

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Exford Parish Council held on Tuesday 25th January 2022 at 7.30pm at Exford Memorial Hall

Attendance: Councillors Mike Ellicott (Chair) (ME), Simon Brown (SB), Serena Colwill (SC), Kathryn Tucker (KT), Oliver Edwards (OE), Jeremy Hickman (JH) and Parish Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY) also in attendance were Mr and Mrs Westcott.

ME opened the meeting at 7.34pm, and advised all that the meeting was recorded for the benefit of the Clerk

16.1 Apologies for Absence: Joan Atkins

16.2 Declarations of Interest: None

16.3 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 30th November 2021, and address any Outstanding Actions;

Minutes accepted – proposed by SB, seconded by KT

The abandoned cars are still in place along with another which is a foreign registered vehicle. ME will follow up with ENPA at the next meeting.

SCC had put up a temporary speed checker, discussion was held about whether a speed camera would be of benefit.

SWaT Cllr S.Pugsley (SP) arrived at 19.40.

16.4 To receive petition and request for funding from C. Woods re speed limit restrictions in the village

It was acknowledged that C.Woods had worked hard on this petition gaining many signatures and comments. The speed of vehicles through the village is causing concern to some parishioners and they would like to see the current zone of 30mph reduced to 20 and the 30 mph zone extended further outside the village.

Discussion followed where it was decided that the issue is more likely with enforcement rather than with the current arrangement for speed limits, and if that could be addressed the current arrangement would be satisfactory. Even if the speed limits were changed if there was no enforcement it may not make a noticeable difference in driver behaviour. It was raised that previous discussion re setting up a speedwatch in the village had not been supported by parishioners who would be needed as volunteers.

SC referred to the large speed advisor sign in North Molton as a good example for reminding drivers of the speed requirements. However, the Parish Council have previously been told they would have to fund this as SCC would not be able to do so.

The Traffic Management team had offered to carry out a speed survey which would need to be funded by the Parish Council. The data would need to be downloaded from them, at further cost.

SP suggested that the police and highways view is that there is no point in putting in an unnatural speed limit unless it can be monitored. He mentioned that he and FN would be able to support further work in this area. He has heard of a campaign called '20 is Plenty'.

ME offered to follow up by contacting Kate Brown at SCC and asked FN and SP to follow up.

It was agreed that the first step is to gather evidence through temporary enforcement measures such as speedwatch. It was hoped that a group of the signatories of the petition would be willing to support this through volunteering. The main focus should be the centre of the village where there is most activity.

Further ideas put forward for future consideration were a 'chicane' or rumble strip at the top of the hill near the church, putting 3/2/1 on the road leading to the change of speed to 20 and involvement of the school in holding up signs to alert speeding drivers that they are putting children at risk.

16.5 To receive update reports from County and District Councillors

SP mentioned that the elections will be going ahead in May when the Unitary Authority will be set up. There will be 2 members for each area for the initial year and then the District Councillor will go in 2023.

Exmoor is in the Pilot Scheme re the unitary authority Highways reorganisation. SP suggested that speeding in villages could become one of the main focus areas for that scheme.

The Road collapse is now going to become a long term job with major engineering works – potentially involving diverting traffic onto the old road.

Withypool's broadband project is ongoing. It has been a difficult process but they hope for a positive outcome as it was well supported. It does take a lot of organising as each individual application is entered separately and then the vouchers again are allocated individually and need to be collated. It was advised that Exford wait for updates before starting on this process.

The signpost project group is starting up again, it was mentioned that the Porlock post is being damaged by cattle. Moving the bag away from the post or replacing the salt bag with an actual bin might solve this but it is unclear who would fund this. ENPA had advised ME that a grant may be available for this. SP mentioned that this may also be something which could be part of the pilot scheme works.

ME and JH mentioned that the Openreach drainage issue is still not resolved and the panel response had been disappointing, so again perhaps drainage could be a focus for the new pilot scheme due to the damage caused by excess water. JH has been communicating with Mr Turner with regard to this and has passed on the concerns raised by parishioners through Facebook. He has been advised a decision will be made shortly. ME has arranged a meeting in April with Openreach.

16.6 To consider Highways Matters, and any actions required

JH reported that IDVerde had done some street clearance work on 24th January but no notice had been given and therefore some vehicles were unable to be moved. Some drains had been blocked but JH had managed to clear the majority.

It was suggested a litter pick could be held in the third week of March.

SCC Cllr Frances Nicholson (FN) arrived at 20.18.

16.5 contd: FN reminded the Council of the Local Plan review into National Parks which is currently going on. The arrangements have altered slightly with some points not going forward due to government decisions. It is still in progress should Councillors wish to take part and SP suggested that they keep an eye on how it is progressing.

16.7 Finance

I. To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due

This was approved.

II. To approve the budget and precept for 2022/2023

This was approved – proposed by KT and seconded by JH.

16.8 To receive update on QEII Field and consider any actions

This year's insurance premium is higher than previously, but not excessively. Due to the specialist nature of the facilities a better quote was not available. The Youth Club are hoping to look into weatherproofing the buildings in the Spring. The QE11 facilities continue to be popular. An account is to be opened separately for QE11 funds with KT and SB as signatories.

16.9 Village Green update

The fencing is now complete and ME shared the invoice which has been submitted. The Councillors approved payment of this at the cost of £2,940.

The wall is now in poor repair, it is unclear who holds responsibility for this. The owner was identified by a councillor and ME will contact him.

New bins have been put in place by SWaT with more options for recycling.

There have been further problems at the public toilet block following the previous leak and flood. One toilet is not working. ME is in negotiation with Wessex Water over this as the problems started after the flood and they took responsibility initially but are not keen to do so now.

Quote not yet received re grass cutting. Clerk has requested this and will follow up.

16.10 Planning Report

This was presented and approved – proposed by OE and seconded by SB.

There is an issue with communication with applicants as their contact details are not provided when planning applications are received. The council would like to be able to contact them to ensure they are aware that the planning meetings are taking place and are able to attend if they wish. It is believed that this is a GDPR issue. SP will enquire why the Council cannot have this information, and whether ENPA could contact the applicants instead to inform them of planning meeting dates.

KT is now receiving the weekly list of applications.

16.11 To receive notice of Parish Council Elections 5th May 2022

This was duly noted.

16.12 To receive an update re Reconnecting Communities Fund project

SC had received four quotes for the installation of the bike rack. She had found an alternative supplier for the rack itself at a cheaper price, as the quotes and previous rack price exceeded the grant. There will be a small cost to the Parish Council due to this which was agreed.

A new grant is available and it was suggested that an application is made for funds to be used for the Jubilee Party, along with two flower boxes to go by the village signs (acquired from ENPA and with the aim of local businesses sponsoring and maintaining the planting). This was approved and SC will put the application together.

16.13 To discuss arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee June 2022

It is suggested that a small committee would be helpful to progress these arrangements including members of the community. ME and SC have already started making plans by making contact with a local supplier re marquee/sound system. SC will lead on this and is keen for others to come on board. It is suggested that a number of 250 would be ideal and that it is publicised that places need to be booked in advance to avoid disappointment on the day.

16.14 Public Forum: Nothing raised

16.15 Items for Next Agenda: None proposed

16.16 Date and time of Next Meeting – Tuesday 29th March 2022 – 7.30pm in Exford Memorial Hall

There being no other business ME closed the meeting at 21.08

Action List:

- 1. Clerk to open a separate QE11 account**
- 2. ME to contact Kate Brown with regards to speeding**
- 3. ME/JH to continue to communicate with contacts re the Openreach drainage**
- 4. ME to continue to communicate with Wessex Water re the toilet blockage**
- 5. Clerk to obtain quote for grass cutting.**
- 6. AOB – Clerk to follow up on the suggestion received from the District Council re a policy for the recording of meetings.**
- 7. SC to apply for the next Reconnecting Community grant**

Signed:
Chairman

Date: