

# WITHERIDGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

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## Minutes of the meeting held 06/04/23, 19:00 Witheridge Parish Hall

### PRESENT:

Cllr Martin

Cllr Northam  
Cllr Richardson  
Cllr Smith

### In Attendance:

3 Member of Public

Mr P Dunn - Clerk

### 1. Chairman's Welcome.

The Vice Chairman took the Chair.

### 2. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllrs Harvey and Wells.

### 3. Minutes.

To sign, if approved, the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 07/04/22.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Smith proposed, Mr Richardson seconded and all were in favour approval.

### 4. District & County Cllr Reports.

None.

### 5. Parish Council Chairman's Report.

A written report from the Chairman was read, see report appended.

### 6. Local Group & Charity Reports.

#### Witheridge In Bloom

Cllr Northam reported the group of volunteers were doing their best but more volunteers were required.as did the Litter Pick volunteers.

### 7. Open Questions.

An update on outstanding works to the parish clock was sought, it was reported a date for the works was still awaited.

Meeting closed 19:15.

Signed:

Chairman.

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**Minutes of the meeting held 06/04/23, 19:00 Witheridge Parish Hall****Chairman's Reports**

I believe that the past year will go down in our annals of history as the year of planning application 73742. We all engaged in lots of extra council, site, and officer meetings to put forward the residents' concerns as to the capacity of the physical and social infrastructure, transport and the local road network and traffic calming. To have all our concerns dismissed by the case officer at the full planning meeting was so dismissive to say the least. The new chief planning officer welcomed it as a contribution to the five year housing land supply of Torridge and North Devon. Rather irrational statement as it was the fault of Torridge, not identifying enough land for housing that caused this application to come forward, allowing developers to ignore the local plan. We encountered the county highways "deaf ear" and were given the brush off concerning your traffic calming worries. Our suggestions were a village gateway at the entrance to Chapner Farm similar to the one at Meshaw, rumble strips, contrasting tarmac colour, interactive speed sign and 30mph roundels. All D.C.C. are prepared to do is to move the 30mph sign a little further down the road to the village sign as all the other standard traffic calming measures would involve the county in maintenance costs. The school Zebra crossing has finally come to fruition, and the bus stop at the school has been moved a little further along and another one constructed adjacent to Butts Close.

The refurbishment of the new playground is progressing at a pace, but the recent wet weather has delayed the laying of the safer surfacing. Many thanks to councillors Searles and Dorow for drawing up the schedule of works JCT contract and the tender document. The new green space which abuts the playground and Willow Rise will become the Parish responsibility when legal documents being drawn up between Alison Homes and the Parish Council are agreed and signed and land searches have taken place. The Parish council have also agreed with the developers that the existing sales office area will be leased back to them for an annual sum of £2,000 for five years. This will go some way to fund our plan to enclose the site with bow topped railings similar to the existing fronting the B3137.

The Parish council with the approval of the Parish Hall committee have mopped up the remaining 106 money from the Willow Rise development allocated for play space, to encase the tot's playground with bow topped railings as the existing fencing has reached end of life. In addition to the railings being playground compliant the new pedestrian gate will be wheel chair access friendly. This will enhance the area aesthetically and keep our children safe. This application was ratified by the District's strategy and resources committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> March and Witheridge was awarded £17,000 towards the project. Many thanks to Peter our clerk for drawing up the documents.

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The District council together with the Parish now has to decide which green space and recreation projects to put forward for the 106 money that will come from the developers of the new 155 houses. Although the District were aware that projects had to go forward as early as last December the Parish were not aware or consulted until the March meeting. We therefore held an extra meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> March to discuss these. I was delighted that 14 members of the public attended to put forward their comments. It was agreed that the following projects go forward:

Construction of an all weather/MUGA on land currently available within the village

Land acquisition for sports pitches/open space for use in Witheridge

Improvement of facilities at the Adventure playground

Extension of the cemetery

Additional car parking close to the square

Improvement of the facilities at Witheridge Parish Hall and grounds.

At the last two council meetings we have heard concerns from residents of both Cannington Road and Drayford Lane as to the lack of hedge, tree and fence maintenance at the Cannington Road open green space. With the Parish council achieving partial success via the North Devon enforcement officer the grass is now being cut, but with the lack of enforcement officers now, where do we go next?

I end by saying a big thank you to the "Knights of Witheridge" for the amazing vibrant display of daffodils you have planted throughout the village. They certainly are "A host of golden daffodils" and lift the spirits even on the gloomiest of days.

Jacky Harvey Chairman