

# **Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council**

## **Minutes of the Parish Council monthly Ordinary meeting on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 7pm at the Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford**

### **Present:**

Cllrs Burhop (Chair), Walker, Dalton, Tillotson, Morgan, Lipczynski and Chapman.

Cllr Bailey (DCC)

Hon Footpath Warden, Ted Swan

### **Public Forum**

#### **a) Police Representative.**

No Police Report available.

#### **b) County Councillor Report.**

Cllr Bailey presented a verbal report highlighting attempts with regard to introducing a possible 20mph speed limit through Newton Poppleford and a meeting to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to discuss the matter with DCC Safety Officer Mr Flower.

Chair thanked Cllr Bailey for her work on behalf of the Parish.

#### **c) District Councillor Report.**

Cllr Ranger had previously circulated a report prior to the meeting.

Chair outlined the contents of the very comprehensive report and thanked Cllr Ranger for her continued service to the parish residents.

#### **d) P3 / Hon. Footpath Warden.**

Mr Swan gave a verbal report primarily concerning the P3 Grant and the need to complete the Annual Footpath Survey by February 2022.

Chair thanked Mr Swan for his dedication and efforts in maintaining the parish footpaths.

#### **e) Allotment Manager's Report.**

There were no reported problems. A request had been received to place beehives on one of the plots. Adjacent plot holders appeared to have no concerns with hives being introduced into the allotments. Councillors considered the hives to be an excellent idea.

#### **f) Public Representation and Questions.**

There were none of the above.

**There were no other public speakers and Chair closed the public forum at 7.30pm.**

**21/089 To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted.**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Tribble, Hughes, Bilenkyj and Carpenter.  
Cllr Ranger (EDDC) had also sent her apologies. Chair proposed the apologies be accepted.  
Resolved unanimously.

**21/090 Declarations of Interest made / Dispensations Noted.**

Cllr. Tillotson was afforded a dispensation to discuss and vote up on matters pertaining to parish allotments at the Ordinary meeting held on 22/07/2019. This dispensation applies until May 2023 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of her personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as Allotment Manager and an allotment tenant.

Cllr. Hughes was afforded a dispensation to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to trees at the Ordinary meeting held on 18/05/2020. This dispensation applies until May 2023 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of his personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as the owner of Bowhayes Trees Limited, Bowhayes Farm, Venn Ottery.

Cllr. Dalton was afforded a dispensation to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to the parish allotments at the Ordinary meeting held on 29/03/2021 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of her personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as an allotment tenant.

**21/091 To consider any matters listed on this agenda that Councillors consider should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 – See agenda item 21/103.**

**21/092 To consider and, if thought fit, approve the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021:**

Approval of minutes proposed by Cllr. Tillotson. Seconded by Cllr. Walker. Resolved unanimously.

**21/093 Correspondence received:**

Chair reported on correspondence received from Exeter Science Centre with regard to the submission of art/photographs in respect of climate change.

**21/094 Chair's announcements/statements on the ongoing Coronavirus situation.**

Chair gave an update on the omicron variant noting its rapid spread with numbers rising (especially in schools) and that the figures in Devon were apparently higher than the UK average. Although 80% of the population had been vaccinated, the present rate of vaccination appeared to have fallen. The Parish Council was available to offer help for those needing assistance in respect of travel to a vaccination centre or food bank or for shopping.

**21/095 To consider matters pertaining to highways, speeding and road safety in the parish:**

The possibility of conducting a traffic census and a survey of potential pelican or similar crossings in the parish was discussed. Chair informed the council that a meeting had been arranged with Mr Nigel Flowers (DCC Safety Officer) in January 2022. Gill Cameron-Webb was progressing the Speedwatch programme and it appears it may soon become active.

**21/096 To consider matters pertaining to Public Rights of Way (P3) and footpaths.**

Mr Swan had provided an update on these matters during the Public Forum session.

**21/097 Planning Matters:**

**a) To consider planning applications received prior to agenda publication.**

None to be considered.

**b) To consider planning applications received after agenda publication**

None to be considered.

**c) Tree Matters (Planning)**

None to be considered.

**d) Planning determinations/decisions advised.**

21/2504/FUL – Wayside, Station Road, Noted.

**e) Appeals.**

None advised.

**f) Planning Correspondence received.**

None received.

**g) To note and respond to planning consultations received.**

None currently outstanding for comments.

**h) To consider Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan 'Monitoring Report'**

This report had been circulated to members of the Council prior to the meeting.

Its contents were noted.

**i) To note planning applications which will be considered at a forthcoming meeting of the EDDC Planning Committee and to decide whether the Parish Council wishes to make a further representation.**

21/2835/FUL – Halfway Inn, Aylesbeare. (application in an adjoining parish). It was noted that, to date, no decisions have apparently been undertaken.

**21/098 Financial Matters.**

**a) To consider and review Financial Reports for December 2021.**

The schedule had previously been circulated to members and published online. The schedule was noted and reviewed.

**b) To consider payments for approval for December 2021.**

Cllr Burhop (chair) declared a Pecuniary Interest as a recipient of a payment and left the room during this agenda item. The chair was taken by Cllr Walker who proposed the payments be approved. Seconded by Cllr Tillotson. Resolved unanimously.

**c) Questions to RFO from members of the Council in respect of the financial reports.**

Questions were directed to Cllr Burhop (chair) acting as the RFO due to the absence of the Clerk (recently resigned from the position).

**d) To consider quotes received for the safe installation of electrical cables for lighting on Greenbank.**

It was noted that the present cable was performing a satisfactory function but was 'domestic' quality cable unsuited for this application. Mr John Moore had quoted £333.00 for the installation of an armoured cable to be buried and connected between the fuse box and a connector box to be mounted on the tree. This was an evident safety feature. A discussion on additional trees to be planted on Greenbank favoured a tree/trees other than a Christmas tree. It was proposed by Cllr Walker, seconded by Cllr Tillotson that Mr Moore's quotation was accepted. Resolved unanimously.

## **21/099 Business to be considered:**

- a) i) To consider update from Climate Change Emergency Working Party.  
No update available at this time but one should be presented at the next meeting.
- ii) To receive update on tree planting projects Winter 2021 / grants available.  
No information available at this time. Information may be available at the next meeting.
- iii) To consider update on proposals for planting a Jubilee 'Landmark' tree.  
Cllr Hughes and Mr Swan will prepare a map of the parish footpaths with suggestions of trees to be planted at specific points, with planting towards the end of March 2022. The possibility of obtaining 'Platinum' funding from DCC for the tree and from Cllr Bailey's locality fund was to be considered.
- iv) To consider proposed alterations to Webbers Meadow (2) to permit 'dogs off leads' exercise and recreation as per a previous request from a parishioner.  
It was noted that the grass was kept long to aid 're-wilding' in line with climate changes. However, it appears that dogs with 'short legs' would have difficulty in exercising in long grass. It was suggested that the grass in Webbers (2) be kept short with grass cutting some 6 times a year, but that the 'paths' in Webbers (1) should be kept in line with the present grass cutting regime – a cut of once a month in the summer and just 2 cuts over the winter period. It was noted that Webbers Meadow is not a specific dog exercise area but is available for all parishioners as a recreational area. It was also noted that short grass perhaps encourages dog owners to pick up any 'dog mess'. The above grass cutting regime for Webbers (1) and (2) was proposed by Cllr Tillotson and seconded by Cllr Walker. Resolved with 6 votes for and 1 abstention.
- v) To consider an update on Greenbank Christmas Tree Planting and Illuminations.  
It was suggested that the lights should be permanently left on the tree but not permanently lit. It was also suggested that costs/quotations for the tree to be professionally dressed should be investigated. The Council thanked Cllr Burhop and Mr Swan for their work in putting up the tree lights this year, noting the height of the tree and the difficulties encountered with the tree's location and proximity to the main road.
- b) **To consider an amended date for the January PC meeting and future venues.**  
It was proposed by Cllr Tillotson, seconded by Cllr Chapman, that the next meeting should be on 31 January at the Pavilion and that future meetings should be held at the Pavilion. Resolved unanimously.
- c) **To receive an update from the Chair on the meeting of the Venn Ottery Village Green Bridge Working Party.**  
Chair reported there had been little progress but that the contractor who had installed the gates will be quoting for the installation of a bridge. With the bridge no longer in use access to the green was presently over private land. Chair will make enquiries with the Council's Insurance Broker to determine if this access route is covered under the Council's insurance policy.
- d) **To consider an invitation from the ED AONB for a presentation on nature recovery and special species.**  
It was suggested that an invitation to make a presentation at the next PC meeting should be made. Mr Swan agreed to progress the invitation to make a 15 minute talk on the subject.

**21/100 To consider matters viewed as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only.**  
None to be discussed.

**21/101 Date of the next Ordinary Meeting.**  
31 January 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Pavilion (as per 21/099b above).

**21/102** It is proposed that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1972, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.  
Resolved unanimously.  
All members of the public left the meeting at this point.

**21/103 Matters to be considered in committee session:**

**i) To consider urgent matters in respect of officer employment and the handover of clerking duties.**

Chair reported that 2 candidates had been interviewed. One was an experienced clerk in post at Ottery, on 3 months notice, able to cover for both Ottery and NP for 3 months if required, available for 25 hours per week (maximum) at an annual cost to the parish of £27k. The second candidate had a legal/secretarial/ administrative background and although experienced in those areas had no experience or qualifications as a clerk, but was willing to undertake training as required. The annual cost to the parish would be of the order of £17k.

It was proposed by Cllr Burhop, seconded by Cllr Tillotson, that the post of clerk be offered to the second candidate. Resolved unanimously.

It was suggested that the parish should advertise the requirement for the post of Treasurer for the 'pavilion' – (Newton Poppleford Playing Field Foundation)

**ii) To consider matters relating to the Venn Ottery Road Cemetery (confidential financial matter).**

Chair reported that information in respect of the Disability Act and access to the cemetery had not yet been received from NALC. However, to avoid any conflict with the parishioner involved in this matter it was suggested that plots should be 'reserved' and remain unused to enable the parishioner the access they required until the parishioner no longer visited the cemetery. The plots could then be placed back into use.

**With no further business to consider Chair closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.**

Signed as a true record of the meeting above .....(Chair)

Date .....