

Minutes of the meeting of Silverton Parish Council
held Monday 13th January 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in the Silverton Community Hall

Present: Cllrs Gavin Donovan, Chris Eveleigh, Ruth Harrison, Simon Hedges (Chair), O Kennard, Alan McManus, Vicki Maylan, Lewis Ward and Josh Wright

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Alan McManus signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form which was witnessed by the Clerk.

Minute 114025 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Emily Townsend

Minute 114026 **To note any declarations of interest:**

- (a) To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature

Cllr McManus declared a personal interest in relation to Item 4(a)(i) relating to Upexe Lane

- (b) To declare any prejudicial interests in items on the agenda and their nature (Councillors with prejudicial interests must leave the room for the relevant items)

None

Minute 114027 **Meeting open to any questions from members of the public – 10 mins**

No members of the public attended the meeting

Minute 114028 **Themes for 2025/26:**

- (a) Neighbourhood plan items:

- (i) Progressing with Upexe Lane Footpath

Cllr McManus had circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting his thoughts for improving safety on Upexe Lane to the A396. He stated he could cut the hedges back twice a year to 1.4m which would keep the road as wide as possible. The hedge trimming would be carried out at the owner's expense. The Chair proposed an offer of thanks to Mr Seward which was unanimously agreed by a show of hands. He confirmed an application would need to be made to the Rural Payments Agency in order for the hedge to be cut back.

Cllr McManus had also investigated provision of signs to be placed at each end of Upexe Lane to warn car drivers of potential pedestrians walking in the road. The cost per sign is less than £40.00 without fittings and fixings etc. The signs he has looked at complies with the relevant rules for street signs. If it was possible he felt one sign could be placed on the 30mpg sign as you go out of the village.

Cllr McManus stated that solar lights were also a possibility although it was

appreciated that this would need the express approval from County Highways as these would shine onto a public road. He confirmed the lights could be placed on Mr Seward's land and he is happy to make further investigations and purchase a light to experiment with a view to approaching DCC. RESOLVED that one light, which is Highways Authority approved together with a stake be purchased up to a value of £100.00. Proposed by the Chair and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

With regard to the pedestrian signs the Clerk will contact the Local Highways Office for advice as to positioning.

(ii) Glebe Arrangement Fees

The Chair indicated that there were no specific proposals yet as to funding but a new section has been included on the Proposed Expenditure paperwork

(iii) Silverton Green Group funding

As (ii) above

(iv) Community Land Trust funding

As (ii) above

(b) Berry Lime Avenue Regeneration

The Chair indicated this would be included within the Tree Maintenance Fund

(c) Volunteering (volunteer stall)

This will be included in the Community Fund

(d) Improving advice to Parishioners (handouts, advice sheets)

This will be included in the Community Fund

(e) Village appearance - expansion of Village Handyman work

This would be included within the Routine Activities Fund.

(f) Shared online Archive for Parish Council

The Chair stated he felt the Parish Council needed to expand the sharing facility to make it available to other groups in the village and store documents. Cllr Wright explaining the Parish Council website already has this facility for Councillors and could be used at no extra cost and he suggested this be used for a 6 month trial period.

(g) Traffic Issues and Improvements

Currently there is no Traffic Fund and the Chair suggested any funds required would be taken from the General Reserves and some may come from the Neighbourhood Plan fund.

(h) Road Warden Scheme funding

No specific funds had been allocated as volunteers were needed and any funding required would come from General Reserves

- (i) Consider request from the Silverton Evangelical Church for a grant of £3,250.00 towards the cost of a Youth Worker in the Parish

Cllr Maylan gave an update on the work of the Youth Worker and confirmed that Silverton Evangelical Church, Silverton Parochial Trust and the Richard's Trust also contribute towards the cost of the Youth Worker. It had been noted that antisocial behaviour had dropped in the village since the Youth Worker had been employed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council provide a grant of £3,250.00 towards the cost of a Youth Worker in the Parish. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

- (j) Request for funding from Mid Devon Mobility

The Chair confirmed he had not included a figure in the spreadsheet for this. It was agreed that if Mid Devon Mobility applied for funding in future years it would be helpful if details of the services provided in Silverton were given and how many in the village take advantage of those services.

Minute 114209 **Grass cutting and, if appropriate, quotation from Parsons Landscaping Limited for forthcoming year**

RESOLVED that Parsons be retained provided the quotation is reasonable as they do a good job and they are very helpful. Proposed by Cllr Maylan and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

The Clerk confirmed the quote received from Parsons was in the sum of £7,246.62 + VAT. It was agreed that Parsons be asked to cut the Berry no closer than 2 inches above ground level.

Minute 114210 **Annual review of Statement of Internal Control**

RESOLVED that the current Statement is agreed but as soon as an account is opened with Unity Trust the method of payment will need to be approved at the following Parish Council meeting. Proposed by the Chair and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

Minute 114211 **Consider budget papers prepared by Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair financial and general reserves and set precept for year 2025/26**

The budget paper drafted by the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair was considered line by line and the anticipated figure for the financial year 2025/2026 agreed.

A discussion arose regarding the Clerk's pay and Income Tax payments. The Chair confirmed the Clerk was paid in line with the Local Government Association and National Joint Council for Local Government Services' recommendations for Clerks' pay. There is a potential back payment to the 1st April 2024 which will be calculated by Thomas Westcott who are retained by the Parish Council and who provide the monthly pay slips.

Clerk to investigate with Thomas Westcott the PAYE payment shown.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council re-joins the Devon Association of Parish Councils for the financial year 2025/2026 and monitor its use. It was noted the Parish Council no longer has direct access to legal advice, now that Sarah Cross was no longer a councillor, and had moved away. Proposed by Cllr Wright and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

Cllr Maylan provided the Councillors with the cost of the repair of the gate provided by Rhinoplay which in itself was a day's work and also the figure given to repair the other items.

Cllr Maylan had asked TK Play to provide a quote to repair/replace the gate and carry out the other work save for the replacement grips on the climbing wall. A quote was awaited.

It was noted that MDDC have now highlighted in its latest report that the bottom gate is closing too fast.

RESOLVED that the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Fund be reduced to £5,000.00. Proposed by the Chair and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

RESOLVED that the annual honorarium to Mr Campbell for winding the clock be increased from £200.00 to £250.00. Proposed by Cllr Kennard. A vote was taken with 8 in favour and 1 against.

The proposed budget was adjusted in the light of the likely costs of keeping the facilities within the Big Rec in good order over future years (it was noted that the cost of the original Big Rec project had been around £100,000). This resulted in a significant amount of the monies proposed for the Neighbourhood Plan fund being reallocated for this purpose, and the precept being increased in order to increase reserves for this purpose.

RESOLVED that the precept be increased to a figure of £54,760.00 representing a 9.9% increase. Proposed by the Chair and unanimously agreed by a show of hands.

Minute 114212 **Matters brought forward by the Chair**

None

Meeting closed at 9.35 p.m .