

NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting which took place at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford at 7pm on Monday, 27th February 2023.

Present: Cllrs. Burhop (Chair), Carpenter (Vice Chair), Chapman, Dalton, Tillotson, Tribble and Walker.
DCC Cllr. Jess Bailey
Ted Swan, Honorary Footpath Warden
2 members of the public

Chair welcomed all present to the Council's February meeting and outlined the fire evacuation procedure prior to opening the Public Forum.

Public Forum

Some reports may have been circulated beforehand and published on-line

a) Neighbourhood Policing report

No report received. It was noted that thefts of catalytic converters from vehicles had been reported locally.

b) District Councillor report: Cllr. Chris Burhop

Cllr. Burhop commented on the tv, press and radio coverage of the campaign led by Harpford residents to have the Red Bridge replaced. Two years ago DCC committed to replacing the bridge and had stated that, on that basis, they would no longer maintain the existing bridge. Since then, they have been true to their word and no maintenance has been carried out, the bridge is now falling into disrepair and may have to be closed. Meanwhile, no progress has been made on installing a new bridge. DCC had stated on tv that the bridge would be replaced but gave no indication of when.

The short-notice closure of the A3052 on Sunday 26th February had caused confusion and it was clear from the email correspondence that DCC Highways had not been entirely transparent about the reason for this. No progress has been made on the issue of the puffin crossing timing and Cllr. Burhop planned to create some additional publicity with the support of Cllr. Bailey.

Cllr. Burhop stated that he had attended a meeting of Ottery St Mary Town Council to which a representative of South West Water had been invited. At that meeting, SWW acknowledged that discharges of untreated sewage from the Honiton treatment plant had taken place on 192 occasions in 2022. SWW have used an ongoing government investigation as an excuse for not responding to Freedom of Information requests which would make detailed information available to the wider public. SWW are blaming additional housing development and poor infrastructure for these problems but do have the power to oppose development which they rarely use. Conversely, for every new house that is built the water company benefits from the additional water rates.

Cllr. Burhop reported that EDDC has now set a budget for 2023-24 which will result in an increase of 3.19% to Council Tax – equivalent to £5 per annum for a Band D household. County Council, Police and Fire Service budgets will also increase and impact on the overall Council Tax burden. Cllr. Burhop noted that, despite a significant increase for the coming year, Newton Poppleford and Harpford parish precept is 13.5% lower than the District average.

c) County Councillor report: Cllr. Jessica Bailey

Chair welcomed Cllr. Bailey to the meeting. Cllr. Bailey congratulated all involved with the publicity surrounding the issue of the Red Bridge and footpath linking Newton Poppleford and Harpford and confirmed that she is pressing for a meeting with Richard Walton, Public Rights of Manager at DCC to try and progress the matter. As there has been no action from DCC Highways on the requested changes to the puffin crossing timing nor have they provided the long-awaited crossing survey, Cllr. Bailey agreed to work with Cllr. Burhop on publicising this issue and putting additional pressure on DCC. Suitable locations have apparently been found for the installation of the wig wags but Cllr. Bailey has not been told where these are.

Cllr. Bailey expressed concern about potential cuts to Adult Social Care services, despite DCC publicly announcing an increase in spending which indicates a lack of honesty about their intentions. DCC have launched an Equalities Commission which, on the face of it, is a good thing but Cllr. Bailey pointed out that 8 of the 9 current DCC Cabinet members are men!

Cllr. Carpenter referred to an email exchange dated June 2021 from which, it appeared, progress was being made on the installation of a new crossing between Newton Poppleford and Harpford and that funds were available to

achieve this. Cllr. Carpenter asked what needs to happen to ensure that, two years on, the issue of the Red Bridge is finally dealt with. It was agreed that pressure from residents, District and County Councillors should continue to make certain that DCC are not allowed to put the subject on the 'back burner' once again. Mr. Swan said that he was aware that there are numerous examples of footpaths and rights of way across the whole region that are not being properly maintained. Cllr. Carpenter commented that public authorities value walking as an exercise so should, therefore, maintain footpaths to facilitate this. Cllr. Bailey stated that it required political will to put the resources in.

Chair thanked Cllr. Bailey for her commitment to the parish.

- d) Report from Ted Swan, Parish Footpath Warden
Mr Swan reported that all footpaths are in good order. The workload will increase with the advent of Spring and a burst in vegetation growth.
- e) Report from the Allotment Management Committee
Cllr. Tillotson reported on a meeting of Allotment tenants held on Saturday, 25th February at which it was agreed to set up a dedicated group email to improve the communication flow. A recent complaint from a resident about rubbish in the lane had been quickly dealt with. All plastic and metal waste has been removed from the boundary hedgerow and banks and is piled up awaiting hire of a skip. New hedging whips have been planted in gaps in the hedge and on the banks. Hedges have been pruned and it is hoped that they can be laid next year to promote growth. Chair thanked Cllr. Tillotson and her support team for their hard work.
- f) Report from the Climate Change Group
Mr Swan presented a report on behalf of Mrs. Cameron-Webb, chair of the Climate Change Group who had sent her apologies to the meeting. The full report is appended to these Minutes and is also available to view on the parish website.
Cllr. Walker proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Cameron-Webb for facilitating the various tree planting projects. This was seconded by the Chair who stated that the village had been transformed. Unanimously supported.
- g) Questions and representations from residents/parishioners
Mr Swan expressed concern at the number of large chunks of concrete in the MUGA topsoil dumped in Webbers Meadow which could cause problems for the grounds maintenance contractor. Chair asked Mr Swan to provide some photographic evidence so that the matter could be taken up with the MUGA contractor.

There being no further questions the Public Forum was closed by the Chair who thanked all in attendance.

		Action:
22/120	To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted (LGA 1972 S.85(1))	
	Apologies received from Cllrs. Bilenkyj, Hughes, Lipczynski and Morgan were noted and accepted.	
22/121	Declarations of interest from members / Dispensations afforded	
	Noted that 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 Ordinary Meeting held 29/3/2021. This dispensation applies until May 2023 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of her personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as an allotment tenant. Chair reminded members of their duty to declare interests during the meeting if applicable.	
22/122	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 item 22/135	
22/123	To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Council's Ordinary Meeting held on 30th January 2023 as previously circulated to members.	

	<p>Cllr. Walker proposed that the Minutes be approved as a correct record of the business of the meeting. Seconded by Cllr. Chapman and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes:</p> <p>a) Venn Ottery footbridge installation Chair advised that the contractor will commence work on the bridge plinths within the next 7 days. By way of clarification, a request from the Venn Ottery and Southerton Residents Association to place a Jubilee bench on the village green was unanimously approved.</p>	
22/124	<p>To review the Minutes of the Council's Finance Committee meeting held on 20th February 2023 as previously circulated to members, and:</p> <p>a) To ratify the decision to accept a donation from the Community Café</p> <p>Chair proposed that an offer from the Community Café to make a donation of £1,189 to fund the purchase of a power sweeper for the MUGA be accepted. With members involved with the Community Café abstaining the proposal was carried with 4 votes in favour.</p> <p>Clerk to note and action the equipment purchase.</p>	Clerk
22/125	<p>To review the Minutes of the Council's Policy and Personnel Committee held on 15th February 2023 and:</p> <p>a) To note the re-adoption of the Data Protection, Publication, Ethical and Web & Social Media Policies Noted. Clerk to update the parish website accordingly.</p> <p>b) To review and, if thought fit, ratify the draft MUGA Booking Policy previously circulated to members as recommended by the PPC. Members voted unanimously to ratify this policy although the Chair noted that it may require amendment in future. Clerk to upload policy to the parish website.</p>	Clerk Clerk
22/126	<p>Correspondence received: Email received from Harpford Hall thanking Council for providing a grant to support of the installation of wifi at the hall.</p>	
22/127	<p>Chair's announcements: Chair noted that covid is still very much present in the community.</p>	
22/128	<p>To consider matters pertaining to highways, speed reduction measures and road safety in the Parish:</p> <p>a) Publicity regarding lack of progress on Puffin crossing timings: This matter was discussed within the public forum.</p>	
22/129	<p>Planning Matters:</p>	
	<p>a) To consider planning applications received prior to publication: None received.</p>	
	<p>b) To consider planning applications received after agenda publication: None received.</p>	
	<p>c) Planning determinations/decisions advised: 22/2276/FUL – Hillsbrook, High Street, NP Chair reported that this application had been refused on highway safety grounds. 22/2441/FUL – Pump Cottage, Higher Way, Harpford Chair noted that although Council had supported this application it had been refused on the advice of the Conservation Officer who</p>	

		considered that any further extension to a listed building would be detrimental to the integrity of the building.	
		d) Planning correspondence received: Chair reported that he had received notification by telephone that the owner of Waterleat no longer intended to develop the site and the property would be placed on the market with the benefit of the full planning permission in place.	
		e) To note and respond to planning consultations received: None received.	
		f) To consider Council’s Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report: Update circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting and contents noted. Chair highlighted that applications submitted in October - 22/2243/FUL – Woodentop, Littledown Lane and 22/2424/FUL – Luscombes, Back Lane had not yet been determined. Clerk confirmed that she had been in communication with Planning Officers regarding these applications and would follow up.	
		g) Update on the Emerging Local Plan for East Devon: Chair confirmed that EDDC members had resolved that work on aspects of the Emerging Local Plan will continue pending clarification of the Government’s new National Planning Policy Framework and confirmation of the number of houses required to be built in the district.	
22/130		Financial Matters:	
		a) To consider and review Financial Reports to 31 st January 2023 as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line: Chair reported that the Finance Committee had resolved to reduce the WC Refurbishment Fund to £10,000. Contact had been made with a specialist contractor who, it is hoped, will be able to assist with the plan to refurbish one unit of the WC as previously resolved by Council. b) To note February payments approved by the Finance Committee as per documents circulated to members and published on-line: Noted. Clerk to action payments as resolved. c) To note receipt of the CIL payment for 2022 Chair stated that he and the Clerk would check planning records to ensure that the correct CIL payments had been received from EDDC. Chair and Clerk to action. d) Questions to RFO from members of Council relating to the financial reports: None raised.	Clerk Clerk/Chair
22/131		BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED:	
	A	To receive an update on matters pertaining to the footpath and bridge between Newton Popleford and Harford: Discussed during the Public Forum.	
	B	To consider matters pertaining to the MUGA facility: a) Floodlighting – S.106 and CIL funding availability	

	<p>Chair noted that currently available funding would not be sufficient to fund the installation of floodlights and other sources of funding will need to be found.</p> <p>b) Maintenance Equipment purchase: Dealt with at 22/124(a).</p> <p>c) CCTV installation: Cllr. Tribble advised that a meeting had been held with the contractor and a quotation is awaited.</p> <p>d) Booking system: Clerk reported that Cllr. Hughes is making progress with the set-up of a dedicated on-line booking system.</p> <p>e) Netball Provision: Chair reported on a meeting with the regional Development Officer for England Netball who will assist with promoting netball in the parish. England Netball may also be able to help with funding the floodlights.</p>	
C	<p>To note EDDC advice pertaining to the parish celebration of the Coronation in May 2023: Noted that, due to the proximity of the local government elections, the celebrations of the Coronation will be organised by a community group and not by Council to avoid contravening publicity restrictions.</p>	
D	<p>To review and, if thought fit, approve the revised Annual Risk Assessment as recommended by the Finance Committee and PPC: Cllr. Tribble proposed that the revised Annual Risk Assessment be adopted by Council. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved unanimously. Clerk to note and update website accordingly</p>	Clerk
E	<p>To consider Electric Vehicle (EV) charging facilities at School Lane Car Park: Chair proposed that an approach be made to EDDC to ask if they would consider providing EV charging points in the School Lane car park as part of the regional roll-out which is currently ongoing in EDDC-owned car parks. Cllr. Carpenter suggested that, prior to such an approach, the level of demand should be ascertained. It was agreed that residents in the immediate vicinity should be surveyed directly with the wider community being asked to respond via a social media campaign. Clerk to note and action.</p>	Clerk
F	<p>To consider Council's policy with regard to the use of weedkillers and pesticides in the parish: It was noted that Council does not currently have a policy on this issue. Cllr. Walker reported that the Climate Change Group was strongly against the use of chemicals which could leach into watercourses and be detrimental to wildlife. Cllr. Tillotson suggested that, in certain places, the use of weedkiller was the only way to keep pavements and other hard-standing areas tidy. Chair proposed that Council should prohibit the use of weedkillers and pesticides by Council's own contractors unless permission is sought and such use is expressly approved. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved with 6 votes in favour and one vote against. Clerk to advise grounds maintenance contractor accordingly.</p>	Clerk
G	<p>To consider matters pertaining to Parish and District Council elections May 2023:</p>	

		The contents of documents circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting setting out the election timetable were noted. Clerk advised that nomination forms would be available to download from the EDDC website from 1 st March.	
22/132		To consider matters viewed as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only: None raised.	
22/133		Date of next Ordinary Meeting Monday, 27 th March 2023 at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford	
22/134		It was 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. Chair closed the meeting to the public at 8.45pm.	
22/135		Matters to be considered in committee session: a) Matters pertaining to the Surgery building: Chair reported that the Clerk had written to all three local GP practices as requested at December's meeting. To date only Budleigh Salterton Medical Practice had responded stating that they had no interest in opening a branch surgery. A further meeting with Robert Way residents to progress action previously agreed by Council will take place shortly.	

With no further business to consider, Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Climate Change Group update to Parish Council – 27th Feb 23

DCC Emergency Tree Fund Project

Fortunately we had good weather and lots of volunteers on the four planting dates and all the trees and hedging whips were successfully planted in the playing field, the old and new cemeteries and on Burrow Green.

The 50 trees were all native species such as Birch, Cherry and Hawthorn as well as less common natives such as Wild Service and Juniper trees. The trees were much bigger and more mature than expected so we should see a good impact this year.

About 1,200 hedging whips were planted at the four sites creating 180m of new hedgerows.

DCC additionally provided an extra 150 whips which volunteers planted to help rejuvenate the Devon banks and hedgerows around the allotment area.

The planting will improve biodiversity, provide many new places for birds to nest and these native species will provide the right sort of food for wildlife. Equally important is that the new planting should increase resident's enjoyment and well-being.

DCC contracted a company called Parklife to manage the overall project in partnership with the Climate Change Group and in April we'll meet with Parklife again to talk about the on-going maintenance of the planting. Not just the watering but also things like the grass cutting regime.

AONB Apple Orchard

CCG also arranged the planting of the new Community Apple Orchard in December when twenty apple trees were planted.

The orchard needs to be maintained by the community so the CCG will discuss this at their next meeting.

Costs

There was no cost at all to the parish for the trees, hedging, stakes, guards and mulch, and thanks must go to the organisations and individuals who covered all the costs.

The Orchard was paid for by a £533 grant from the East Devon AONB and £120 which was kindly donated by the Community Café.

Planting on the playing field, old and new cemeteries, Burrow Green and the allotment were paid for by the Woodland Trust and the Queen's Green Canopy fund.

Additionally free refreshments were provided to volunteers at all 5 planting sessions by Anita Kemp, Lorna Dalton and Makala Tillotson

Volunteers

This amount of tree planting could only be achieved with a LOT of help.

Big thanks must go to the many residents who turned up for every planting session, to the class of children from Newton Poppleford school and 9 Bicton College students who joined us at the playing field and to Toby Taylor's RSPB volunteers who ploughed through the new cemetery planting in a single day.

Thanks also to the Parish Council for allowing us to plant on parish land, Devon County Council for choosing us to be part their Emergency Tree Planting project and to Parklife who managed the planting.

Jubilee Copse

Although the Jubilee Copse was flooded for several weeks most of the whips have buds showing so it might have survived, but only time will tell.

However the MUGA foundation soil shouldn't be moved until expert advice shows how to avoid accidental flooding of the orchard as apple trees definitely don't like their feet in water.

Queen's Green Canopy

All the trees and hedges planted over the last 12 months have now been added to the Queen's Green Canopy register to show how Newton Poppleford is helping to restore biodiversity for the future.

Note that to protect privacy they don't show the exact locations.

Free Tree Giveaway

To help counter the effects of ash die-back the CCG applied to Devon Wildlife Trust for 250 tree whips which were given to residents to plant in their gardens.

The Free Tree Giveaway took place on 11th February and there was an enthusiastic take up with all trees disappearing in 1 ¼ hours!