

Exford Parish Council
Draft Minutes of Parish Council meeting

Held on: 31st January 2017 at Exford Memorial Hall 7.30pm

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

Members of Public: None

Apologies for Absence: Joan Atkins

Declarations of Interest: None

Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 29th November 2016

Minutes were signed off as a true record.

Matters Arising

Actions from minutes of meeting held on 29th November:

1. Leat Wall. FN has been in contact with Highways and will forward their response.
Action 1. FN to report back.
2. Horse Warning Sign. Clerk reported that Highways have agreed to replace this but not until the new financial year. This will be kept on diary.
3. Raised Path. FN reported that Highways Superintendent will inspect the path and report on issues.
Action 2. FN to follow up.
4. Highways Course. FN stated that this is progressing as part of the Historic Signposts project and should be available later this year.
5. School Warning Sign. JH reported that he has been advised that it is Highways policy to restrict the refurbishment of warning signs due to budgetary restraints. FN agreed to follow up replacement of the sign by the school for the new financial year.
Action 3. FN and JH to follow up.
6. Highways Issues. Clerk stated that no response has been received to the email to Alyn Jones at SCC. FN will follow up.
Action 4. FN to follow up.
7. Village Green Maintenance. Quote accepted for 2017.
8. Village Green Bench. DL reported that the new bench is in place and the plaque has been transferred. This was paid for by Peter Bindon's family. The new bench is made from recycled materials and should be long lasting and maintenance free. Clerk has received a copy of the paid invoice for insurance purposes.
9. Exford Bridge Parking. Clerk reported that a letter has been received from Peter and Linda Hendrie advising that they share the PC's concerns regarding thoughtless parking on the bridge and raise this with their customers wherever possible.
Action 5. Clerk to put article in Across Exmoor highlighting this issue.

Highways

JH reported that Karin Harwood (Service Manager-Engineering Programmes, SCC) is visiting Exford on 8 February to discuss highways issues. JH requested assistance to markup problem areas before the meeting. DL commented that both drains at Chibbet are still blocked. Drain at Downscombe is ok at present but blocks frequently.

JH confirmed that the next sweep of the village will take place next week. He is continuing to attempt to get the contractors to sweep from Mill Lane down to the village as an alternative to the road from Stone Cross.

Road Signage-JH is continuing to follow up Highways regarding repainting of essential signs in the village (see also Matters Arising point 5 above).

Openreach manhole above Court- JH has now obtained details of the person in charge of Openreach property and will continue to pursue this.

Air Ambulance-following the previous meeting, JH confirmed that he has contacted Devon Air Ambulance regarding the suitability of the village green for possible night landings if required. However, only the helicopter based in Exeter is flying at night at present. Exford is technically covered by Somerset/Dorset although we also get cover from Torrington. They have agreed to keep Exford's details on file for possible further roll outs of night flying.

Flood Management

ME reported that he attended a meeting with the Environment Agency regarding flood management in the Exe Valley. Following the damage caused by storm Angus in November, a joint letter from the Parish Chairmen of Exford and Winsford was sent out to riparian owners in the Exe Valley requesting their assistance in keeping the river bank clear of trees and logs which could get washed away. However, this can be a contentious issue as the Environment Agency requires landowners to obtain permission before entering the river.

FN commented that 'kickers' placed in the river by the EA to agitate the riverbed also cause problems when they break away and are washed downstream. She welcomed the news that funding has been made available for a workshop to produce Exmoor river and stream specific advice.

ME stated that despite the lack of clarity regarding responsibility for maintenance, it remains in everyone's interests to prevent further flood damage

DL made a general point that the tracks made by large tractors make deep gullies that have the effect of channeling water.

Clerk reported that an email was sent to Highways regarding the buildup of stones under Exford Bridge. Following an inspection by a bridge engineer a response has been received stating that the buildup is still at a lower level than in 2014 when it was last cleared. Due to budgetary constraints, it is next due to be cleared in 3 years' time.

Proposal for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils

SP gave a brief background on the proposal. West Somerset is the smallest principal authority in the country and faced with the need to make further budgetary cuts it is no longer financially viable to continue. The proposal is to create a single new council covering the areas currently administered by West Somerset and Taunton Deane Councils. This will produce considerable cost savings whilst protecting services. There is also seen as a natural link between the two areas.

The public consultation closes on 28th February and the proposal needs to be submitted to the Government by end March 2017. If no proposal is made, one will be imposed by the Secretary of State. The new council will be in place by early 2019 following transitional arrangements in 2018.

SP stated that we need to ensure that West Somerset has maximum levels of representation within the new authority as there will be a reduction in numbers of councillors with each covering a large area.

ME proposed that the PC writes to WSDC supporting the proposal and emphasizing the need for maximum possible levels of representation for West Somerset. Agreed unanimously.

Action 6. Clerk to write to WSDC.

Village Green/Play Area

Village Green

The recent incident of a loose horse running on the village green caused some damage to the grass surface. Following a letter from the PC the resulting divots have now been repaired.

DL raised the issue of the repairs to the village green entrance. ME responded that this appears to be a bigger job than initially anticipated due to the sections of broken tarmac.

Action 7. Clerk to contact John Atkins and Oliver Edwards and remind them to have a look at the area and give the PC their proposals.

DL also raised concerns following the flooding in November that the drain on the green may not be sufficient. ME confirmed that the drains will be dug out to investigate the extent of the problem before the next meeting.

Action 8. ME to progress.

Play Area

BM reported that plans are continuing to put granulated rubber fill in those areas under play equipment where there is currently wood chip. This is a longer lasting solution which will save a lot of money in the longer term. A donation of £174 has been received from the whist drive organized by Denise and Michael Stanbury A big thank you to them. Total funds raised are now £2174.

BM showed councillors some granulated rubber samples from two affordable suppliers. The sample from Eco Chippings meets play area standards and would cost £2333 (including delivery) for the required 10 tonnes. This leaves a shortfall from fundraising of £159. The chippings are uncoloured (grey) as the green version would cost an additional £1000.

BM proposed that the PC purchases 10 tonnes of rubber chippings and requested that the PC tops up the funds with the necessary £159. Seconded DL. Approved unanimously. Purchase to be made in this financial year although the actual job may be done later in the Spring.

QE II Field

BM reported that a meeting of the QEII Management Committee was held on 24th January. The main points arising were:

The shipping container: Planning permission expires in November 2019 but it is worth planning now in order that any necessary funds and planning approvals can be sought. The plan is to build a wooden structure around the container in its present location which would cost around £5000 (proposed to be split between the Cricket Club and the PC). This would become an asset of the PC. Another option is to leave the container as it is if this is acceptable to ENPA.

Insurance: Renewal documentation has been received and the premium of £527.96 has been paid (split between the Cricket Club and Youth Club).

Maintenance: There is a Youth Club working weekend on 4/5th March to do painting in the pavilions. There are potholes outside the main entrance gate. Although not Highways responsibility, JH will raise with them the possibility of some aggregate being dropped off which we can then roll in.

Main pavilion: Further into the future, ways of funding the building of a new pavilion are being investigated.

ME commented that the recent issue of a cooker ring being left on in the pavilion was of major concern to the PC due to the fire risk and asked that this was emphasized to the Youth Club.

Finance

The bank reconciliation for 31st January was produced showing current account funds available of £12461.62 (this figure now includes £2500 play area funds, £1000 towards historic signpost repairs and residual precept funds required for expenditure until end April). £7588.22 held in reserves. The toilet block maintenance account is £11908.07. List of cheques issued for payment 29/11/16-30/01/17 produced.

Planning

KT reported on the following planning application and decision:

Planning meeting 5 December 2016

6/13/16/114 Annexe Baliff's Cottage, Muddicombe Lane, Exford. Lawful Development Certificate for the existing use of the extension to Baliff's Cottage. The applicants gave a brief resume as to why they had submitted the application. All councillors present supported the application and were pleased the applicants had gone through the correct channels. ENP approved 22/12/16

Clerk's Report

List of email correspondence received to date provided.

Clerk suggested that another village litter pick should be arranged before Easter. Councillors agreed that it would be good to smarten the village up before the main tourist season. The date was confirmed as Sunday 12th March at 2pm.

Action 9. Clerk to put up notices and publicise in Across Exmoor.

Public Forum

It was noted that in March Porlock Hill will be fully closed for 4-5 days for resurfacing.

Some of the new drains on the Cutcombe to Exford road are blocked, causing flooding and some manholes are sinking again. Although not in our parish, JH will raise with Highways.

KT commented that a fridge had been fly tipped along the road towards Cutcombe. It was confirmed that this had been picked up and taken to the tip in Minehead by Lenny Clinkscales. Many thanks to Lenny for this.

Two car parking spaces in Coombe Lane are being blocked by a large bush.

Action 10. Clerk to contact housing association to resolve.

The bank outside Westcott Mead which was damaged by a car needs rebuilding.

Action 11. Clerk to contact Falcon Housing.

FN raised the issue of the closure of in-patient beds at Minehead Hospital due to staff shortages. She has been having meetings with the relevant authorities. There is a proposed recruitment open morning at the hospital in March and they are also looking for people who may have previously worked there who would be willing to share their experiences.

FN also commented that West Somerset's position at the bottom of the social mobility index leads to problems in training and recruiting staff generally.

BM stated that AirBand is now live across Exmoor supplying superfast broadband. However, there are still gaps in coverage. It was agreed that BM should liaise with AirBand on behalf of the PC.

Action 12. BM to liaise with AirBand.

ME paid tribute to the huge contribution made by John Edwards and it was agreed that a formal letter of condolence should be sent on behalf of the PC to the Edwards family on their loss.

Meeting closed 9.10pm.

ACTION POINT SUMMARY

- 1. Leat Wall.** FN to report back.
- 2. Raised Path.** FN to follow up.
- 3. School Warning Sign.** FN and JH to follow up.
- 4. Highways Issues.** FN to follow up response to email.
- 5. Exford Bridge Parking.** Clerk to put article in Across Exmoor.
- 6. New Council Proposal.** Clerk to write to WSDC.
- 7. Village Green Entrance.** Clerk to contact John Atkins and Oliver Edwards.
- 8. Village Green Drains.** ME to progress.
- 9. Village Litter Pick.** Clerk to publicise.
- 10. Coombe Lane.** Clerk to contact housing association.
- 11. Westcott Mead Bank.** Clerk to contact Falcon Housing.
- 12. AirBand Coverage.** BM to liaise with AirBand.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28th March 2017 at Exford Memorial Hall. 7.30pm

FURTHER COPIES OF THESE MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE TO VIEW AT EXMOOR STORES AND ONLINE AT www.exfordparishcouncil.org

