

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26th November 2019, Knowstone Parish Hall**

**Present:** Cllr D Barrett, Cllr Filmer-Bennett, Cllr R Howe, Cllr D Maidment, Cllr T Moore (Chairman), Cllr J Pomfret, Cllr J Stanbury

In attendance: W Sweet (Clerk), 5 x members of the public

**19/103 Apologies for absence – D/Cllr Ley**

**19/104 Declarations of Interest** (re. matters appearing on this agenda) - None

**19/105 Approve Minutes** It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2019, Cllr Howe proposed, Cllr Filmer-Bennett seconded, all agreed.

**19/106 Correspondence** (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

- Email dated 22.10.19 from DCC – Highways Newsletter – Winter Special Edition;
- Email dated 22.10.19 from South West Heritage Trust – Funding for the North Devon Record Office – Cllr Barrett felt this was a service worthy of the Council's support. He will write a resolution with a suggested amount to go on the agenda of the next meeting.
- Email dated 24.10.19 from DCC - Devon Climate Emergency: Devon Carbon Plan process is launched – residents called on to give their ideas;
- Email dated 29.10.19 from North Devon Council Lead for Environment – Free home energy visits;
- Email dated 30.10.19 from DCC re. Devon Climate Emergency;
- Email from DCC dated 31.10.19 - Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Update – October 2019 Strategy Newsletter
- Email dated 1.11.19 from TNMWD Citizens Advice – Quarterly Newsletter;
- Email dated from Devon Communities Together - Council Emergency Plan Preparation & Big Energy Saving Network Programme;
- Email dated 7.11.19 – DALC Newsletter 25;

**Note any correspondence received after the preparation of the agenda.**

- Cllr Howe read out a letter to St Peter's Church received that day from Kier notifying them of a temporary road closure from Manor Cottage to Wadham Cross for essential water infrastructure works which will last for five days between 2nd and 6th December. All efforts would be made to maintain access for residents where possible. It was suggested that the word is passed to people in the area and the information be put on the website. Surprise was expressed that the Council had not been informed of this closure by Highways. Cllr Pomfret asked if there was any chance of getting them to put up a sign to say that the road is going to be closed. If Kier does not do so they will be in breach of regulations. Cllr Filmer-Bennett will check it out with the Highways Department.
- Email dated 14.11.19 from DCC re. Engaging Rural Micros;
- North Devon Weekly Information Sheet dated 15.11.19;
- Email dated 16.11.19 from Mr David Morgans re. mains drainage for Roachill. From January 2020 all properties whose cesspits discharge into a watercourse have to replace them with a water treatment plant. Mr Morgans felt it was the water companies' responsibility to ensure water safety and requested that the Council writes to South West Water asking them to connect Roachill to mains drainage. After some discussion it was RESOLVED to write to South West Water asking them to connect all properties within the Parish to mains drainage on environmental grounds, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Barrett seconded, all agreed. Cllr Filmer-Bennett will draft a letter which he will circulate to all councillors.
- DALC Newsletter #27 dated 18.11.19;
- Email dated 18.11.19 from Henshaw Planning Services (planning consultants at Blackerton Care Village site) re. Parish Housing Needs Survey. The owners of the site are planning to undertake a Housing Needs Survey at their own expense and asked whether the Council would be happy for Knowstone as an adjoining parish to be included. Subject to ascertaining the format of the survey, it was AGREED that the Council would be happy for such a survey to include the parish of Knowstone.

- The Rural Bulletin - 19 November 2019
- Email dated 20.11.19 with details of NDC's Parish Forum: Training on Planning - Tuesday 3rd December 2019 which Cllr Howe and the clerk planned to attend.

**19/107 Public Questions – Standing orders suspended**

(i) Mr David Morgans said he had noticed that between the cattle grid and East Bowden in the gouged out unofficial passing place two pieces of tarmac had been laid. He asked the Parish Council to ask Highways not to put anymore there. Cllr Filmer-Bennett will respond under his report.

(ii) Mrs Rosemary Newton presented the Council with the framed picture of HMS Eggesford. Cllr Howe said he had written a short piece about it to go on the website. It will be hung somewhere in the meeting room – position to be decided by the hall committee.

(iii) Mrs Newton said there was a grave in the churchyard, below the Newton grave, with the names Mr Packer and Emma Packer, daughter on it but no mention of Mrs Packer who used to live at Manor cottage and there is nothing about her in the church either. Cllr Howe said he would investigate.

**19/108 Finance**

a) Financial Report by RFO. Accounts and bank reconciliation to date and expenditure to date against budget and projection to year end had been previously circulated. The clerk reported that she had received a letter from NDC Exchequer manager informing the Council that grants will not be paid in the financial year 2020/2021. North Devon Council are going to put some money aside (£20,000 per year) for smaller parishes to bid into for projects with an emphasis on sustainability and countering climate change

It was RESOLVED to agree the accounts to date as circulated, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Filmer-Bennett seconded, all agreed.

b) The receipt of £2038.37 from NDC – final 50% of precept and grants was NOTED.

c) Accounts to settle:

• Wendy Sweet – pay (£145.86) & expenses (£2.43)	£148.29
• Fremington Parish Council (councillor training)	£60.00
• CPRE renewal	£36.00
• Peter Turner (framing of HMS Eggesford photo)	£35.00
• Crosse Wyatt – initial work re. East Hill	£70.00
• Wendy Sweet – pay (Nov – Dec – to be paid 28.12.19)	£145.86

It was RESOLVED to settle the above accounts, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Pomfret seconded, all agreed.

d) **Budget 2020/2021 preparation** – review and discuss draft budget for 20/21, previously circulated, and provisional Precept figure. The clerk explained that she had removed the cost centres – ‘Beaples Stone bench’ as that was a one-off purchase in this financial year and ‘Mobile speed signs’ as it seemed unlikely that the parish was going to be allowed to have them. It was AGREED to hold an informal meeting on Tuesday 21st January 2020 to discuss the budget more fully. A provisional precept figure is required to be submitted to NDC by 16th December and the clerk said she intended to submit the same figure as this year’s precept.

**19/109 Planning**

(a) **Applications notified since last meeting**

(i) **Ref. 70687** - Conversion of mixed residential and agricultural barn to full residential occupation - West Hill, Knowstone EX36 4RT. Cllr Howe reported that the applicant has changed architect and is hoping to get a reasonable result this time. A site visit has been suggested to the planning department by the applicant but no response received as yet. As this and planning ref. 70688 are broadly aligned to what was previously submitted, Cllr Howe proposed that the council fully supports both these applications, Cllr Stanbury seconded, all agreed.

(ii) **Ref. 70688** - Change of use of land together with construction of manege with perimeter fencing for private use at West Hill, Knowstone EX36 4RT. See item 19/109 (a)(i).

(iii) Applications determined since last meeting - none

(iv) Applications received after preparation of the agenda - none

(v) Application in adjoining parish and district – A phone call had been received from a resident in Oakford parish with concerns about a planning application at Wedgewood Groundworks for change of use of agricultural land to groundworks depot and offices. It may have an impact on this parish with additional traffic going through Roachill. It was AGREED that Cllr Howe and Cllr Moore go and have a look to assess the situation.

**19/110 East Hill Farm**

(i) Update – It was reported that the Developer has started work on the affordable houses but there is no imminent start to converting the barns. Crosse Wyatt has been appointed to deal with the transfer of land and money.

(ii) To nominate four councillors to be trustees to be shown on property title registers at H.M. Land Registry as per letter dated 8.11.19 from Crosse Wyatt. It was RESOLVED that the following four councillors would be appointed trustees: Cllrs Moore, Filmer-Bennett, Howe and Pomfret, Cllr Moore proposed, Cllr Stanbury seconded, all agreed. The Clerk will write to all four councillors letting them know what information they need to take into Crosse Wyatt for ID purposes.

(iii) In answer to a question about the possibility of using the land for an Air Ambulance night landing site, the clerk said she would be organising an informal visit by Toby Russell in the New Year.

**19/111 Proposed cuts to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service** - discuss KPC's response to email dated 8.11.19 from Cllr Chris Sleep, Mayor of Lynton and Lynmouth Town Council, asking parish and town councils to join forces to resist the proposed cuts to the Fire & Rescue Service.

Cllr Moore circulated copies of a press release which stated that the decision has been postponed until next year. They are planning to have fewer fire engines and put more emphasis into preventing fires. The Council needs to understand all the mechanics behind it and discuss in detail. There is going to be an election and there may be a change of direction after that so difficult to know if it is going to happen. Cllr Barrett thinks the Council ought to be against the cuts. The service also deals with road traffic accidents not just fires. He said that some distances quoted were as the crow flies so not correct. Every extra mile adds 5 or 6 minutes of extra danger to a casualty. Cllr Howe agreed with Cllr Barrett - it is great to try and prevent fires and bad accidents but a quick response is needed when they do happen. This area is not going to be affected but its resources may be called away to support in other areas. Cllr Stanbury felt the Council should wait and see. Cllr Pomfret would like to look at it in more detail. It was AGREED that the Council would register its interest with Cllr Sleep but will wait until the January meeting to discuss further when it had a better idea of what is going on. It was suggested by a member of the public that the Council gets someone along to the next meeting to speak about the proposed changes from the fire service side. They had heard someone speak well on the subject at a meeting in the summer and they will find out the name of that person and pass it to the clerk so they can be invited to the January Council meeting.

**19/112 Third Party Reports** (if present):

- a) District Councillor – not present
- b) County Councillor – not present

**19/113 Members Reports**

- a) **Highways** – Cllr Filmer-Bennett

(i) Re. filling tarmac in gaps in the unofficial passing place between cattle grid and East Bowden as raised by Mr Morgans – Cllr Filmer-Bennett said he would take up the matter if the Council wished him to and write an appropriate letter to the Highways Department.

(ii) Cllr Filmer-Bennett reported that since the last meeting a letter had gone to the Environment Agency which they had acknowledged. Environment Agency vehicles have been seen in the area and they

appeared to be looking at the damage to the hedges etc. There have not been any lorries through Roachill recently as they are now going past Plymptons instead which is more of a problem as there are no passing places. The state of the roads in the parish is beginning to deteriorate with some potholes having to be repaired three times. He is waiting for a visit from Highways and County Councillor and he will walk them along the whole road and point out all the cracks etc. He thinks it will take years to fill the site where the soil is being tipped and it is all legal. What is not legal is the way it is being hauled as they have to take due care etc.

- (iii) Potholes and drains clearance – if problems are reported on the County's website they will get done.
- (iv) No response has been received from Cllr Hughes who is the portfolio holder for Highways regarding the East Knowstone signs. This will be followed up in the New Year.
- (v) Mrs Newton said that a hedge trimmer had sliced out an oak tree on right coming out of Knowstone towards E Knowstone which looks precarious and needed to be reported.

b) **Footpaths & Beaples Stone** – Cllr Pomfret said he is about to start undertaking the annual survey. He had noticed that the Two Moors way signpost is still broken so he will chase Ros Davis at Devon CC. Someone had reported a very slippery style on one of the paths and he had emailed Ros about putting chicken wire on the steps. She will send metal treads to fix onto the styles. He has produced small laminated signs warning walkers about slippery styles. He had chased up Richard Grant Memorials re. the lettering on the stone at Beaples Stone and was told that someone came to look at it but could not find it. Someone from Richard Grant is coming to Witheridge this Thursday and will look again. Cllr Pomfret has asked them to ring him if they cannot find it.

c) **Police** – Cllr Moore reported that he had attended a rural police seminar recently where there had been about 200 people, mainly farmers. With regard to rural crime, there are two Rural Crime Police Officers whose subsidiary role is wildlife crime. Martin Beck covers Devon. Shaun Sawyer, the Chief Constable, said it is an expanding team and it will have four officers in due course. The two officers are doing a lot of work - co-ordinating rather than actually on the ground and also trying to educate other officers about rural crime. Fly tipping is an issue – if it is done on a farmer's land they are liable for the cost to remove it. Another issue is cybercrime which targets farms through the internet. They have produced signs to go on farm vehicles saying stop this vehicle between specified hours but stolen farm vehicles are usually put onto a trailer. Livestock theft is still going on in a major way. Regarding dog attacks on livestock, attendees asked whether they could shoot dogs that worry their livestock but a clear answer was not given. It had been emphasised that Devon and Cornwall police's budget is dependent on level of crimes and people are encouraged to report crime. Only 50% of crimes on farm are reported as farmers are generally pragmatic and get on with it.

Mrs Newton said that following an accident at the bottom of Hares Down the canopy of a vehicle is still on the side of the road. Highways should move it in due course as it is not the scene of a crime.

d) **Moors Management** – Cllr Moore reported that their annual meeting takes place next month which he will attend. The Community fund had turned down their request to help fund a new cattle grid.

e) **Parish Hall** – Cllr Howe reported that the Christmas decorations would be put up in the hall on 6th December ready for the church's annual fair. The dances continue to play an important part in the activity of the hall. A good clearance of overgrowing shrubs etc in carpark had taken place and the debris disposed of.

f) **PCC** – Cllr Howe reported that the Batsworthy fund had turned down its application for funding towards under-pew heating on the grounds of the low number of people it would benefit. On 10th November a wreath to commemorate the fallen of Knowstone was laid in the usual place at Molland. It is hoped that when Knowstone has its own war memorial a wreath can be laid there. The Church Christmas fair will take place on Saturday 8th December, Bingo Night on Tuesday 10th December and the Carol

Service on Sunday 15th December at 6.30 p.m. The rood steps project continues to be worked on. Additional funds have been received from the collection at Cath's funeral. The quinquennial inspection of the church has taken place – there is nothing to worry about just a few things like guttering to see to which is very reassuring. The PCC has appointed a contractor to undertake work in the churchyard. Work has already started and an overgrown Rhododendron has been removed revealing five gravestones one of which carries the name of Ernest Bowers who was killed in the First World War. There are some rather worrying bulges in the wall that separates the churchyard from the car park opposite the Mason's Arms and that day he had met with a local contractor and Nick Avery to discuss the problem and a plan has been drawn up to address it. From information that Rosemary Newton had dug out from old minutes it was known that the land used to have cottages on it and had been made over to the church by the estate which used to own it. Cllr Howe has spoken to Mark and Sarah to explain situation as barriers may have to be put round the bulge. Disclaimer notices will be put up. It is probably being caused by roots that need to be taken away. Stones will be put back in the wall using the right sort of lime mortar before Christmas.

g) **Snow Warden** – Cllr Stanbury said he would be liaising with the clerk to order the grit. Two new bins have appeared at Rock and Wadham Cross, although the latter has a crack.

**19/114 Business at the Chairman's discretion**

(i) Cllr Howe raised the issue of fly tipping at Marley Moor where large electrical items had been recently dumped on the verge and the owner charged £15 per item to be removed. Cllr Howe has written to the Council asking why a resident was charged when no charge had been made for removing items dumped on glebeland. He is waiting for their response.

**19/115 To confirm date & time of the next meeting – 28th January 2020 at 7.30 p.m.**

The meeting closed at 21.13.