

Draft MINUTES for EGGESFORD PARISH MEETING

HELD AT ALL SAINTS CHURCH, EGGESFORD

MONDAY 26 JUNE 2025

In attendance: Chris Rose, Chair (CR); Chris Rogers (CRR), Vice Chair; Councillor Steve Keable (SK), Devon County Council; Joanne Court (JC), Clerk; 16 parishioners.

1. Introductory remarks. Steve Keable (Liberal Democrat) was introduced as our new County Councillor for the electoral division of Creedy Taw & Mid Exe, responsible for 29 parishes. On behalf of the parish, the death of Michael Downward was marked; he made an exceptional contribution to Eggesford life as long-standing Church Warden and Chairman of Friends of Eggesford All Saints Trust (FEAST) and will be deeply missed.

2. Previous Minutes approval. The Minutes of the 2024 Meeting, posted on the Parish website in advance, were approved.

3. Matters arising. There were no matters arising, which would not be covered under the headings below.

4. Community matters:

a. Roads. Nomination of a new Highways Officer was suggested, a specific person to take responsibility for monitoring problems with parish roads and footpaths and reporting. It was thought that the passing on of information via WhatsApp about road closures etc was working well and sufficient. (The Chair commended the allocation last year by DCC of £12m to repair potholes and improve drainage on our county's roads albeit the standard of repair is variable). SK reported that the demolition of the pub in Lapford had started that day and the road should reopen in two weeks. [Note: Demolition still not yet started – as at 27 June]

b. Neighbourhood Watch/Local Security. The Chair would pass on thanks to Lee Berrecloth, the outgoing Neighbourhood Watch organiser. James Penelhum (JP) had kindly volunteered to take on this role. He outlined the possible approaches. The main potential benefit of formally setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme would be official signs which households could display. On balance, the consensus of the meeting was that the deterrent effect of these signs is minimal, and any suspicious activity or concerns are already reported on WhatsApp. JP would monitor and filter crime alerts from Devon & Cornwall Police and post only relevant info. This would have to be passed on by neighbours to those without access to WhatsApp. Anyone who wished to could sign up to receive these alerts direct. JP would also provide further information on the WhatsApp group (Afternote: completed).

c. Community Emergency Response Planning. The production of a Community Emergency Response Plan was then considered so that the parish would be better prepared for extreme weather, flooding, extended power cuts etc. Advice would be given by David Dann and CR to individual households to make sure everyone has emergency supplies, lists of emergency numbers, planned exit routes, knowledge of meeting points. Potentially vulnerable

households should be identified; specific action to be determined. Volunteers with resources such as generators, tractors, will be co-ordinated by CR and Dave Dann. Dave Dann had reviewed the local government templates and ‘toolkits’ for making a community emergency plan and would pass on further useful information in due course.

d. Eggesford WhatsApp Information Group. There was some preliminary discussion of whether the WhatsApp group is sufficiently accessible to all parish residents to be the means of passing on emergency and other useful info and it was confirmed that it is now administered by both Sara Penelhum and the Chair. It had started as a friends’ group but now most residents make use of it and anyone who wishes to be added to the group can contact either of them. If not an Eggesford resident, they would need to have some local link.

5. Parish Chair Update:

a. Defibrillator. On behalf of the Parish, thanks were extended to all who contributed and especially to Andy and Maria Hill for their generous contribution of more than half of the cost of the new defibrillator. Its siting outside number 4 Fourways was reported.

b. Parish Events. The VE Day celebrations, generously hosted by the Skinner family, had been enjoyed by all. Future Parish events include a fly past at the airfield on the second weekend in August, a performance of ‘Hamlet’ on 27 August at The Lodge and a Heritage Open Day at All Saints Eggesford on 14 September.

c. Parish Planning consultation process. The Chair confirmed that he is now a consultee for all Parish Planning applications and will post details of any applications on WhatsApp as soon as received from the council. Parishioners were encouraged to sign up to alerts from Mid Devon District Council for local Parish planning applications if they so wished

d. Communications. The best means of circulating Parish information was further discussed. Notices may be posted on notice boards at Fourways and at the church. GDPR regulations make email burdensome. The Parish WhatsApp is the easiest, most direct means of communicating with most residents. Users were encouraged to observe basic guidelines to protect all residents such as only adding content which may be helpful to other residents and not posting opinions which might offend.

6. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 for Parish Meetings with no financial activity would be filed before the 30 June deadline (Afternote: completed 24 June).

7. Airband/Local Broadband: CR reported that Airband have refused to provide free broadband to the church. The full monthly price would be payable. FEAST had considered paying for the wifi for the church but considered the cost prohibitive. Peter Green was once again thanked for his efforts to secure local broadband and emphasised the importance of logging all faults with the Airband service by emailing or telephoning the Support Team.

8. FEAST Update. Ed Howell, on behalf of FEAST, reported that efforts were being made to secure significant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund or similar sources. The priority is to have sufficient reserves to maintain the fabric of the Church, but consideration is also being given to improving the facilities and opening the church to more use by the wider

community, making the space more flexible. Residents will be able to express their views on the future of the church at the Heritage Open Day, 14 September.

9. Local Transport. GWR have added an extra carriage to some Tarka Line trains so that each train now has four carriages rather than three. The predicted date for half hourly trains is 2040. The provision of additional parking is under consultation by Devon County Council and a Preliminary Design document has been prepared which identifies possible options. Local bus services that connected with train timings at Eggesford station for outlying towns and villages, including Chulmleigh and Winkleigh, was under consideration, noting that the Station currently lacks a bus stop space. JP raised the important issue that these public transport developments would not help young people who must spend many hours each day commuting to Exeter College; students are being let down by the council's failure to provide equally excellent sixth forms in all local areas, especially Barnstaple. SK confirmed sixth forms are closing in Crediton and Tiverton so that the problem will be exacerbated.

10. MDDC and DDC Update. SK was congratulated on his election result after successful electioneering. Apologies received from Cllr Alex White and condolences extended to Cllr Natalia Letch.

11. AOB. With no other business, the Parish Meeting closed.

12. Afternote: Parishioners with views on any of the above issues who were unable to attend the meeting are encouraged to inform the Chair or Vice-Chair so that their views may be considered in future planning.