

Exford Parish Council
Draft Minutes of Parish Council meeting

Held on: 28th November 2017 at Exford Memorial Hall 7.30pm

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

Members of Public: James Edwards, Tim Greenland, Michael Johnson, Bowen Thomas, Lin Thomas, Beryl Wrapson.

Apologies for Absence: Brian Martin.

Declarations of Interest: None

Minutes of Previous Meetings held on 26th September 2017 and 17th October 2017.

Minutes of meeting held on 26th September 2017:

Minutes were signed off as a true record (proposed JA, seconded JS).

Minutes of meeting held on 17th October 2017:

Correction made that Brian Martin did not declare an interest.

Bowen Thomas (BT) commented that declarations of interest had not been asked for at the beginning of the meeting. Chairman (ME) stated that it was up to individual councillors whether or not to declare an interest. BT stated that as the discussion evolved it covered the flow of traffic along Higher Mill Farm Lane. There had been the opportunity for other councillors who had involvement in the holiday industry to declare that they may have a potential conflict of interest. ME stated that it had been suggested that he should have declared an interest due to his membership of Exmoor Holiday Group (now disbanded). He confirmed that the issue had no direct effect on him and therefore there was no prejudicial interest. Membership of this loose cooperative would not infer a conflict of interest.

Michael Johnson (MJ) commented that members of a group being involved in making a decision that can affect another member of the group would appear to be close to being a disclosable pecuniary interest. He referred to the Code of Conduct and stated that there is a risk that non-disclosure made the meeting decision invalid. He requested that the matter is adjudicated by the Council's monitoring officer for clarification and until then the meeting decision be suspended.

Steven Pugsley (SP) agreed that the minutes should be put aside until a response is received from Bruce Lang (WSDC) which he anticipated would be within a few days.

Action 1. Matter to be referred to Bruce Lang (WSDC).

Matters Arising

Actions from minutes of meeting held on 26th September:

1. Extraordinary Meeting. Taken place.
2. Cutting Back Vegetation. Done.
3. Village Green Entrance. Scaffolding outside tea rooms at present and ground too wet. This will be done when conditions improve.
4. Beech Hedge. Countrywide have been advised.
5. CCTV. Contribution sent and acknowledged by Cutcombe PC.
6. Westcott Mead. No response yet from Falcon Housing. Clerk will chase.

Highways

JH reported that IDVerde successfully undertook the village sweep last week. They have since come back to sweep Coombe Lane and the laybys below the kennels.

The new drains above Monkham are blocking up again. Also, those opposite Stockleigh and between White Post and Chibbet Post and at Coombe Lane. JH has reported these to Highways.

JS advised that she had contacted the CEO of Openreach regarding the blocked manhole above Court. This has resulted in the swift resolution of this long outstanding issue.

ME commented that vehicles have blocking the bottom of Coombe Lane. The former 'no parking' markings have been replaced by a white line. He asked Frances Nicholson (FN) to raise this with Highways.

Letter from MJ was read out requesting that the Parish Council consider requesting 30mph signs on Mill Lane at Edgcott due to the lack of footpath and risk from speeding traffic on the Porlock road.

FN stated that in view of the national guidelines on the placing of speed limits she considered it unlikely that Highways would agree however she will find out. DL commented that it would be difficult to enforce.

ME suggested that we write to Highways requesting 30mph signs although he reiterated that we can only make a suggestion as the PC has no control over Highways decisions.

Action 2. Clerk to write to Highways. FN to raise speed limits and Coombe Lane markings with Highways.

Possible Contribution to Highways Work

ME referred to the suggestion made by FN at the PC meeting on 17th October that SCC may be willing to waive some of their costs for undertaking work to alter the camber of the road outside Mill Cottage if the PC could raise the rest.

ME stated that his concern is that this is a Highways issue and the PC involvement could set a precedent for the future. However, he confirmed that he would be willing to facilitate a contribution scheme by local residents of that road if they so wished. The issue was then opened to discussion.

DL stated that any involvement could put the PC at future financial risk.

JH commented that this would set a precedent.

JS said that these are public funds for the benefit of all parishioners.

FN stated that this could possibly be included as part of her application for Small Improvement Scheme funding however this may be several years, even if approved.

It was agreed unanimously that the PC would not be prepared to contribute. ME stated that the PC will continue to try to do its best for all residents of Exford.

Village Green/Play Area

Report from BM was read out:

No high-risk actions arose from the annual independent inspection of the play area carried out by Playdale on 26th September. There are some small parts that need replacing and some adjustments needed. BM has also requested that Playdale replace some parts which were highlighted in the previous year's report and free-up the zip wire adjustment mechanism. Playdale have quoted £1544.89 + VAT, however £605 of this is labour to re-set the roundabout to resolve a 'low risk' problem. BM recommends that this is removed from the quote, making the cost £939.89 + VAT. BM asks for the PC to support this proposal.

ME commented that he has read the Playdale report and there is nothing either urgent or health and safety related that needs to be done. ME stated that he is very disappointed as the issues with both the roundabout and the zipwire have been raised with Playdale within the last 12 months and have not been satisfactorily addressed.

ME suggested that this proposal is not supported at present and is held over until discussions are held with Playdale to seek a more reasonable cost solution.

Proposed DL, seconded JA. Agreed unanimously.

Village Green

DL reported that the Matthew Waley-Cohen memorial bench has now been replaced by a new bench made from recycled materials. He suggested that the PC writes to thank Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen. Proposed KT, seconded DL. Agreed unanimously. ME thanked DL for his work on this.

Action 3. Clerk to write letter.

Village Green Entrance- ME confirmed that it has been suggested that rather than cover the whole entrance area, that two strips of hardcore are laid and rolled in. This cannot be done at present as there is scaffolding up outside the tea rooms but will be done in the Spring.

QE II Field

Report from BM was read out:

Paul Jones and Will Lock of Exford Cricket Club are working on design proposals for the enclosing structure for the shipping container, which can then be discussed and agreed ahead of submitting a planning application. Paul Jones has replaced the non-slip chicken wire on the terrace floor of the main pavilion. He has also unblocked the gutters, which has caused a failure of the floodlight. This will be replaced as soon as possible. We were approached by a helicopter company for permission to use the field as a one-off landing site on 26th November (for a fee) however this did not occur.

Finance

The bank reconciliation for 28th November was produced showing current account funds available of £13465.11. £7588.78 is held in reserves. The toilet block maintenance account is £13318.29. List of cheques issued for payment 26/09/17-27/11/17 produced.

2018/19 Budget Recommendations

The budget estimate for financial year 2018/19 was presented. There will be some inevitable increases in costs in the coming year however it was suggested that with an adequate level of reserves the PC can undertake all the tasks necessary with a recommended modest increase of 2.5% in the precept. Councillors agreed the budget and proposed precept of £11100 unanimously.

Action 4. Clerk to confirm 2018/19 precept to WSDC.

Planning

KT reported on the following planning application and decision:

Planning meeting 17 October 2017

6/13/17/110 The Old Police House, Coombe Lane, Exford. Proposed single storey extension.

All Councillors present fully supported the application and did not find any reason for objection.

ENP approved 14/11/17.

Clerk's Report

List of email correspondence received to date provided.

Councillors queried the proposed diversion route for the intended closure of the Stone Cross-Wheddon Cross road in January. FN advised that this is due to the difficulty for HGV's turning at Wheddon Cross. If the full closure goes ahead she will seek to amend the diversion signage at Copleham Cross for light vehicles.

Action 5. FN to contact Highways.

Public Forum

KT commented that it is very disappointing that 'Across Exmoor' will cease to exist in the present format due to the lack of an editor. It will continue in a very reduced form.

ME stated that Exford continues to be desperately in need of new social housing and asked Councillors to try to investigate if there are any plots which may be available, even if only for one or two houses and bring any suggestions to the next meeting.

Meeting closed 9.05 pm.

ACTION POINT SUMMARY

- 1. Meeting 17th October 2017.** Proceedings to be referred to Bruce Lang.
- 2. Speed Limit Signs and Coombe Lane No Parking Markings.** Clerk to write to Highways. FN to raise with Highways.
- 3. Village Green Memorial Bench.** Clerk to write letter.
- 4. Precept.** Clerk to confirm to WSDC.
- 5. Diversion Signage.** FN to contact Highways.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd January 2018 at Exford Memorial Hall 7.30pm

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