

ANNUAL MEETING OF KNOWSTONE PARISH

Minutes of the meeting held in the Parish Hall Knowstone 19 May 2015 at 8pm.

Present:

A list of those present is set out below

1. Apologies:

1.1 Cllr Jeremy Yabsley DCC, Mr & Mrs R Barfoot, Mr & Mrs Filmer-Bennett

2. Opening address:

2.1 The Chairman of the Knowstone Parish Council (KPC) Cllr John D Smith welcomed those present from the Parish (as well as the guest speaker The Rev'd Christopher Whinney – The Exmoor Society) and gave a short address to open the meeting.

2.2 The minutes of the last Annual Parish meeting having been circulated in advance of the meeting were approved by common consent

3. Chairman's Report:

3.1 The Chairman gave a report on events in the parish over the past 12 months

The Finances are generally in good order

The Community bus is well established and the requirement for subsidy is reducing Moves to buy land at East Hill Farm from DCC which were approved at the 2014 meeting have "come to Nought". DCC encouraged KPC to enter into negotiations and incur costs but in the end they executed a complete "volte face" and withdrew without explanation or apology.

The project to put PV panels on the roof of the Village Hall is now up and running and finally complete.

A data base is being compiled for emergency planning purposes to collate information such as specialist skills and equipment as well as particular needs of parishioners.

The Batsworthy Cross wind farm is now going ahead as a result the parish is in lie for a share in the very significant monies that will be paid to a Community Interest Company (CIC) over the next 25 years

Concerns have been raised regarding the future use of the picnic areas at Moortown Cross in particular the area on the North of the A361 (known as "Sidey Moor"). DCC plan to off load the costs of maintenance of these sites and unless taken on by viable businesses they are likely to be "mothballed"

A seventh member of the parish council will be co-opted and declarations of interest were invited.

The Chairman noted the retirement from KPC of Cllrs David Morgans Bob Barfoot and Copper Howe and thanked all three for their years of service to the community.

4. Local Group reports

4.1 The meeting received reports from the following:

a. Parochial Parish Council

Cllr Howe gave a report on recruitment of the resident vicar as well as a report on the fabric of the church buildings.

Plans are in hand to bring the bells back into working condition. The cost of using professionals is prohibitive but it is hoped that the same result can be achieved by use of "self help"

The churchyard is in good shape thanks largely to the efforts of Bill Bucknell

Forthcoming events include the Flower festival in late June and the Harvest Festival on 19 September

b. Village Hall Committee

Ken Dykes reported on the use of the hall over the past 12 months

There is a vibrant committee in place full of enthusiasm and new ideas. The revenue from bookings by regular users such as Dance Club, Gardening group and the art group have been maintained. The Committee is looking into ways to boost the revenue from one off users.

The Film club has been restarted thanks to the energy of Michelle & Tim Browse and the Masons Arms and a Hobby Horse race night is planned for 18 July which should be a good evening and raise monies for the Village Hall

The death of Jim Baker was recorded; Jim had been a stalwart of the committee and his absence would be keenly felt.

Future projects being considered include broadband and Wi-fi links but the committee is open to suggestions and ideas to boost use of the Hall

c. Moors Management

Cllr Morgans reported

DBM gave an overview of how the respective rights of land owners and rights holders are worked out. The Parish (in the form of the Parish Council) do not hold rights but they are landowners. As a landowner the Parish earns approx. £3,000 pa rent from Natural England.

This year's payments have been delayed due to a dispute. No details were given because it is hopefully about to resolve.

Issues surrounding TB testing of cattle using the Moors which were a problem at last years meeting have now been resolved satisfactorily. AS in past years management of the Moors is by a mix of grazing swaling and burning.

d. **Batsworthy Cross**

A report by Bob Barfoot was read to the meeting confirming that the conditions on the Batsworthy Cross planning permissions have now been "satisfied". It had been felt that the conditions had not been complied with and that NDC should not have discharged them but in the absence of support from Natural England the professional advice received was that any challenge to NDC's discharge of the conditions would be bound to fail

e. **Music In Knowstone**

No report

f. **Dance Club**

No Report

g. **Art Club**

No report

h. **Knowstone Horse and Pony Show**

No report

i. **Garden Club**

No report

5. Guest Speaker – The Rev'd Christopher Whinney – The Exmoor Society

The Rev'd Chris Whinney gave an interesting talk on the history of the Exmoor Society and its present role in working to maintain the nature of Exmoor for future generations. Chris invited the audience to get involved and join the society and also to bring campaigns affecting Exmoor to his attention.

There was a Q&A session during which Chris expanded on some of the issues the society deals with.

6. Open Discussion

a. **Purchase of Land**

Members expressed anger at the behaviour of DCC in relation to the fiasco surrounding the planned purchase of land at East Hill farm. It was felt that the community had been badly treated by NPS (the land agents acting for DCC) and that as a result community funds and time had in effect been wasted.

b. Batsworthy Cross

Members queried whether there were any steps still open to prevent Batsworthy development from going ahead but it was felt that the war had been lost and development of the wind farm was now inevitable.

They were concerned at the widespread road closure programme and the length of time that routes would be closed and the disruption that it would cause.

c. Sidey Moor Picnic area

Members were told of the plans by DCC to closed or sell the two picnic areas at the Moortown junction. Concern was expressed at the likelihood that the picnic area on the North side (Sidey Moor) would be mothballed since it was felt likely that the present café business could not continue in view of the ill health of Mrs Jenkins.

Concern was expressed that Sidey Moor would be a magnet for fly tipping and or travellers unless it was kept open and some viable business use was made of it to keep the site open. A number of ideas were floated; the council was asked to press for more information from DCC regarding their plans and also to explore ways in which the site can be re-purposed to keep it open. It was felt that in time some of the RWE money likely to come into the CIC from the wind turbines could be used for this purpose but receipt of those monies is likely to be still some time off.

Meeting Closed

There being no further business the meeting Closed at 10:15 pm

Minutes prepared by Richard Vos (Parish Clerk) 29 May 2015

Attendees List

Knowtsone Parish Council : Cllr John Smith, Cllr Reg Howe, Cllr John Stanbury. Cl Tim Bowse Cllr Ian Brooks & Richard Vos (Clerk)