

HITTISLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 28th June 2023 in the village hall

Present: Cllrs Mark Brown, Darrell Chidley, Andrew Shervington, Beryl Watson, Cathy Wetherden; Ruth Curtis (clerk); DCCLr Frank Letch and two members of the public

1. Apologies – Cllr Chris Dack; MDDCLr Sandy Chenore; MDDCLr Martin Binks
2. Declarations of interest – Cllr Chidley declared an interest in 9.2 Parsonage Lane as owner of Sanctuary Ranch.
3. Minutes of the last meeting 17th May 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record
4. Matters Arising
 - 4.1 Exeter Green Community Energy meeting – was reasonably well attended with the main focus being on each household lowering their carbon footprint and becoming carbon neutral. A good amount of information was provided on low-income households and the help available from tariff checks and supplier switching, to grants for insulation and heating. You can apply for an independent energy assessment (eligibility criteria apply) - see [Healthy Homes for Wellbeing - ECOE](#) and [Our Retrofit Service - ECOE](#)
 - 4.2 Emergency Plan update – Cllr Brown has the draft plan from the Devon Community Resilience Forum and is reading through this to help put together a draft for Hittisleigh. The questionnaires to parishioners will go out via email with hard copies to those not on the village email group. There will be the option to respond online or via hard copy. Councillors thanked those involved for their skills and time in putting the survey together.
 - 4.3 Co-option – applications will be discussed at the next meeting with a view to co-opting then.
 - 4.4 Signpost at Dennis Down – is in a state of disrepair and a parishioner has generously offered to help fund its replacement via the parish council along the lines of the refurbished one at Binneford Cross which was done by members of the community. As a particularly iconic signpost – with its curved way marker endings and traditional style lettering – it was resolved to register it as a local asset with MDDC and to explore fully the options to fund its restoration or, if that proved not feasible, its replacement on a like for like basis.
 - 4.5 St Andrews Churchyard donation – councillors discussed increasing the regular annual donation of £100 from the parish council and resolved to increase this to £250. DCCLr Letch proposed to donate £100 from the Locality Fund – FOSACH can apply directly.
 - 4.6 Highways matters – councillors thanked DCCLr Letch for his help in getting the Hittisleigh Mill road repaired. After so many years, it felt like an historic event! The clerk reported that Highways had checked the dangerous undermining of the road near the Woodlands for Sale and had determined it is not a danger or a priority.
 - 4.7 Airband broadband – notification has been received by households that the Hittisleigh Mill road will be closed sometime in next 6 months. Airband (fibre) and Open Reach – funded by different sources - are offering competing services which is confusing for residents.
5. District and County Councillor reports – DCCLr Letch gave following updates:

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- a radical change at MDDC following the elections: now 33 Lib Dem, 5 Conservative and 3 Green seats. A period of training is now underway (only 9 out of 42 councillors have been there before!)
- A lot of work on renewables - ground-source heat pumps and roof solar PV - as housing is being retro decarbonised.
- Very glad to have supported work for the Hittisleigh Mill Road – we were lucky to have it completed. Highways have 5 pot-hole machines - ‘dragons’ - to cover 32,000 pot holes in Devon. There are many priority areas competing for funds – one such area on A377 outside Copplestone Farm shop will need to wait for 24-25 budget. Attending to and managing blocked drains obviously helps preserve road surface - DCCLr Letch will send link on reporting drain problems in his next report.
- Cllrs congratulated DCCLr Letch on his appointment as MDDC Chairman.

6. Governance & Accounting for year ending 31 March 2023

- 6.1 Internal audit report – councillors reviewed the internal audit report and resolved to approve it.
- 6.2 Annual governance statements – councillors reviewed and resolved to approve the annual governance statements which were duly signed. There were no changes to the financial regulations or the statement of internal control.
- 6.3 Annual accounting statements – councillors reviewed and resolved to approve the annual accounting statements which were duly signed.
- 6.4 Certificate of exemption from external audit – having approved the annual governance and accounting statements, it was resolved to apply for the certificate of exemption and this was duly signed.

7. Payments

- 7.1 VETS annual fee £120 – approved.

8. Planning

- 8.1 21/00986/DCC Retrospective change of use from small scale specialist waste incinerator to receipt and temporary storage of animal by-products at Old Tellams Yard, Road From Pitton Cross To Hook Farm, Cheriton Bishop, EX6 6HH – permitted with conditions – the conditions (owners obligations) are listed in the accompanying S106 agreement.

9. Enforcement matters

- 9.1 Howards Copse – no further update
- 9.2 Parsonage Lane - no further update
- 9.3 Swallow Tree Farm – no further update. At the new agricultural building at the top of the village, parishioners had observed a flurry of lorry movements over a period of a couple of days with lorries coming every half hour or so carrying hardcore.

10. Correspondence

- 10.1 For information – there were no comments on the information circulated.
- 10.2 New correspondence
 - Mid Devon walking festival 2024 - the clerk had circulated information.
 - Tree planting – in memoriam Brian Howell. The PCC have not yet met to consider the proposal for the tree planting in the church field. Cllrs discussed other potential places outside the village but it was felt that a central village setting was more appropriate. Cllr Watson will follow up.

As the parish council had met in June, it was agreed to not meet in July. **This means the next meeting will be Wednesday 20th Sept.**