

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 5th June 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice Chair), R Kenshole, T Verney.

Also present: C Cllr Davis, D Cllr Wilkinson, Val Ford (Clerk) and 2 member of the public.

Apologies/Approvals.

Apologies were received from Cllr Knight at the last meeting and Cllr S Tanton. Apologies were also received from Cllr S Whitby for the June and July meetings due to work commitments. This would take her over the six month rule so this needed to be formally recorded and accepted. **Cllr Reeves proposed that this apology be accepted which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.
RESOLVED THAT CLLR WHITBY'S APOLOGIES BE ACCEPTED UNDER THE SIX MONTH RULE DUE TO UNAVOIDABLE WORK COMMITMENTS.

5255. Declarations of Interest
None.

5256. Public Participation
None.

5257. Approve & Sign Minutes of the 1st May 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. **Cllr Verney proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st May 2024 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE 1ST MAY 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED

5258. Approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 1st May 2024.

These Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and will be signed at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2025. **Cllr Verney proposed that these Minutes were an accurate record of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 1st May 2024 which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

**RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 1ST MAY 2024 BE APPROVED AS AN ACCURATE RECORD.
- THAT THESE MINUTES WILL BE SIGNED AT THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING IN 2025.**

5259. Matters Arising

5234. Matters Arising. 5245. Small Grant Fund (c). Mr Stainer from WDVGFA provided the Clerk with receipted invoices for the work carried out in respect of the grant funding for 2023-2024.

5260. Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

The Clerk had checked the Devon & Cornwall Police website for the latest crimes but there had been no update since the figures reported at the last meeting.

5261. Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis referred to her report (See Appendix A). A copy of this report was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Items referred to were as follows:-

- a) Free Sunday bus travel in June 2024 to get people to try using the bus.
- b) Barnstaple Railway Station. C Cllr Davis had been trying to find the money for years to improve the safety of this which involves four lanes of traffic and she had noticed that if using the taxi rank there is a set of railings which means the door cannot be opened. A Consultation Webinar was held, with a lot of responses already and she wanted people to spread the word.
- c) North Devon Link Road. C Cllr Davis referred to the bridge at Landkey being finished but this has to be tarmacked and finished off. As the various items of work are finished the speed limit in that area will be removed. Trees will be planted in due course. There are overnight closures plus closures on the dual carriageway due to emptying of gulleys and tensioning the safety barriers.
- d) Electric Vehicle Chargers were discussed, with these being put in at the Science Park and a lot at Exeter Service Station.

Cllr Ayre congratulated C Cllr Davis on becoming Deputy Leader of Devon County Council.

The roadworks near the Cedar Inn in Barnstaple are going to plan as far as C Cllr Davis is aware.

D Cllr Wilkinson advised that Utility companies can close roads at will. This happened in Morteohoe with caravans queued up and down Chapel Road.

5262. Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson had received a text from SW Water with an invite to the SW Community Road Show on Tues 11th June 2024. He was concerned about the short notice on such an important issue.

West Down Community Shop contacted D Cllr Wilkinson applying for £250 in respect of the Community Council Grant. There is a bit more money available for local organisations or the money can be used for generic things around North Devon.

D Cllr Wilkinson referred to "Sly Tipping". This is where businesses are carrying out fly tipping but are putting waste next to black bins or dumping waste in someone else's bin. This is costing rate payers a lot of money and the businesses should be paying for trade waste.

A revocation of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for Braunton had been announced. The air quality at the crossroads had improved, which could be the result of electric cars being used.

D Cllr Wilkinson referred to S106 money. In Woolacombe some money was available which was put down for the renewal of the roof at the Parish Hall. However, other grants were used for this and the developer would be within his rights to have this money back, although it is hoped to redirect this money in the Woolacombe area. Richard Slaney (Parks, Leisure and Public Open Space Officer from NDC) referred to £13,158 being available now from the Wilderbrook Way on Mullacott Industrial Estate (in West Down Parish) allocated for the refurbishment of the Ariel Recording Studio. This will need to be fought for if required as this was signed off a long time ago by previous Parish Councillors but has been allocated to the Ariel Centre, which is not in West Down Parish. D Cllr Wilkinson referred to a lesson being learned that when putting something forward for S106 monies, more than one scheme needs to be allocated so that if one is completed the money can be used on another.

Discussion took place about money being used for pupils from West Down School to go up to the Ariel Centre. Cllr Ayre did not know how much the Ariel is used these days and felt clarification is required.

Cllr Ayre advised D Cllr Wilkinson that there seems to be some confusion with the Planning Department at NDC about which applications are for Woolacombe or West Down and she has asked them to reevaluate their areas.

D Cllr Wilkinson gave his apologies for the July 2024 Parish Council Meeting.

5263. Flashing Speed Signs

C Cllr Davis referred to going out with the Highway Officer a week on Monday to look at sites for the Flashing Speed Sign in West Down.

Cllr Reeves had found another site at Dean Lane (by the left hand side of the field gate). There is nothing definite on who owns it but he had spoken to the landowner of the field who had no objection. There would be no obstruction for a sign either way. C Cllr Davis will find out what is under the ground there.

Cllr Reeves provided photo images of the other potential sites at Ilfracombe Hill, Stang Lane and West Down Hill. He had rung North Devon Homes regarding the original proposed site at Dean Lane who had no record of ownership but they provided him with an email address to enquire further.

C Cllr Davis will ask Lynton Council for information on prices and pass these to the Clerk so that West Down Parish Council can put in an application for funding from DCC.

5264. Planning Decisions

78426 – Gillards Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NH. Approved

78436 – The Chapel, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NQ. Approved.

77772 – Teasel Cottage, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NT. Approved

78415 – West Hill Farm Road from West Down School to Winsham Down House, West Down, Ilfracombe, EX34 8NF. Approved.

5265. Planning Applications

a) To comment on the following planning applications.

78558 – Demolition of 3 No. barns and erection of 3 No. dwellings at West Hill Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NF.

Cllr Reeves referred to there having been approximately forty barn conversion applications in for West Down during the last four years, with all being approved. A few comments have been made on this application following the Bat Survey and from the Sustainability Officer and one objection from a member of the public who felt the barns in question were in perfectly good condition and should stay in agricultural use. “Fallback” position was involved in at least one. Some concern was expressed about the narrow lane and construction traffic but the other barn conversions were approved.

Cllr Kenshole queried if the barn would be in keeping with the local area with the rounded roofs. **Cllr Kenshole proposed that the design of the barn conversions be raised with Planning as to whether they are in keeping with the local area which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL ASK NORTH DEVON PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE DESIGN OF THE BARN CONVERSIONS ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE LOCAL AREA IN RESPECT OF PLANNING APPLICATION 78558.

b) To comment on any planning applications received after the Agenda was published.

78741 – Cheglinch Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NW.

West Down Parish Council had not received a Consultation Letter on this application. Morteohoe Parish Council were listed as a Consultee but West Down were not. This was queried with Beth Cole, Planning Officer, who advised that there is no consultation for Prior Notification Applications as they are classed as permitted development so neither Morteohoe Parish Council or West Down Parish Council would receive Consultation Letters. Cllr Ayre had written to Planning requesting that they reevaluate their areas.

5266. Footpaths

a) To receive any update on the P3 Grant Funding Application submitted.

Email received from Jon Boyd, Public Rights of Way P3 Officer, on the 7th May 2024 confirming receipt of our form. He is currently in the process of reviewing the P3 forms for all the parishes. He will be back in touch as soon as possible.

b) Any other footpath matters.

Cllr Ayre referred to the damage to the stile on Footpath 6 which occurred over the bank holiday weekend. This was reported to the Police with a crime number being given. This damage caused distress to the landowner as his livestock could have got out. Cllr Ayre made some enquiries but no one seems to have seen anybody taking a saw to this stile and Mr Hunt, the Parish Council Grass Cutting Contractor, did not know anything about it. Cllr Ayre got in touch with Robert Taylor (Public Rights of Way Officer at DCC) who gave her the name of the new P3 Officer – John Boyd. Mr Taylor offered a couple of options for the stile. It can either be repaired or, potentially, agreement could be reached with Mr Boyd for a replacement stile into a kissing gate. It is up to the landowner what they want there. Cllr Ayre had

phoned the landowner so that they can consider what they want to do.

Cllr Ayre had met with Mr Hunt and they found the bench by the bridge at the bottom of Footpath 12. Mr Hunt has trimmed this area and checked the bench as being of reasonable standard.

Mr Taylor referred to Footpath 14, with a member of the public putting in a complaint as access and egress points are difficult to get to from top to bottom. Cllr Ayre will look at this. Cllr Verney had walked this footpath on Sunday and felt the hedges need cutting but otherwise it seemed in order. Cllr Ayre will feed this information back to Mr Taylor and Mr Boyd.

Cllr Verney referred to Footpath 12. The post that holds the gate on at the end of the new boardwalk is wobbly. He did not know if this post was broken or due to the ground being wet. Cllr Ayre will contact Gareth Hookway about this as he is familiar with the material used.

Cllr Verney had received an email from Cllr Knight asking to shadow him in his Parish Council P3 Officer role as she may want to take this over next year or work together with him. Cllr Ayre will ensure she copies Cllr Knight into the footpath emails.

5267. Emergency Plan

Cllr Ayre had received an email from Alex Miles, Emergency Planning Officer at North Devon Council, who felt it was good that West Down have an Emergency Plan and she looks forward to receiving a copy of it.

Cllr Kenshole had found out who has the questionnaires. He will create an excel template so that the Clerk can input the data and Cllr Kenshole will then install Teams on the Parish Council laptop. Cllr Ayre was happy to share inputting of data if required.

Cllr Ayre referred to the final Emergency Plan Meeting. Devon Communities Together (DCT) have provided information about who to lodge the plan with. Andy Odell seems to have everything in control and Cllr Reeves is looking into the pot of money that could be available for the radios. Cllr Reeves stated that it is his intention to finish this by the end of the month. The Emergency Plan equipment will need to go on the Parish Council Asset Register.

Cllr Ayre had carried out some work on the outer district area at West Down to make sure people have what they need. The Plan will need to be reviewed next June and the aim for next year is to have an Active Community Exercise. She added that the Emergency Plan has been a great piece of work.

5268. Car Park Lease

Laura Mather, Samuels Solicitors, had not received a draft lease as of the 20th May 2024 so she chased NDC for this. Cllr Ayre had chased Jon Triggs (NDC) and received an email back assuring her that NDC want to proceed with this lease. An email had also been received from Natalie Hayes, Estates Officer at NDC, who apologised for the delay. She is awaiting a response from Legal Services and is hoping to align the timing of the lease with the site visit requested. She will be in

touch once she has a date for this site visit (at the moment it looks like it will be the end of June/early July 2024). Once she has heard back from Legal she will be in touch again.

5269. Air Ambulance Light

Cllr Ayre sent an email on 25th May 2024 to John Stainer and Susi Batstone (WDVGFA) to agree items with the Community Park and Parish Council. Cllr Ayre has suggested that she and Cllr Reeves attend their next meeting to agree responsibilities. A date for this meeting is awaited, with this item to be put on the Agenda. This light needs to be put on the Parish Council Asset Register.

Cllrs Ayre and Reeves met with Mr Tinsley-Such. Although he is not a Trustee of WDVGFA any more he is still happy to be involved with the Air Ambulance Light. Cllr Reeves referred to Nigel Tinsley-Such researching the cost of the replacement lamp bank which is not working. MATS Electrical gave a price of £246.65 plus VAT with a five year warranty which was cheaper than had first been thought. The Parish Council can claim VAT back for the light. There is a need to find someone who will be prepared to fit this new lamp bank. Mike Hunt has the key to enable the light to be raised and lowered.

The Parish Council might need to budget £100 per annum for potential maintenance of this light. It needs to be tested for an hour a month, with a record of this needing to be kept. Mr Tinsley-Such might be prepared to do this.

Once everything is sorted out this needs to be confirmed with the Air Ambulance Service. Until then the site at West Down remains a “dark site”.

5270. Community Land Trust

Cllr Verney referred to the brief CLT meeting that had been held. There is no funding available at the moment so this cannot be moved forward. The CLT have their AGM coming up so they will wait and see what happens.

It was decided that the CLT did not want to disband so Cllr Ayre stated that they have “mothballed” this for now. The CLT are disappointed with Middlemarch and the delays that have occurred.

5271. NDC Climate & Environmental Grant

Cllr Reeves had written to the Parish Hall and the Community Park about this grant. The Parish Council are willing to access this grant if they come up with a project within the guidelines from NDC, which Cllr Reeves had sent to them. Terry King had contacted the Parish Hall committee and one or two people came up with a few potential ideas for the large area of car park and surroundings which could be landscaped. This will be on the Parish Hall Agenda on the 12th June 2024. Cllr Reeves had not heard back from the Community Park but Susi Batstone did a comprehensive Ecological report earlier this year. The Parish Council have already supported the Community Park with over £5,000 of grant funding. Cllr Reeves added that a combined application could be the way forward. This will be kept on the Agenda.

5272. Review of Financial Regulations

This review was to include cheque signatories and online banking authorisation, as well as a comment in the Auditors report. Cllrs had been asked to look at these regulations on the WDPC website prior to the meeting.

Cllr Ayre had already dealt with removing previous Parish Councillor Sue Squire as a signatory, with Cllr Kenshole being added as a signatory. Cllrs Ayre, Reeves and Kenshole are now signatories for cheques, as is the Clerk, and online authorisation.

Cllr Reeves suggested that an addition be made to the Financial Regulations stating that agreement to payment of invoices is carried out at the monthly Parish Council meeting, following a list of payments being sent to Cllrs prior to the meeting by the Clerk who will now add how these payments will be paid (i.e. online or by cheque). Cllr Ayre added that authorisation print outs are given to the Clerk so this will also be added to the Financial Regulations. **Cllr Ayre proposed that these changes are made to the Financial Regulations which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL AMEND THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS TO REFLECT THAT PAYMENTS ARE AGREED AND PAID AT THE MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS, FOLLOWING THE PAYMENT LIST SENT TO CLLRS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL ADD TO THE PAYMENT LIST WHETHER THE PAYMENTS WILL BE BY CHEQUE OR BY BACS.

- THAT AUTHORISATION PRINT OUTS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CLERK FOR HER RECORDS.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL ALSO ADD THE DATE OF THE REVIEW TO THE FRONT PAGE IN THE USUAL WAY.

5273. Review of Standing Orders

Cllrs had been asked to look at the Standing Orders on the WDPC website prior to the meeting. This document came from NDC. The Parish Council will update these Standing Orders when they are given amendments. **Cllr Verney proposed that this course of action be taken which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL MAKE AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS WHEN THEY ARE SENT UPDATES FROM NDC.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL PUT THE DATE OF THIS REVIEW ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE STANDING ORDERS.

5274. Review of Statement of Internal Control

Cllrs had been asked to look at this document on the WDPC website prior to the meeting. **Cllr Verney proposed that this document stand as it is which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT NO AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO THE STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL.

- THAT THE CLERK WILL UPDATE THE FRONT PAGE OF THIS DOCUMENT IN THE USUAL WAY.

5275. Review of General & Financial Risk Assessment

Cllrs had been asked to look at this document on the WDPC website. A couple of changes to June are required in the review column, firstly regarding Financial

Records and secondly to Banking. The Clerk or Cllr Reeves will let Cllr Kenshole have the excel document when altered so that he can put the usual header and footer on. **Cllr Reeves proposed that these changes be made which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole.** There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL AMEND THE DATE OF REVIEW TO JUNE FOR THE FINANCIAL RECORDS AND BANKING.

- THAT THE CLERK OR CLLR REEVES WILL PROVIDE CLLR KENSHOLE WITH THE EXCEL DOCUMENT SO THAT HE CAN UPDATE THE HEADER AND FOOTER TO ALIGN WITH THE OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

5276. Updated Diary

A copy of this diary was circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. This needs to be updated to include the Emergency Plan review to be in June (not April) and the Asset Register review to be the 31st March each year. The Clerk will also add the Parish Council Internal Auditor checks on a quarterly basis (with the next one due in June 2024).

5277. Finances

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balance in the Treasurer’s Account as at 31.05.2024	£19,206.19
Balance in the Business Account as at 31.05.2024	£ 4,879.16

b) To receive and agree the invoices received for payment.

North Devon Council Clerks Salary	£395.53	
Additional Hours	£151.70	
Admin Charge	£ 7.72	£ 554.95
Parish Hall – Room Hire – Emergency Planning Mtg		£ 19.00
Devon Association of Local Councils – Cllr S Whitby - Training		£ 36.00
Mrs V Ford – Printer Ink		£ 20.09
Gareth Hookway – Footpath work		£1,242.00
	Total Payment	£1,872.04

Cllr Verney proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £1,872.04 SHOULD BE PAID.

c) Update on External Audit.

Email received from PKF Littlejohn on the 10th May 2024 to say they have received and logged the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Form 3 and it is now in the queue for processing.

5278. Correspondence

a) Email received from the PTFA at the School to thank the Parish Council for the

grant funding they received for the toddler climbing frame. Due to getting the climbing frame at a discounted price they wondered if they could put the residual money towards a few other items they had purchased. This email was Circulated to Cllrs on the 3rd June 2024.

RESOLVED – THAT THE CLERK WILL FIND OUT HOW MUCH MONEY WAS LEFT OVER AFTER THE PTFA PURCHASED THE TODDLER CLIMBING FRAME AND REQUEST RECEIPTED INVOICES FOR THE ADDITIONAL ITEMS PURCHASED FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL SMALL GRANT FUND.

b) Email received from Tracey Blackmore advising that due to personal circumstances beyond her control she was not able to attend the June 2024 meeting to give her presentation. She is not able to attend an evening meeting until September 2024.

c) Email received from Chris Burridge-Barney, Transport Planning Officer, DCC, about the launch of a Public Engagement regarding proposals to improve bus-rail integration at Barnstaple Railway Station. This was circulated to Cllrs on the 22nd May 2024.

d) Letter received from David Ayre on behalf of West Down Parish Hall Management Committee, expressing sincere thanks to West Down Parish Council for the grant of £250.00 that will be used towards the grass cutting at the Parish Hall.

e) Email received from Bev Triggs regarding the Parish Forum on the 18th June 2024. This was circulated to Cllrs on the 16th May 2024.

f) Email received from Adrian Bryant, Parish Councillor at Braunton Parish Council, to bring to West Down Parish Council's attention an article in The Guardian about cycle paths and requesting WDPC ask Devon Council to allow community cycle path construction, so projects like the Tarka Trail between Willingcott and Knowle can be completed. His email was circulated to Cllrs on the 16th May 2024.

g) Email received from Andrea Davis, Chairman of Peninsula Transport. In partnership with Western Gateway STB they have just published their Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Study to provide an evidence base to support future EV charging policy across the region. Circulated to Cllrs on the 15th My 2024.

h) Email received from Gary Knaggs, North Devon Heritage Officer, thanking West Down Parish Council for the recent payment of £100 to help with funding for the North Devon Record Officer. It is much appreciated and he asked the Clerk to pass on his thanks to the Parish Councillors.

i) Event e-bulletin from DALC circulated to Cllrs on the 15th May 2024 about an introduction to Devon's Highways Department. This was to join them for a pivotal Connect Event on the 5th June 2024.

j) Invitation received from North Devon Records Office regarding an event to be held on the 18th June 2024 between 2pm and 4 pm. They hope that as many representatives as possible will be able to attend.

k) Email received from Community First on 16th May 2024 confirming that the payment for the Parish Council Insurance Renewal had been received and processed.

l) Email received from NDC giving Guidelines and restrictions on decision-making and publicity during the Pre-Election period which was circulated to Cllrs on the 4th June 2024.

5279. Unresolved Questions

None.

5280. Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda

- a) Order Salt Bags.
- b) Review of GDPR Policy.
- c) Review of General Privacy Notice & Privacy Notice for Councillors, Staff & Role Holders.
- d) Review of the Role of Data Protection Officer.
- e) Emergency Plan
- f) Car Park Lease
- g) Air Ambulance
- h) NDC Climate & Environment grant
- j) Flashing Speed Signs.
- k) Village Tidy Up/Community Day

5281. Any Other Business

- a) Cllr Ayre had closed down the West Down Community Speedwatch Group due to a lack of people coming forward to commit to this scheme but there have been recent issues around speeding raised on Facebook.
- b) Cllr Verney had been contacted by a couple of residents living around the Car Park complaining about children making a noise. There used to be a sign to say No Ball Games. This will need to be considered further when discussing the Car Park Lease.
- c) Cllr Verney wondered if a voluntary Tidy Up day could be organised following him walking around the village and footpaths last Sunday. This could include gulleys.
Cllr Reeves had also noticed drains being blocked from the square to the school. Cllr Ayre will look online about requesting the drain sucker. Cllr Kenshole queried disposal of waste if there is a Tidy Up day.
- d) The King's Portrait is to be discussed at the next Parish Hall Meeting. If they do not want to put this up at the Hall then the Iron Room would like this.
- e) The Small Grant Fund application is now in the new pdf form. Thanks were given to Cllr Kenshole for doing this

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm