

Exford Parish Council
Draft Minutes of Parish Council meeting

Held on: 26th January 2016 at Exford Village Hall 7.30pm

Attendance: Mike Ellicott, Kathryn Tucker, Joan Atkins, Jeremy Hickman, Derek Lloyd, Brian Martin, Judy Skinner,
Cllr Frances Nicholson, Cllr Steven Pugsley. Clerk: Jane Laycock.

Members of Public: Dave Baldwin, Liz Baldwin, Carole Boyles, Ines Collett, Anna Connell, Maggie Lloyd, Barbara Pears, Karen Wall

Apologies for Absence: None

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26th November 2015

Minutes were signed off as a true record (proposed DL, seconded BM).

Matters Arising

Actions from minutes of meeting held on 26th November:

1. Village Green Maintenance. Quotation accepted.
2. De icing Material. Notice placed on parish noticeboard.
3. Village Litter Pick. See agenda item 'Highways' below.
4. ENPA Planning. Arranged.
5. Community Asset Scheme. SP briefly outlined this and is sending details to Clerk.

HM The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations

Carol Boyles initiated a discussion regarding the date and format of a village event.

It was agreed that the event should take place on Sunday 12th June (the weekend of the Queen's official birthday) and should be a village tea in a 'street party' format-i.e. tables in one long marquee on the green with games for the children and possibly music.

DE queried if there are to be beacons lit on April 21st. ME stated that neighbouring parishes who have existing beacon sites may be doing this.

ME proposed that the Parish Council donate up to £500 towards the village tea party. JH seconded. Passed unanimously. Receipts to be passed to the Clerk for payment.

Action 1. Carol Boyles and volunteers to coordinate arrangements and also advertise event in Across Exmoor and on village website.

BM to check availability of chairs and tables with Village Hall committee and also check situation regarding performance licence for any music.

Highways

ME, KT and JH attended the recent Exmoor Area Panel meeting and raised the ongoing problem of blocked drains with Highways.

Mill Lane has now been scraped and JH is attempting to arrange for Veolia to sweep the area.

Comments were made on the poor condition of the road markings in the village and also at Chibbet Post, some of which have only recently been done and do not appear to be lasting. JH will follow up with Highways to repaint.

The newly refilled BT Openreach manholes on the Monkham road are breaking up and water is bubbling out. JH raised this issue with Highways 10 days ago with no response.

Action 2. JH to continue to follow up the above issues with Highways.

DL raised issue of Highways decision not to proceed with altering the Chibbet Post junction. He has emailed Highways and also undertaken a survey via the village shop. Although the survey response was disappointing, out of 17 responses 10 people commented that they had had near misses at this junction.

FN stated that she has pursued this as far as possible and her opinion is that there is no realistic prospect of Highways changing their decision.

It was noted that the 30mph sign still hasn't been moved beyond Westcott Mead. FN will chase.

Action 3. FN to raise again with Highways.

BM raised issue of the rapidly diminishing levels of salt in the bags on the moor. FN stated that salt boxes are available to parishes to buy at a discounted rate which Highways will then keep refilled. However, none of the areas concerned fall within Exford Parish.

It was commented that there is a considerable amount of mud and other farmyard material deposited on the road between Monkham and Chibbet Post. There was concern that this is making the road surface slippery and a hazard to road users. Clerk was requested to write to Linley Williams to raise the issue.

Action 4. Clerk to write to landowner.

ME reported that there is a diversion sign which has been left in the layby on the B3224 near the Hunt Kennels.

Action 5. Clerk to report to Highways.

Exmoor Parish Lengthsman

ME reported that the Lengthsman scheme is no longer being subsidized this year. This will have the effect of raising his hourly rate from £6.28 to a minimum of £11.50. Discussion followed on whether it was worth continuing to use this scheme.

JS stated that he appeared to be rather limited in the duties he could undertake. ME confirmed that he strims banks and around signposts and clears the tops of drains however he requires close supervision and works rather slowly and queried if he was value for money.

JH pointed out that the Lengthsman has the advantage of being Chapter 8 registered and is therefore licensed to work on the public highway.

FN confirmed that there is a Management Committee which should appraise and manage the Lengthsman however this appears to have become fairly inactive.

Action 6. ME to discuss with Dulverton Town Council (lead council) and report back.

Historic Signposts Project

ME confirmed that this is still progressing, albeit slowly. Surveys are completed and ENPA are in the process of arranging finance. ME stated that we will continue to push for this to be completed this year, ideally in the summer weather.

FN commented that recent press articles regarding lack of support for historic signposts from SCC are incorrect.

Village Litter Pick 2016

It was agreed that this should take place on Sunday 20th March 2-4pm. This date should be late enough to avoid the worst of the winter weather whilst also being just before the Easter holidays.

Action 7. Clerk to advertise in Across Exmoor.

Exford Toilets

ME advised that the paperwork is still being processed by solicitors. Until the funds are in the hands of the Parish Council, we will not commit to start the building work. Unfortunately, the builders are now getting booked up, but progress will be made as soon as possible.

Village Green/Play Area

ME had a meeting with a representative from the reinforced matting suppliers regarding protecting the vehicular entrance to the village green. The problem is that part of the area already has hardcore/tarmac which would have to be removed before matting is laid. The alternative is to put a layer of hardcore across the whole surface and roll it in which would stabilize the area and enable grass to eventually grow through. BM proposed that in view of the matting costing approx. £1200, that we should consider the hardcore option.

Action 8. ME to investigate costs with the intention of completing this before May Day.

BM reported that the intermittent problem with the play area roundabout sticking is being monitored and will be examined when the weather dries out. Also the shavings around some of the play equipment will need to be topped up in the spring in order to comply with playground regulations. We may need to raise funds to pay for this.

QEII Playing Field

BM reported that a Management Committee meeting was held on 25th January. James Winzer has replaced Lady Jenny Acland as a Youth Club representative.

The shipping container used as storage by the Cricket Club is permitted to be on location until 29th October 2019. Longer term options are to build a permanent structure over the container or to build a new structure and sell the container. Decision also has to be made as to whether the location remains the same (NE corner of field) or in the SW corner where there is an issue with a slight change in the existing right of way. Parish Council will be kept informed of progress on any proposal.

With the finalisation of QEII Fields in Trust status we have the opportunity to use this status to help gain funding and it should be mentioned in all applications to grant bodies. BM has received confirmation from FIT that the Parish Council can take up membership for £50pa which would give access to discounts and funding opportunities. These benefits can be accessed by the user groups under the PC membership. BM proposed that the PC approves the proposal to take up this membership for an initial year. ME seconded. Agreed unanimously.

Action 9. Clerk to progress.

Will Lock has sourced (at 50% discount) and fitted a new lockable manhole cover for the septic tank. This will be paid for by the PC. Huge thank you to Will for doing this.

Insurance for the QEII Field of £499.43 is now due and has been paid. BM thanked Dave Skinner for once again undertaking the pavilion roof inspection which is a condition of the insurance.

The formal request to the Charity Commission to dissolve the former Exford Playing Field charity is still progressing and will require a visit to the Somerset Heritage Centre to attempt to resolve outstanding issues. BM and ME will undertake.

Community Renewable Energy Grants

ENPA working in partnership with the Exmoor Trust have recently announced a new round of funding from the Carbon Neutral Exmoor project to support community based renewable energy projects. Funding is available as a grant repayable via the government's Clean Energy Cashback initiative and is available to cover the costs of installing renewable energy within community buildings on Exmoor. Exmoor Trust requires expression of interest from community groups by end March 2016. Further details: http://www.exmoortrust.org.uk/carbon_neutral_exmoor_fund.php ME confirmed that the new toilets will have 2 solar panels on the roof to charge a battery supporting the lighting.

Visit Somerset

We have received a request from John Turner (CEO of Visit Somerset) regarding making a presentation on his organization. It was agreed that it would be more effective if he attends a meeting of the Exmoor Area Panel.

Action 10. Clerk to suggest he contacts SP to arrange.

Finance

The bank reconciliation for 26th January was produced showing current account funds available of £6628.76 with £7584.89 held in reserve.

We are awaiting receipt of our application for government funding under the Transparency Code initiative to enable us to purchase equipment and set up the required Parish Council website.

Councillors met on 15th December to discuss the budget for 2016/17. Although there was a underspend against budget this year, this was due to the sum which had been apportioned to cover maintenance and cleaning of the new toilets not being required. Maintenance costs exceeded budget due to exceptional items such as essential tree work on the green and signpost restoration. In the coming year, Councillors were mindful that the toilets will become operative, first aid retraining is due and we may also have to contribute towards further signpost restoration. Once again, WSDC are not able to provide any financial support.

Councillors therefore unanimously agreed a modest increase in precept of 5% in order to cover anticipated expenditure in the coming year, giving a total precept amount of £10314.

Planning

KT forwarded a report on the following planning applications:

Planning meeting 16th December 2015.

6/13/15/113 Exford Depot, Exford. Application for proposed alterations to surface water drainage and installation of oil interceptor. All Councillors present approved application.

Stone Farm, Exford. Reinstatement of two mid-18th century fireplaces.

This matter which commenced in 2011 has now reached a satisfactory conclusion.

6/13/15/112 Southcott, Exford. Proposed relocation of agricultural barn.

One comment received. Councillors understand that the proposed shed would be set into the grass bank to make the least impact and once completed would be quite unobtrusive with little general visibility.

Planning meeting 7th January 2016

6/13/15/115 Monkham Lodge, Exford. Proposed 2storey extension to main house with replacement conservatory on north elevation and new garages to replace stables on south elevation. Councillors considered this was tidying up the footprint of the building and it was unanimously approved.

Site meeting 15th January 2016

6/13/15/114 Monkham Lodge, Exford. Proposed agricultural/equestrian barn (283 sq. mts).

Councillors had a number of concerns including proximity to power lines. This would be an exceptionally large building for private use and visible from the majority of the village.

Councillors voted unanimously to object to the planning application.

6/13/15/112. Southcott, Exford. Amended plans re propose agricultural shed.

Councillors voted in favour of the planning application.

Planning Decisions

6/13/15/111 Conquest Bungalow, Exford. Proposed single storey extension (householder).

Approved 4/12/15.

Clerk's Report

List of email correspondence received to date provided.

Public Forum

Liz Baldwin raised the question of safety of volunteers undertaking litter picking on road verges.

Action 11. FN to clarify and report back.

Meeting closed 9.20pm.

ACTION POINT SUMMARY

- 1. Village Tea Party Event.** Carol Boyles and volunteers to coordinate and advertise.
BM to check with village hall re furniture and music licence
- 2. Highways Issues.** JH to continue to follow up.
- 3. 30mph Sign.** FN to raise with Highways.
- 4. Mud on Road.** Clerk to write to landowner.
- 5. Diversion Sign.** Clerk to contact Highways.
- 6. Parish Lengthsman.** ME to discuss with Dulverton Town Council.
- 7. Village Litter Pick.** Clerk to advertise in Across Exmoor.
- 8. Village Green Entrance.** ME to investigate costs.
- 9. Membership of FIT.** Clerk to progress.
- 10. Visit Somerset.** Clerk to contact CEO.
- 11. Litter Pick Safely.** FN to clarify.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 at Exford Memorial Hall. 7.30pm.

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AND ONLINE AT www.exford.org**

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