

1 WASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 27th March 2024 in Washfield Memorial Hall commencing at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: County Cllr R Chesterton, District Cllr C Adcock and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe

75/03/24. To receive apologies. Apologies were accepted from Cllr J Mock.

76/03/24. Disclosure of interest in item on the agenda. Cllr Wood declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 80/03/24 a) as his mother owns land connected to discussions regarding Footpath 2. Cllr Balment declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 85/03/24 a) as a director of a company due a payment.

77/03/24. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

78/03/24. Matters arising from the minutes (not already covered by the agenda). None.

79/03/24. Public questions. No members of the public present.

80/03/24. Footpaths:

a) P3 Report. A written report from Mr & Mrs Roberts, Footpath Wardens, was circulated by email prior to the meeting. The report was noted.

Footpath 1: Haydon to Charterhouse (Cuckoo's Nest). The boardwalk put in last year over the very wet bit at the Haydon end of the path is working well even after all this rain. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has spoken to the landowners about not planting over the line of the path.

Footpath 2: Mousebeare to Long Lane via New Park and Pitt. Disappointed about the outcome of talks etc about the path at the top of the field above New Park. Need to ask Stuart Howell, DCC Footpath Warden, to liaise with the landowner about landscaping the path through the field. DCC to scrape area between the ford and footbridge, and dig out ditches if permission granted from landowner.

Footpath 3: New Park to Ennerleigh via Courtenay. Not walked recently.

Footpath 4: Brook Lane to Long Lane. No problems

Footpath 5: Bullfinches (Lower Washfield) to Courtenay via Stanterton.

Very muddy track towards the Lower Washfield end

Footpath 6: From road between Slade and Charterhouse to Bridleway 7 below Smiths. Not walked recently

Bridleway 7: From lane above Smiths to lane above Ramstorland. Fingerpost at the top of the field just before going down to the streams and track up to Ramstorland lane has rotted off and is leaning on a gate, itself attached to a wobbly post. All need

resetting and have been reported to Stuart Howells.

Footpath 8: Nibbs to Lower Washfield. Finger post at the Nibbs end falling over. Reported to Stuart Howells. Both gateposts on the gate onto the lane at Lower Washfield are rotted and the gate has been locked shut with notices attached pointing to temporary use of another gate 20 yards away. The original gate will be replaced and a stile included by the farmer (stewardship scheme) in the spring.

Footpath 10: Beeches to Lower Washfield. No problems.

Footpath 2 – the Parish Council could write to landowners to try and agree a permissive footpath to avoid the section that is difficult to walk. Cllr Wood declared an interest as his mother is one of the landowners.

b) Any other footpaths matters. No other footpath matters.

81/03/24. 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

23/01876/Full Erection of 2 dwellings and erection of workshop for private use following demolition of agricultural buildings, change of use of outbuilding to mixed farm/domestic workshop and associated works. Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 291941 116618 Winbow Farm, Washfield. Decision: conditional approval granted.

c) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

82/03/24. Highways

a) To report on any highways work carried out in the parish and to note any highways work needed. It was reported that there are lots of potholes on the roads in the parish. Cllr Chesterton reported that he is pushing the repairs which are badly needed on the road from Quoit-at-Cross, Stoodleigh to Hatherland Cross. There is money in the budget next year and the year after for repairs to roads and he will try to find out when it is planned to repair this section of road.

There is a cone in a large pothole at Lower Washfield. This pothole was reported 19 days ago and has still not been repaired. There are only 3 potholes in Washfield showing as reported on DCC's online reporting page for highways defects.

As a result of incorrect diversion signage when SWW had a road closure a HGV lorry got stuck and one of the parapets was knocked off the bridge opposite Badcott. The parapet was cracked before this incident but is now in the river.

b) Update on letter sent to SWW requesting notice of road closures and for workable diversions to be in place for as short a time as possible. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has written to SSW and the following response to her questions has been received from Mrs Sue Richards, Complaints Customer Manager.

1. We will erect advance warning signs of any planned road closures a minimum of seven days in advance to notify road users of the intended closure of the road. We cannot provide advance warning of reactive road closures where we require immediate access to our network to undertake urgent repairs.
2. Our statutory notifications are issued to the local highway authority who own the road network, which in this case is Devon County Council (DCC), to ensure they

share the information with all of the relevant external stakeholders such as emergency services, bus services, waste collection etc and display the information on their public viewable platform.

3. You will need to contact DCC who make all information available on their webpage [one.network](#) relating to all activity on their road network.
4. Unfortunately, we cannot ensure the roads are re-opened at the end of a working day. The reason being, the excavation may remain open overnight where work is continuing, or minimum sideways clearance is not achievable as set out in the Streetworks Act. If our works are finished and we are able to reinstate on the same day, we will of course re-open the road as soon as possible.
5. 5a – We must operate in line with the Streetworks Act set out by the government and managed by the local highway authority. I'm so sorry but we cannot make the rules up ourselves. If a road closure is required then the road will be closed, we cannot just allow one lane to remain open as the safety of our staff and the public are the priority.
5b – all road closures are submitted to the local highway authority who permit our presence and are updated of the road diversion to ensure suitable.
5c – our road works should all be signed appropriately in line with the requirement of the Streetworks Act.

The Manager has advised that he fully takes on board your position in trying to ensure your village remains accessible, however we are regulated by the local highway authority and prescribed stipulations for road works. We will endeavour to complete our works at the very earliest convenience to minimise disruption, but he cannot agree to not conforming with the Streetworks Act and risk our staff or the public safety, by reducing the available road space to unsafe or unapproved distances by opening the road after working hours or keeping one lane open. Mrs Richards can be contacted on her direct line 01392 442804 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

c) Any other highways matters. Packer Lane and the junction with Washfield Lane is unadopted by DCC and is still owned by the developers. If they don't want to get it up to the required standard they don't have to hand it over but they are unlikely to want long term responsibility. The priority given to Packer Lane is as shown on the planning approval for the Rackenford Meadows development. Cllr Chesterton is unable to do anything about getting the priority changed in Washfield Lane's favour at this time. It is difficult to change what was agreed by the MDDC Planning Committee. The conversation about a change of priority will be kept going so that a plan can be presented when it is adopted. Any near misses as a result of the priority should be logged and photos taken to evidence the dangers at this junction. If there is a safety issue it is the responsibility of the developers. The road had to be dug up at this junction because the developers had forgotten to put in 2 drains. Initially the traffic lights were in a dangerous position and they had to be moved. The plans didn't work well when they were laid out on the ground.

83/03/24. Reports

a) County Cllr. A written report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. The report included updates on:

- Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal
- Locality Budgets
- Waste – Defra statistics for 2022-23
- Electric vehicle Charging points – award of £7million government funding to support the delivery of thousands of EV charging points across the county over the next few years.
- Environment – Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations laid down before parliament
- Highways.

There were no questions. The previous expression of interest for an EV Charging Point outside of the Village Hall was noted.

b) District Cllr. Monthly written reports from the District Councillors since the last meeting had been circulated by email.

An email from Cllr Gilmour giving information about waste and recycling rates will be circulated.

MDDC now has 2 Planning Enforcement Officers.

The State of the District Debate was very successful and improved relationships between Town and Parish Councils.

Cllr Gilmour will be stepping down as Chair of the MDDC Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Gilmour is finding out how much S106 funding is available for the parishes in Clare & Shuttern Ward.

Bakes Wood, Washfield. An individual has created (illegally) an access off the road and a building in the wood and left waste there. The District Councillors continue to investigate what can be done to address the problem, which is complicated as ownership of the (unregistered) land is unclear. Cllr Gilmour is liaising with the concerned parties and MDDC Development Control. It is not registered with Land Registry. A parishioner is taking the matter to court again. Cllr Gilmour feels that fly tipping is the only way that it can be dealt with.

84/03/24. To discuss whether the Parish Council is interested in supporting the Wild Tiverton CIC venture and contributing / applying for funding. It was agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross reported that money has been raised to purchase 12 acres of floodland which will be restored to allow flooding to try and reduce the flow of water on the River Exe during periods of heavy rainfall. Some of this land will be public space and some a nature reserve. There are Beavers and Otters there and it will add to the biodiversity of the parish. There was some concern that this scheme was taking land out of agriculture. Councillors agreed to support investigating whether S106 funding could be applied for, for this project.

Cllr Chesterton, Cllr Adcock and Cllr Gilmour left the meeting left the meeting. They were thanked for all they do for the Parish Council.

85/03/24. Finance:

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

Mrs J Larcombe - £121.08 Clerk's salary and expenses (Payment ref: 2324/11)

H M Revenue & Customs - £22.60 (Payment ref: 2324/12)

Cllr Balment declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following payment and took no part in the agreement of the payment.

F C S Balment & Sons - £427.58 base and installation of commemorative bench for Roger Arnold, former Chair and councillor (Payment ref: 2324/13). This work was agreed in a previous financial year and has been on hold while a suitable site was identified.

Councillors agreed to arrange to meet at the seat to commemorate the late Mr Arnold.

b) To report any receipts and the bank balances. There have not been any receipts since the last meeting. Bank balance Unity Trust Current Account £1,815.71. No recent bank statements from NatWest.

A letter was signed to arrange for the transfer of the balance in the NatWest Savings account into the Current Account and for the savings account to be closed. The balance in the Current Account will then be transferred to the Unity Trust Current Account and the NatWest Current account closed.

c) To amend the Financial Regulations for online banking and changes to the Procurement Regulations. The amended Financial Regulations were adopted.

d) To amend the Standing Orders for changes to the Procurement Regulations. The amended Standing Orders were adopted.

e) Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Controls and Internal Audit. Approved.

f) Review of the Annual Business Risk Assessment. Approved.

g) Appointment of Internal Auditor. It was agreed to appoint Karen Ward.

86/03/24. To discuss a request for no dog fouling signs for Dark Lane. Dog Control Orders do not apply to carriageways with a speed limit of 40 mph or more so official signs are not applicable. Cllr Balment has put up signs previously where they can be put, asking people to pick up after their dogs

87/03/24. To make arrangements for a working party to tidy up the Village Green. This will be arranged before the Village Hall's May Day celebrations.

88/03/24. To discuss arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting. It was agreed to have speakers based around the natural environment of the village and working in harmony. Date to be decided.

89/03/24. Chair's Announcements and Correspondence:
MDDC – Review of Town and Parish Council Charter

90/03/24. Date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 15th May 2024. This will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting when officers are elected and responsibilities decided.

Signed:
Chair

Date: