Chair thanked Cllr. Bailey for her attendance and report.
- c) District Councillor report: Cllr. Chris Burhop
A copy of Cllr. Burhop's full report is appended to these Minutes.
Cllr. Burhop advised that, although the Flood Recovery Coordination Group has now been dis-banded monthly meetings will take place to provide updates on outstanding works. A representative of VOSRA pointed out that the residents of Venn Ottery have been fighting for improved flood defences for over 20 years. A dossier of information has been sent by VOSRA to Simon Jupp MP, DCC and the Environment Agency but Councillors Burhop and Bailey were both asked for their support in maintaining pressure on the various agencies to ensure that action is taken. In addition, it was mentioned that in 2009 DEFRA made £5m funding available to support people in areas with high levels of flooding – please could Cllrs. Bailey and Burhop pursue this? Cllr. Burhop noted that one of the few good things that had come out of the 9th May event was that a number of issues that had not been addressed for a number of years may now be prioritised.
In response to a question about Back Brook, Cllr. Burhop confirmed that the Environment Agency had surveyed the brook and would be carrying out dredging work at the end of the fish spawning season. Residents whose properties border the brook are being advised of their riparian responsibilities which the EA does have the power to enforce. Cllr. Burhop circulated a map produced by DCC Highways showing planned works to roads damaged by flooding. Following a complaint by a resident, DCC's Rights of Way Officer has been contacted about the surface of Footpath 3 which, now it has been repaired, is not wheelchair-friendly.
A recent survey by EDDC has shown that there are currently 300 empty Council properties in the district some of which have been left in a shocking condition by previous occupiers and require complete renovation. Cllr. Burhop

said he had some sympathy with the Council but this is a situation that needs addressing when there is such high demand for affordable housing.

Finally, Cllr. Burhop asked the Parish Council to consider whether it wished to have EV chargers installed in the School Lane car park.

Chair thanked Cllr. Burhop for his very informative report.

d) Report from Ted Swan, Parish Footpath Warden

Mr Swan apologised for his recent absence from the parish due to the flooding of his property but confirmed that he would be resuming duties next week. Chair responded that Mr Swan had nothing to apologise for. Arrangements will be made to send his deputy, Mr Kimber, on a brushcutter course. Mr Swan advised that his application to have the path between School Lane car park and Church Green acknowledged as a Public Footpath would be heard by Devon County Council on 13th July. Mr Swan will attend the meeting in support of his claim. Clerk confirmed to Mr Swan that Footpath 39 at Lynch Head had now been added to the Definitive Map and formal documentation received from DCC. In addition, it was noted that a P3 grant of £450 will be paid to Council this year. Chair thanked Mr Swan for his continuing hard work on behalf of the parish.

e) Report from the Climate Change Group

No report submitted but Cllr. Walker confirmed that the mulch that had been washed away in the flood had now been replaced. Most of the hedge whips and new trees are surviving the dry weather.

f) Questions and representations from residents/parishioners

A member of the public noted that in the May edition of the parish magazine it was stated that Council was to commence legal proceedings in relation to the redundant surgery building. The Clerk was asked what sum of money had been put aside by Council to pay for this. The Clerk responded that Council had budgeted a sum for the year to cover professional fees and any costs relating to an application to the Lands Tribunal would be paid from this sum. However, the Clerk stated that, to date, Council had not resolved to proceed with legal proceedings.

There being no further questions Chair closed the Public Forum and reminded members of the public present that they would not be able to address the meeting again until Council's Standing Orders were suspended.

To consider the following business:

		Action
23/001	To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted: (LGA 1972 S.85(1)) Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Compton who had a prior engagement. It was proposed by Cllr. Lipczynski that this apology be accepted. Resolved unanimously.	
23/002	Declarations of interest from members / Dispensations afforded: All members present are, by definition, members of the NPPFF Trustee Board and declare a personal interest in that capacity. Cllr. Tillotson was afforded a dispensation to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to Parish allotments at the Annual Meeting of Council held on 22 nd May 2023. This dispensation applies until May 2027 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of her personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as an allotment tenant.	
23/003	To consider a request from Cllr. Hughes for a dispensation to discuss and vote upon matters relating to trees to remain in effect until May 2027 in respect of personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as owner of Bowhayes Trees Ltd (S.33 Localism Act 2011): Cllr. Tillotson proposed that this Dispensation Request be approved. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved unanimously.	
23/004	To consider any matters listed on this Agenda that Councillors believe should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. See Agenda item 23/017.	
23/005	To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2023 as previously circulated to members:	

	<p>Cllr. Carpenter proposed that these Minutes be approved. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes: None not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda.</p>	
23/006	<p>To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on 22nd May 2023 as previously circulated to members: Clerk confirmed to Cllr. Hughes that an email received from Cllr. Compton today on this subject had been circulated to all members. Cllr. Carpenter stated that Cllr. Compton had been advised of his rights and on the procedure for proposing an amendment to the draft Minutes. Chair stated that, as Cllr. Compton had not put forward a draft amendment for consideration, Councillors must vote on the proposal before them. Cllr. Tillotson proposed that these Minutes be approved as drafted. Seconded by Cllr. Walker. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>In response to a question from Cllr. Hughes, the Clerk advised that the Annual Meeting had not been recorded. Prior notification is given on the Agenda if a meeting is to be recorded.</p> <p>To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes: None not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda.</p>	
23/007	<p>To consider and review the Minutes and recommendations of the Council's Finance Committee meeting held on 20th June 2023 as previously circulated to members: Contents noted.</p>	
23/008	<p>Correspondence received: None not discussed elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
23/009	<p>To consider matters pertaining to highways and road safety in the parish:</p> <p>i) Installation of Wig Wag signage Chair thanked Cllr. Bailey once again for providing funds to support the installation of the wig wag signage. The cost to the Council will be £850 which is within the budget of £1,000. Cllr. Bailey said that she would try and find out when the installation would take place.</p>	
23/010	<p>To note the outcome of an investigation into a formal complaint lodged against the Parish Clerk: Chair stated that is a requirement of Council's Complaints Policy that the outcome of any complaint made to Council is made public. It was therefore incumbent on her to confirm that a formal complaint against the Parish Clerk had been received and duly investigated by the Chair and Vice Chair. The complaint was not upheld.</p>	
	<p>As there were members of the public present who wished to speak on planning matters Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow public representations. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton and resolved unanimously.</p>	
23/011	<p>Planning Matters:</p> <p>a) To consider planning applications received prior to publication: 23/1067/FUL – Swallowfield Cottage, High Street, NP Noted that this property is in a courtyard development with limited access and parking. The property has one allocated parking space and the applicant wishes to convert the roof space to create a third bedroom. Cllr. Lipczynski proposed that Council object to this</p>	

	<p>application as it contravenes Neighbourhood Plan Policy T1. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved unanimously. Clerk to note and update the EDDC Planning Portal accordingly. 23/1210/FUL – Bridge End House, Harpford</p> <p>A number of members of the public expressed concern about this application for Change of Use from residential to a residential institution to house vulnerable people and their carers. It was felt that insufficient information had been provided about the potential client group but that, in any event, the location of this property was unsafe for anyone with special needs. The property is very difficult to access whether on foot or by car, access for emergency services off the single track lane would be extremely difficult, the bus stops are dangerously sited, there are no pavements and the A3052 at Four Elms Hill is a notorious accident blackspot. Parking is poor and the building is known to regularly flood during which times the parking area will be under water. In addition, Harpford has no amenities at all and accessing amenities in Newton Poppleford, except by car, is unsafe.</p> <p>Chair noted that the Neighbourhood Plan states that Council will, in principle, support Change of Use applications from residential to business as new businesses improve the economic health of the community and may provide employment to local people. However, the health of individuals is more important than economic health. Cllr. Bailey stated that, although she did not usually comment on planning matters, road safety is a County Council issue so she may comment in this instance. Before leaving the meeting at 8.10pm Cllr. Bailey thanked those members of the public present for coming to the meeting to raise their concerns.</p> <p>Cllr. Hughes proposed that Council object to this application on the grounds that the property is not in an appropriate location for use as a residential institution. Seconded by Cllr. Harrison and carried with 9 votes in favour, 1 abstention.</p> <p>Clerk to note and upload decision to the planning portal.</p> <p>As there were no further representations to be heard from members of the public Chair reimposed Standing Orders.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
	<p>b) To consider planning applications received after agenda publication: None received.</p>	
	<p>c) Planning determinations/decisions advised: 23/0004/FUL – Land north of Grange Farm, Southerton – Approved with conditions 23/0010/FUL – Land north of Grange Farm, Southerton – Approved with conditions 23/0785/FUL – Garden Cottage, Venn Ottery – Approved 23/0063/FUL – Fairholme, Exeter Road, NP – Approved with conditions</p>	
	<p>d) Planning correspondence received: None received.</p>	
	<p>e) To note and respond to planning consultations received:</p>	

		<p>EDDC Local Plan Webinar 15th June – Neighbourhood Area Housing Requirement: Cllr. Carpenter confirmed that he had attended this webinar but the issues dealt with were too complex to explain in a short report. When the minutes are available these will be circulated.</p>	
		<p>f) To consider Council’s Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report: Update circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.</p>	
23/012		<p>Financial Matters:</p> <p>a) To consider and review Financial Reports for May as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line: Noted.</p> <p>b) To note June payments approved by the Finance Committee as per documents circulated to members and published on-line: Noted.</p> <p>c) To ratify the decision of the Finance Committee to renew Council’s All Risks Insurance Policy with Ansvar Insurance on the terms outlined in the Insurance Renewal Review document previously circulated: Cllr. Hughes proposed the decision be ratified. Seconded by Cllr. Harrison and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>d) To note the result of the Rebuild Cost Assessment of the Pavilion building and the decision of the Finance Committee to increase the sum insured accordingly: Clerk advised that increasing the sum insured from £424,000 to £725,000 may result in an increase in the annual premium.</p> <p>e) Questions to RFO from members of Council relating to these financial reports. None received.</p>	
23/013		<p>BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED:</p>	
	A	<p>To consider Committee memberships for 2023/24:</p> <p>i) Finance Committee Present members of the committee had all indicated their willingness to continue. Chair noted that Cllr. Compton had expressed an interest in serving on this committee. As there were no proposals made the committee continues with its current membership.</p> <p>ii) Policies & Personnel Committee Present members of the committee had all indicated a willingness to continue. Cllr. Malawana had expressed an interest in serving on this committee. Cllr. Lipczynski proposed that Cllr. Malawana be elected as a member of the PPC. Seconded by Cllr. Walker. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>iii) Planning Committee After discussion it was agreed that it would be beneficial to reinstate this committee. Chair along with Cllrs. Bisseker, Carpenter, Harrison and Hughes volunteered to serve. Cllr. Hughes recommended that members of this committee receive training on responding to planning applications. Clerk confirmed that all new Councillors had been signposted to download the Neighbourhood Plan from the website.</p>	

		Clerk to investigate suitable DALC training courses.	Clerk
B	<p>To review membership of Working Parties:</p> <p>i) WC Refurbishment Project: Chair explained that Council proposed to alter the existing public WC to provide a single, unisex, card-entry facility. This will reduce cleaning and maintenance costs and deter vandalism. The working party will be tasked with driving this project forward. Cllrs. Harrison and Malawana volunteered to join the Chair and Cllrs. Dalton, Tribble and Walker on this working party.</p> <p>ii) Climate Change Group: Cllr. Bisseker to be added to the circulation for this group. Clerk to advise chair of the Climate Change Group.</p>		Clerk
		Chair proposed the suspension of Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to address the meeting. Resolved unanimously.	
C	<p>To receive an update on the installation of the Venn Ottery Village Green footbridge:</p> <p>i) Correspondence received from the resident of ‘Slightly Foxed’, Venn Ottery The owner of this property reminded Councillors that he and his wife had allowed members of the public to cross their property since the loss of the footbridge connecting the churchyard to the village green. However, they had not anticipated how long it would take to replace the bridge. With the second anniversary now looming Council was requested to provide some assurance that the new bridge would be installed soon. Cllr. Hughes agreed that Council had relied on the goodwill of the owners of this property for long enough and this project needed to be completed as soon as possible. Cllr. Tillotson remarked that Council had not appreciated how difficult it was to find a suitable bridge and, having purchased it, the installation of the bridge had become quite a complicated, and costly, issue. Chair thanked the residents for their patience. Clerk confirmed that two quotations for the installation of the bridge had been received and a third was awaited. As soon as this had been received Council would be able to appoint a contractor. Cllr. Hughes was given authority to obtain quotes for the installation of a post and rails adjacent to the culvert. Chair reimposed Standing Orders.</p>		
D	<p>To review response to flooding event in the parish:</p> <p>i) Recovery Coordination Group actions and reports: This subject was discussed at length during the Public Forum.</p> <p>ii) Parish response and Emergency Plan review: Cllr. Carpenter confirmed that a useful meeting had taken place with Dave Whelan, EDDC’s Emergency Planning Officer on 6th June. An updated version of the Emergency Plan will be circulated shortly. Cllr. Carpenter confirmed that this would include plans to have stocks of flood defence equipment available in Newton Poppleford, Venn Ottery and Harpford. It is</p>		

	<p>proposed to hold a public meeting when the S19 report has been published. This would be an appropriate event at which to encourage community engagement in the plan.</p> <p>iii) Update on Council insurance claims: Clerk confirmed that quotations for repairs to the MUGA had been submitted to the Loss Adjuster. Cllr. Malawana suggested that the Clerk update residents on the time frame for repairs when known. Clerk to note and action</p> <p>iv) Fencing Repairs: Quotations are being sought for repairs to the fencing. As the costs will not be covered by insurance Council will need to consider other sources of finance. Clerk to add to the agenda for discussion at the July meeting</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
23/014	<p>To consider matters viewed as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only: None so considered.</p>	
23/015	<p>Date of next Ordinary Meeting Monday 24th July, 2023 at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford. The meeting will commence at 7.15pm.</p>	
23/016	<p>At 9.05pm 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 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. Members of the public were thanked for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.</p>	
23/017	<p>Business to be considered in committee session:</p> <p>i) Matters pertaining to the former surgery building in Newton Poppleford After discussion, Councillors resolved that the surgery building will remain vacant while the Council continues communications with local GP Practices. Parishioners to be reminded why the building is not currently being utilised and of the costs of maintaining and insuring the building whilst it is empty – approximately £800 per annum.</p>	

With no further business to consider, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.50pm.