

Minutes of the meeting held 07/04/22, 19:00 Witheridge Parish Hall**PRESENT:**

Cllr Harvey - Chairman

Cllr Goodwin

Cllr Smith

Cllr Dorow

Cllr Northam

Cllr Wells

Cllr Searles

Cllr Yabsley

In Attendance:

District & County Cllr J Yabsley

1 Member of Public

Mr P Dunn - Clerk

1. Chairman's Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed all present.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllr Martin.

3. Minutes. To sign, if approved, the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 01/04/21.

RESOLVED: Cllr Yabsley proposed, Mr Northam seconded and all were in favour approval.

4. District & County Cllr Reports.

Cllr Yabsley reported:-

- The proposed development adjacent to Willow Rise had been called into committee.
- Financial situation at District and County very difficult.
- 17 families from Ukraine allocated for North Devon.
- Limited County Council Grants.
- Meeting with Highways Tuesday.

5. Parish Council Chairman's Report.

See report appended.

6. Local Group & Charity Reports.**Witheridge In Bloom**

Cllr Northam reported:-

- The displays were ongoing, experiencing difficulty getting volunteers, bunting and flags to be displayed for Jubilee.

7. Open Questions.

The coming to market of The Angel for residential was raised and queried whether change of use would be required.

Meeting closed 19:25.

Minutes of the meeting held 07/04/22, 19:00 Witheridge Parish Hall**Chairman's Report**

I began last year's report saying " I think you will all agree that this year has been like no other " however this one has superseded it, having firstly to cope with the government changes to council meetings and then the second half of the year becoming one of attrition thanks to the application of Larkfleet homes for another 155 houses. This involved us in having to have two meetings a month because of work load and site visits with council officials due to village concerns both with the above planning and non compliance of previous 106 agreements with Cannington Road green space.

June and Julys meetings were held outside at Toll House Gate with a delegated committee thanks to the hospitality of Councillor Martin. September October and November were held at Cruys Morchard village hall due to the non availability of Witheridge Hall. In December and January due to parishioner lobbying we moved to Witheridge for our first monthly meeting and returned to Cruys Morchard for the second.

On December 2nd we had our second meeting with Maria Bailey the chief planning officer of North Devon District council to discuss the planning application received from Larkfleet Homes for another 155 dwellings on land beyond The Willow Rise construction site and behind the doctor's surgery in Cannington Road. I was delighted to see so many people attend and it became standing room only. All the residents' concerns were minuted and formed the basis of the Parish council's response as consultees to the planning. The detailed document is available on line however to summarise there are paragraphs on Transport, drainage strategy, affordable housing, impact on local services, sustainable development, and section 106 mitigation. In conclusion, the parish council is deeply concerned with this proposed development; its scale and impact will have a detrimental effect on the village. There are genuine concerns over the sewage and drainage, road safety, affordable housing and many other aspects of this application and we believe that a significant amount of additional information will be required to establish the sustainability of the proposal. Whilst we recognise that there is a continuing need to develop new housing, we are extremely disappointed that after all the effort put into preparing and agreeing a detailed set of policies for the future development of the village for the period until 2031 , we now find ourselves in a position where an application for a large number of homes on land outside the development area is being promoted with little regard to the consequences on the infrastructure and facilities in this community.

Due to the number of residents concerns as to speeding into the village and with potential accidents occurring at the new Willow Rise access we sought a meeting with the highways officer from Devon county council a Mr. Michael Newcombe. We discussed our options to reduce speeding, rumble strips, village gateway, moving the 30 MPH sign to Chapner farm entrance; this is land currently designated as public open space and it would be prudent to

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move it now, plus an interactive speed camera. These however have all been rejected mainly on maintenance costs and the suggestion that Witheridge buy its own Vehicle activated sign and be responsible for the maintenance! All that was offered was a 30MPH "roundel" on the carriageway!! Moving on to the bus new shelter to be constructed on the wide pathway outside Merryside villas, and the school zebra crossing. The Zebra location was agreed with the school and the council which would necessitate the removal of the existing bus stop outside the school and relocating it to the land between Lakelands close and the football club. Mr Newcombe is suggesting that this bus shelter that has been purchased by the Parish council be moved to Merryside villas the aforesaid location and a cantilever bus shelter purchased which would be more suitable given the land available. The suggestion of a bus bay was rejected because of the pavement width and the only solution offered was a bus cage on the highway at both locations.

At our March meeting the council was in total agreement to reject the proposal in respect of the speed limit extension on the approach to the village from Tiverton and seek further options for consideration. The amount of money allocated from the Larkfleet homes for the improvements are not insignificant, £60,000 for speed restriction, £30,000 for the bus shelter and £80,000 for the zebra crossing. The suggestion from highways that the current school bus shelter should be repurposed as the "new shelter" to be provided under the Willow Rise section 106, is this going to be acceptable to the Willow Rise residents? I am sure they would expect a new shelter given how much they are paying for it through the cost of their homes. The county's idea of a cantilever bus shelter would not be the Parish council's choice as there are no sides to keep out the prevailing wind and rain. The council will consider at the April meeting that Devon county highways give us a budget breakdown for undertaking these works vs. the section 106 contributions. This money is intended to improve the safety of Witheridge parishioner's lives and not to supplement the county highways coffers for other projects. More transparency is needed from Devon County.

At another site meeting with the case officer from North Devon again residents concerns were raised. The foot and bicycle access through Viriga Way, The sewer connection at Butts Close and the consequential raw sewage disasters, the proposed play park, the existing provisions for the Two Moors footpath and the Drayford lane walk, Witheridge issues with power cuts- Is the mains supply at its limit? And surface water runoff which is affecting Butts Close.

We did however have partial success with our site meeting with the enforcement officer from North Devon Council concerning the lack of maintenance of the green spaces around Cannington Road by "Greenbelt." Despite the districts early reluctance to act, citing a deed of covenant pertaining to Broomhouse Park the grass is now being cut and some repairs

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have been done to the land by the doctor's surgery. The other case needing enforcement is the land allocated to the council that abuts the Adventure playground. The developers have dumped subsoil on the land causing drainage issues and lots of stone appearing. The land needs grading then topsoil needs adding and grass seeding before the council will consider accepting ownership. The officer is aware of our concerns but as yet no action has been taken against the developer.

The Adventure playground improvement has moved on another stage. The contribution of £130,000 from the Constructors of Willow Rise was agreed by the district council and the Parish council have now raised a tender document along the lines agreed by the working group. Tenders from prospective contractors will be received by the council no later than 20th May 2022 and the successful contractor will be notified by Friday 19th July 2022. A prestart meeting will be scheduled between the council and the contractor and works completed by 30th November. Many thanks to Councillor Searles for drawing up the draft document.

I finish with an appeal to anyone in the village that holds a first aid certificate. Your council needs you! Councillor Northam organises litter picks in the village four times a year and is currently our first aider. She has however suffered a severe shoulder injury and feels she cannot now apply CPR. The council insurance insists on a first aider and without one the litter picks will not proceed. It is not an arduous task as you will not be asked to be a picker but welcomed with open arms if you want to, or you can just chill in the Parish Hall. It will involve one Saturday morning in three months 9am to 11am.

Jacky Harvey Chairman