

WASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday January 18th 2023 in Washfield Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr's Mrs A Taylor-Ross (Chair), M Balment, J Boundy, R Webber, W Wood and Mrs A Wych.

In attendance: the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

66/01/23. To receive apologies. Apologies were accepted from Cllr J Mock. Apologies were received from County Cllr R Chesterton, District Cllr's A Moore and R Stanley and Mr and Mrs A Roberts (Footpath Wardens).

67/01/23. Disclosure of interest in item on the agenda. There were no disclosures of interest.

68/01/23. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2022 as an accurate record of the Meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

69/01/23. Matters arising from the minutes (not already covered by the agenda). There were no matters arising.

70/01/23. Public questions. No members of the public present.

71/01/23. Footpaths:

a) P3 Report. Mr and Mrs Roberts had sent their apologies due to the icy conditions. A written report from them had been circulated by email.

Footpath 1: Very wet at the Haydon end. Ros Davies, Parish Paths Liaison Officer, thinks she can secure funding from a capital fund to put a board walk in there.

Whilst doing that it would make sense to put new finger posts at both sides of the first open field after the path, to clearly indicate the line of the path over that field. A finger post is also needed where the path meets the road at Charterhouse.

Footpath 2: The stile and gate have been replaced. Agreed that the posts for the electric fence above the gate will soon be moved 2 metres further out into the field and the walkability of that bit of the field will be monitored with a view to landscaping next financial year if/where necessary. Footboards on the bridge have been replaced. Clear signage now shows the route of the path through Lower Pitt.

Nonslip surface fitted to the stile next to the new barns. The stile into horse field replaced with a pedestrian gate. The lane at New Park has been drained into the ditch but not successful as the level of water in the ditch is too high. Steps are still needed to access Footpath 2 from the Long Lane end.

Footpath 3: A bid for funding needs to be sent to DCC for funding for two, maybe three, gateposts where this path goes through a small yard at the bottom of Courtenay farmyard. The gate nearest the field needs a new hanging post (very wobbly) which also supports the fence above it. The gate nearest the farmyard needs a new hanging post. The latch post is showing signs of rot at the base but is

firm at the moment. One of the two fingers on the signpost as you leave Courtenay farmyard is broken.

Footpath 4: The bridge at the bottom of Brook Lane is very slippery and needs some anti-slip attention.

Footpath 5: Fingerpost needed where this crosses Washfield Lane going to Courteney (could be done at the same time as the gates on footpath 3 also at Courteney).

Footpaths 6, 7, 8, Nothing to report.

Footpath 10: Landowner repaired gatepost where this path joins Washfield Lane at Beeches

b) Any other footpath matters. The Clerk reported that she had emailed Tania Weeks, Definitive Map Reviewer, for an update on the two Definitive Map Review proposals for Washfield. Mrs Weeks is hopeful her reports will be presented to the Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Committee meeting on 9th March 2023. The reports and recommendations are only viewable by the public when they have been sent to the county councillors on the committee, which is usually about 10 days prior to the committee meeting. She will write to the clerk and the relevant landowners and occupiers before that date to advise how the report can be viewed and also about the process for speaking at the meeting if people wish to do so.

72/01/23. Planning

a) To make a recommendation on any planning applications received before the meeting. No applications received.

b) To note any decisions on planning applications made by MDDC.

21/01725/Full Erection of carport with bat roost above and conversion of barn to dwelling. Pylemoor Farm, Washfield. Decision: conditional approval granted.

22/01138/Full Conversion of disused storage building into 2 holiday lets. Cowlins, Washfield. Decision: Conditional approval granted.

22/02361/PNAG. Prior Notification for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Land at NGR 294166 117412 Hatherland Mill, Lower Washfield. Decision: no objection. Prior approval not required.

c) Slurry infrastructure grant – to note that Defra have published information for local planning authorities to consider when assessing planning applications for stores to be funded through the grant. Noted.

d) Any other planning matters. APP/Y1138/W/22/3301879 Stanterton Farm, Washfield, The appeal was made against the decision of MDDC to refuse prior approval for planning application 22/00641/PNCOU Prior notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to 1 dwelling under Class Q. Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 293938 116315 (Stanterton Farm), Washfield. The appeal was dismissed.

73/01/23. Highways

a) To report on any highways work carried out in the parish and to note any highways work needed. Recent heavy rain caused the River Exe to break its banks in some places, threatening some properties in Lower Washfield. A large pothole on Long Lane is hard to see because of the water on the road.

Cllr Chesterton has been asked for an update on the Lower Washfield road problems.

b) Update on proposal to join the DCC Highways Self Help Scheme.

Councillors are waiting to speak to Melanie McKenna, the new Neighbourhood Highway Officer to arrange a meeting to discuss the list of defects put together by Cllr Boundy and Cllr Webber.

c) Any other highways matters. Cllr Webber reported a possible road defect opposite Marsh Farm/Old Lane.

74/01/23. Reports

a) County Cllr. A written report from Cllr Chesterton for December 2022/January 2023 was circulated by email prior to the meeting. The report included information on:

- The Government announcement that DCC has been successful in their bid for Tiverton High School to be rebuilt. Cllr Chesterton said this was great news. The school is on a flood plain and the new school will be built on the opposite side of Bolham Road. The plans include a new theatre.
- The appointment of Donna Manson as Chief Executive for DCC. She was the Chief Executive for Scotland's largest rural authority the Highland Council from 2018
- The appointment of Julian Wooster as Interim Director of Children's Services from January 2023. He was the Director of Children's Services of Somerset County Council and guided them from an Inadequate Ofsted rating to good
- DCC MP budget briefing
- Woodland Creator Accelerator Fund
- The Public Inquiry Finding on Stagecoach Devon
- Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund and 1 year pilot
- Gritting
- Cyclic highway maintenance update

b) District Cllr. No report.

75/01/23. Finance:

a) To approve any payments. It was resolved to agree the following payments:

Mrs J Larcombe - £84.68 Clerk's salary (Chq no 552)

HMRC - £21.00 PAYE (Chq no 553)

Councillors considered a letter from Citizens Advice Torrington, North, Mid and West Devon asking for financial support and agreed to give a grant of £50.00 (Chq no 554)

Cllr Balment declared a personal and prejudicial interest in awarding a grant towards the upkeep of the churchyard as he cuts the grass and he took no part in the discussion or decision about this payment. It was agreed to give Washfield PCC a grant of £500 (Chq no 555).

There was a discussion about the type of fencing that could be used around the village green and advice will be sought.

b) To agree the budget for 2023-24. The Clerk had prepared a financial report detailing spending against budget for 1st April to 31st December 2022, predicted spending against budget for 2022-23 and a draft budget for 2023-24. Councillors

noted the earmarked reserves of £2,390.17 and how that reduced the predicted general reserves of the Council to £2,756 at year end. Town and Parish Council elections will take place on 4th May 2023 and there will be a cost if there is a contested election. It was agreed to take this from general reserves if there is an election. With inflation at over 10% budget lines were increased accordingly. Councillors reluctantly agreed that the amount of precept requested would need to increase for 2023-24, the first time for many years. The Clerk advised this would increase the Band D rate for the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax for 2023-24 to £12.33.

c) To agree the precept for 2023-24. It was agreed to request a precept of £2,016.

d) Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2022-23 financial year for the 5 year period until 2026-27. The appointment was noted.

76/01/23. Community Resilience Plan for Washfield. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross suggested using the Annual Parish Meeting to talk about a draft plan. She will draft a plan and circulate by email for councillors to comment on.

77/01/23. Update on plans for the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has drawn a blank in obtaining a speaker for the APM. She approached Citizens Advice but they had no one available. It was agreed to hold the APM on 22nd March and use it to discuss a community resilience plan for the parish and to try and encourage people to nominate for election to the Parish Council. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided at the end of the meeting. The Clerk will book the hall.

78/01/23. Announcements and Correspondence. There was no further correspondence. It was suggested that the remaining bench could be sited on the verge between Plantain House and Thorn Hill. This is part of the Exe Valley Way. This will be looked into.

79/01/23. Date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 15th March 2023.

Signed:
Chair

Date: