

Exford Parish Council
Draft Minutes of Parish Council meeting

Held on: 22nd March 2016 at Exford Village Hall 7.30pm

Attendance: Mike Ellicott, Joan Atkins, Jeremy Hickman, Derek Lloyd, Brian Martin, Judy Skinner. Clerk: Jane Laycock.

Members of Public: Barbara Pears

Apologies for Absence: Kathryn Tucker, Frances Nicholson, Steven Pugsley.

Declarations of Interest

None

Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26th January 2016

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

Matters Arising

Actions from minutes of meeting held on 26th January:

1. Village Tea Party. Arrangements progressing.
2. Highways Issues. JH has emailed Highways and will continue to follow up.
3. 30mph Sign. Move completed.
4. Mud on Road. Warning sign now put up by landowner.
5. Diversion Sign. Removed by Highways.
6. Parish Lengthsman. See agenda item 'Highways' below.
7. Village Litter Pick. See agenda item 'Highways' below.
8. Village Green Entrance. See agenda item 'Village Green' below.
9. Membership of FIT. Completed.
10. Visit Somerset. Contact made with CEO.
11. Litter Pick Safety. See agenda item 'Highways' below.

Highways

Litter Pick

JH thanked everyone who turned out to help. Hi-vis tabards were offered to participants to aid safety on the roads. A substantial amount of rubbish was collected (more than last year) including Highways debris and agricultural remains. A stolen handbag was retrieved by Patrick Chittendon which was handed over to the police. It was agreed unanimously that an Easter egg should be given to Patrick to thank him for his diligence.

Action 1. Clerk to organise.

JH has contacted Veolia to collect fly tipped items and sent an article to the Free Press.

ME officially thanked JH for his work in organizing such a successful event.

It was commented that it would be helpful if adjoining parishes organized similar events to clear litter.

Historic Signposts Project

DL reported on his recent meeting with ENPA. 12 out of a total of 126 historic signposts on Exmoor are in Exford parish. It has been proposed that ENPA take responsibility for renovation of rusty signposts whereas it would be a parish responsibility to keep them clean. However, ENPA are attempting to get matched funding before releasing any money towards this. After discussion it was agreed that we will make progress with the worst signs ourselves using a local contractor. DL will re-list the signs in order of priority. ENPA are organizing Chapter 8 safety training for a nominee from each parish.

Action 2. DL to progress listing.

Parish Lengthsman

ME reported that the current contract finishes at the end of March. In view of the large increase in the Lengthsman's hourly rate following the removal of grant funding, it has been decided that this no longer provides value for money and the contract has not been renewed. The raised footpath along Edgcott Road was cleared by the Lengthsman and a letter has been received from a parishioner complimenting the work however it was commented that the bank still needs to be dug out and cleared to restore the path to its original width. Offers of help have been received and it was suggested that this could be done on a self-help basis with volunteers. JS stated that care should be taken not to destabilize the bank.

Other Highways Issues

JH stated that Veolia swept the village recently, including Mill Lane. Unfortunately, not everyone moved their cars as had been requested.

JH confirmed that BT Openreach have been out to inspect the issue of water escaping from underneath the manhole covers on Monkham Road.

The camera at the Wheddon Cross junction has now been upgraded to ANPR capability.

JA stated that the leat wall has become dangerous and sections have collapsed.

Action 3. JH to follow up with Highways.

DL commented that the road traffic horse warning sign has been placed at the top of Church Hill facing traffic leaving the village. Although it was agreed that this is still useful, a further sign for traffic entering the village is needed.

Action 4. DL to follow up with Highways.

Exford Toilets

ME stated that he has been advised that contracts for the sale of the existing toilet block have been signed. The funds are expected imminently and the building contractors will then start as soon as they can. ENPA have agreed to put up fit and proper signage for the new facilities. It was agreed unanimously that a 'number 2' bank account should be opened to keep all transactions related to the public toilets separate.

Action 5. Clerk to organize with bank.

Village Green/Play Area

BM reported that the intermittent problem with the roundabout sticking has been identified and Playdale plan to visit this week to resolve the problem.

The grass had its first cut of the year last week. During the regular grass cuts, the strimmer has been causing damage to the base of wooden posts that form part of the play equipment. To combat this, BM has attached metal mesh to the bottom of the posts. ME thanked BM on behalf of the Council for his work on this.

In spring the shavings in and around some of the play equipment will need topping up in order to comply with playground regulations. BM proposed that rather than spending money each year doing this, that we should invest in a granulated or shredded rubber surface. This is more expensive, but has a longer life. BM stated that he has already started to seek funding from various sources for this.

ME proposed JA seconded. Passed unanimously.

Action 6. BM to progress.

ME stated that following the recent drier weather, Chris North and ME will investigate the pits which have developed on the village green. These may be due to a collapsing drain.

ME reported that repairing the vehicular entrance to the green is not as straightforward as originally hoped. It was agreed that rolling in hardcore would be the best solution.

Action 7. ME to obtain quotes.

QEII Playing Field

BM reported that the next Management Committee meeting will be held on 12th April when the Finance Officer will present the annual accounts.

The Parish Council has now taken up annual membership of Fields in Trust as proposed and approved at the last Parish Council meeting. This will give access to discounts and funding opportunities for the user groups.

The next annual fire safety check on the pavilions is due on April 22nd.

The Parish Council has submitted an application to West Somerset Council seeking to continue the 100% rate relief status of the grounds.

PC Website/Transparency Code

Following receipt of the funds from our successful bid under the government's Transparency Code initiative, ME, BM and Clerk met to discuss what is required to fulfill our legal requirements to be open and transparent under the recent legislation and also to incorporate the best from other parish council websites.

BM and Clerk then visited PC Webshop to get the site developed. The draft site will be up within 2 weeks for Councillors to give opinions before going live. It will be a purely non-commercial site for the Parish Council only, with links to community facilities and useful information such as ENPA Planning and County Highways.

ME suggested that there is the possibility of using the Parish Council laptop for future planning meetings. JH queried if the speed of the wifi in the Memorial Hall would be sufficient. BM stated he would investigate but thought it would be adequate.

Finance

The bank reconciliation for 22nd March was produced showing current account funds available of £7468.05 with £7584.89 held in reserve. List of cheques issued for payment 27/01/16-22/03/16 produced.

ME commented that the build up of reserves is in respect of the funds required to run the new toilet facilities and also pay rates on them. ME has written to our MP and also David Cameron regarding exempting public toilets from rates. He has also had discussions with other parishes regarding the possibility of setting up an Exmoor Toilets charity to exempt the facilities from rates and also save on contract cleaning costs. No further progress on this at present.

Planning

KT forwarded a report on the following planning applications:

Planning meeting 24th February 2016

6/13/15/114 Monkham Lodge Exford. Proposed agricultural/equestrian barn (283sq mtrs) as per additional and amended plans and information 09/02/16.

Councillors present recognize that applicants have gone some way to address the issues however they still have reservations as to the scale of the building and visibility. Councillors restated their previous views and object to the application.

Planning meeting 1st March 2016

6/13/16/101 Exemead Stables Exford. Erection of an agricultural building (133sq mtrs).

All Councillors present supported the application and were pleased action was being taken to improve the site. As a separate entity, Councillors suggested that the caravans and temporary constructions be removed from the site and wood piles etc. be stored in new building or moved to higher parts of the field.

Planning Decisions

6/13/15/109 Barn Cottage, Exford. Proposed use of dwelling as either a unit of local needs housing under 6/13/107/106 or as a holiday let (Full).

Approved 21/01/16.

6/13/15/112 Southcott, Exford. Proposed conversion of barn to one-bedroom self-contained holiday let, relocation of kitchen within existing house extension together with the proposed erection of a new detached agricultural shed for use as a lambing barn and agricultural equipment storage. As per additional information and amended plans (Full).

Approved 22/01/16

6/13/15/113 Exford Depot, Exford.

Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for proposed alterations to surface water drainage and installation of oil interceptor (Full).

Approved 02/02/16.

6/13/15/115 Monkham Lodge Exford. Proposed two storey rear extension to main house with replacement conservatory on north elevation and new garages to replace stables on south elevation (Householder).

Approved 17/02/16

Clerk's Report

List of email correspondence received to date provided.

Public Forum

JH stated that silt is again building up underneath the bridge and confirmed that this is Highways responsibility to remove.

ME confirmed that the annual Parish Meeting of Electors will be held at 7pm on Tuesday 24th May to be followed by the regular Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm.

Action 8. Clerk to advertise.

Meeting closed 8.50pm

ACTION POINT SUMMARY

- 1. Litter Pick.** Clerk to organize Easter egg.
- 2. Historic Signposts.** DL to arrange list.
- 3. Leat Wall.** JH to follow up with Highways.
- 4. Horses Warning Sign.** DL to follow up with Highways.
- 5. Additional Bank Account.** Clerk to organize.
- 6. Play Area Surface/Fundraising.** BM to progress.
- 7. Village Green Entrance.** ME to get quotes.
- 8. Parish Meeting of Electors.** Clerk to advertise.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday 24th May 2016 at Exford Memorial Hall. 7.30pm, preceded by the annual Parish Meeting of Electors at 7pm.

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

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