

WASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday September 27th 2023 at Washfield Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Mrs A Taylor-Ross (Chair for items 36/09/23 onwards), M Balment (Chair for items 33/09/23 – 35/09/23), J Boundy, J Mock, R Webber, W Wood and Mrs A Wych.

In attendance: County Cllr R Chesterton, District Cllr's C Adcock & R Gilmour, Mr & Mrs A Roberts (Footpath Wardens), one member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

33/09/23. To receive apologies. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross had sent a message that she had been unavoidably delayed and would be late arriving. Cllr Balment, Vice-chair, took the chair. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Wood.

34/09/23. Disclosure of interest in item on the agenda. No disclosures.

35/09/23. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chair, Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross.

Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross joined the meeting and took the Chair.

36/09/23. Matters arising from the minutes (not already covered by the agenda). None.

37/09/23. Public questions. The member of the public said he had attended Stoodleigh Parish Council's meeting and had been advised to come to this meeting. For some time the member of the public has been keeping tidy a piece of land on the right hand side of Stoodleigh Drive known as Bakers Wood and has erected a fence on it. He had engaged a solicitor to find out who owned it but they had been unsuccessful. He believed it was a family who lived out of the area. Cllr Mock said it had been owned for the past 60 years by a family in London. Someone is now building a shack on this area of land and they have cut a gateway in the fence, put in a gate and padlocked it. Additional fencing has been erected and trees cut down. Following Stoodleigh Parish Council's meeting Cllr Gilmour reported the matter to the MDDC enforcement team but they are under a dearth of enforcement matters. Cllr Gilmour is hoping that John Millar, MDDC Area Team Manager (Development Control), will have a look. MDDC was informed about this matter in April 2023 and it is registered as ENF23/00091/Rural. The District Councillors will carry this matter forward. The member of the public said he was willing to show the shack to planning officers.

The member of the public left the meeting.

38/09/23. Footpaths:

a) P3 update. A written report from Mr & Mrs Roberts had been circulated prior to

the meeting. All the works they have asked for have been done and they are not aware of any new problems. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross is going to talk to the farmer about leaving pathways through the crops when they are growing over footpaths (FP1, FP3 and BW7). Ongoing concerns FP2 between Mousebeare and New Park: the farmer at New Park is unhappy with the suggestion of landscaping the path through the top of the field. Although moving the posts and fence has improved the situation it is still difficult to walk on the top part of the field because of the sliding ground and rabbit holes etc particularly when the grass and nettles are high. They are still getting complaints about the dangers and risk of twisting an ankle or falling with nothing to hold on to between the electric fence and the nettles and brambles. This is stopping people walking this path. They have now suggested that the path be moved into the old lane and come back into the field by the new gate. The bottom half of the field below the gate is no problem to walk. They have looked at the lane and, in their opinion, the old lane would not be too difficult to clear, and it is firm, dry and gently sloping underfoot and would make it a much more pleasurable walk. FP2 between New Park and Pitt is still very wet and there is deep mud between the footbridge and the ford. It could benefit from scraping the mud to the firm surface below and clearing the drainage ditch so it doesn't build up again.

It was noted that Footpath 6 through Slade works well but additional signage would help.

It was felt that Washfield had done well since joining the P3 scheme. Everyone who has helped with the footpath improvements was thanked.

b) Proposal 2 from the Definitive Map Review for Washfield – update on any issues with Shilhay Green Lane. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross reported that she has walked the path. A decision on proposal 2 will be made at the DCC Rights of Way Committee meeting on November 23rd. If there is any new evidence it could be submitted now. The Parish Council has not received any new correspondence on the matter.

c) Any other footpaths matters. None.

39/09/23. Highways

a) To report on any highways work carried out in the parish and to note any highways work needed. Cllr Balment has reported the potholes at Badcock but Highways are saying they are too big for the emergency team to make emergency repairs. They will need a larger repair.

A pothole at Charterhouse was reported and repaired promptly as it was dangerous. According to Highways the potholes on the road from Iron Bridge to Keepers Cross have been repaired today, 27th September. No repairs had been made at lunchtime.

b) Grit bins – request for filling. Highways have asked to be informed which grit bins need filling. Cllr Boundy had prepared a list and the details will be submitted.

c) Update on request for notice of SWW road closures and for workable diversions to be in place (for as short a time as possible). No update.

d) Any other highways matters. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross reported that she had emailed Melanie McKenna, DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer, regarding the issue Wynefreds and Lower Wynefreds have with rain overflow from the main highway at the top of Brook Lane cascading down the lane when the drain on the main highway blocks. She has confirmed there is nothing Highways can do and just suggested keeping the drains clear.

40/09/23. Reports

a) County Cllr. A written report from Cllr Chesterton was circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

Cllr Chesterton left the meeting.

b) District Cllr. Cllr Gilmour and Cllr Adcock invited councillors and the clerk to a Christmas drinks party at Cllr Gilmour's home.

At the Full Council meeting on 6th September, the Cabinet recommendation to proceed with a soft closure of the company to maximise returns and minimise any potential financial exposure was adopted. Current projects will be completed and sold. It is expected that the majority of the £21million debt figure quoted will be recovered. Cabinet (29th August 2023) has approved the acquisition of St Georges Court, Tiverton by Mid Devon Homes (HRA) subject to an agreed valuation.

It was noted that MDDC's annual budget is £16.4million.

Full Council Motion on Roads: At the full Council meeting on 6th September, Motion 596 from Cllr Gilmour was passed:

- 1) Mid Devon District Council call on Devon County Council to fulfil their statutory obligations under Section 41 of the 1980 Highways Act, that requires them to maintain Devon's roads and to keep them safe. Further, to explain the financial position regarding the funds promised by HMG, and received to date, the proposed remedial actions for the roads in Mid Devon District Council to be undertaken before this winter and the spending/budget allocations between 2022/3 - 2025/6.
- 2) Mid Devon District Council agrees to establish an on-line petition to include the following: Our roads in Mid Devon have become dangerous and a liability to drivers, passengers, other road users and pedestrians. Now, we the electorate of Mid Devon District Council are calling on Devon County Council to fix our dangerous roads and if they do not have sufficient funding to demand this from Central Government.

Cllr Webber joined the meeting. Cllr Adcock and Cllr Gilmour left the meeting.

41/09/23. Planning

a) To make a recommendation on any planning applications received before the meeting. No applications received when the agenda was published.

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

23/00882/Full Erection of a dung store. Location: Ennerleigh Farm, Washfield.
Decision: conditional approval granted.

23/00902/Full Erection of an agricultural livestock and storage building and formation of track. Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 294192 118531. Decision: conditional approval granted.

c) Mid Devon Landscape Character Review Workshop 12th October, 10am.
Noted.

d) Parish Council Class Q Training 19 October 2023 6pm. Noted.

e) Any other planning matters. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has been contacted by a parishioner who is concerned that the applicant for planning application 23/00902/Full (Erection of an agricultural livestock and storage building and

formation of track. Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 294192 118531, Wildwood) has created an entrance without planning permission. When commenting on the application the Parish Council asked for Highways to visit the site to check whether there are any safety issues with the proposed access. This has been reported to MDDC who have said they will look at it. The gate has been set back from the road.

Mr & Mrs Roberts left the meeting.

42/09/23. Finance:

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

Devon Association of Local Councils - £100.17 (Chq no 567)

Karen Ward - £40.00 internal audit (Chq no 568)

Mrs J Larcombe - £87.48 Clerk's salary (Chq no 569)

H M Revenue & Customs - £21.20 (Chq no 570)

It was noted that since the last meeting a payment of £180.00 had been made to C J Radford & Sons for P3 work (chq no 566).

b) Financial Report. The financial report was noted.

c) Update on moving the bank accounts to Unity Trust Bank. The Clerk has completed the online application form to open a current and instant access deposit account. A cheque (No 571) for £500.00 made out to Washfield Parish Council was signed to open the accounts with. Signatories signed the Account Application Submission Form. The Parish Council's Standing Orders, copies of the last 6 months bank statements, a financial plan, the Parish Council's letterhead and a copy of some minutes all have to be submitted with the submission form.

43/09/23. Update on replacement of fencing around the village green. The fencing will be replaced in October.

44/09/23. Finalisation of Community Resilience Plan for Washfield. This item was carried forward to the next meeting.

45/09/23. Chairman's Announcements and Correspondence. The Chairman had no Announcements. No further correspondence.

46/09/23. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 15th November 2023 at 7.30pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date: