

## KNOWSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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### Minutes of a meeting of the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 held in Knowstone Parish Hall

Present: Cllr J Pomfret (Chair), Cllr A Parry (Vice Chair), Cllr J Clarke, Cllr D Maidment, Cllr J Stanbury, Cllr D McGregor

In attendance: W Vigus (taking minutes), D/Cllr R Milton (part), one member of the public (part)

#### 23/78 Apologies for absence – Cllr C Dey

**23/79 Declarations of Interest** (re. matters appearing on this agenda) – Cllr Clarke declared an interest in planning application ref **78368** (pt 9a on agenda) and Cllr Stanbury declared an interest in planning application ref **78437** (pt 9b on agenda).

**23/80 Approve Minutes** It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the last scheduled meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 with one amendment to 23/70 to read “Cllr McGregor raised the issue of the budget currently not balancing” as opposed to Cllr Clarke. Cllr Pomfret proposed, Cllr Stanbury seconded, all agreed. A copy of the minutes was signed by Cllr Pomfret. This will be retained on file.

#### 23/81 Correspondence (not covered elsewhere on the agenda).

Receipt of the following was NOTED:

24/01/2024	Temporary Traffic Notice TTR02455353– Road on Beaples Moor
24/01/2024	Email from Friends of the Log cabin Diner re defibrillator (with invoice)
25/01/2024	Email re footbridge on footpath 6. Repair/replacement to be done in due course
26/01/2024	Email re Election Act Summary of Changes
26/01/2024	Email from DCC re devolution proposals
26/01/2024	Email from D&C Police. Devon & Cornwall one of safest areas in country
29/01/2024	NDCC Planning applications received and decided
30/01/2024	A361 Traffic Bulletin
31/01/2024	Email from Bishops Nympton Clerk re gritting. (Back in NDC priority list)
01/02/2024	Email from Selaine Saxby re People’s Postcode Lottery Funding
05/02/2024	NDCC Planning applications received and decided
05/02/2024	Acceptance from North Devon Ring & Ride to speak at Annual Meeting of Parish on May 23rd
06/02/2024	Invoice from W Vigus for minuting Services
06/02/2024	A361 Traffic Bulletin
07/02/2024	CPRE e-bulletin
08/02/2024	HMRC acknowledgement of Employee submission
09/02/2024	A361 Traffic Bulletin
12/02/2024	NDCC Planning applications received and decided
15/02/2024	Invoice from Senior Internet for Website Hosting and management
19/02/2024	NDCC Planning applications received and decided
20/02/2024	A361 Traffic Bulletin
22/02/2024	Email from Devon Communities Together
23/02/2024	Email re enforcement case 10615 Tower Farm
26/02/2024	NDCC Planning applications received and decided
26/02/2024	Email from NDC re Wilder Communities drop in event
28/02/2024	Email from Devon Communities Together re Community Asset Map
01/03/2024	Devon Highways traffic notice re Knowstone Mill Bridge closure
04/03/2024	NDCC Planning applications received and decided
04/03/2024	Email from Batsworthy Wind Farm Fund re applications now open
04/03/2024	Invoice from DALC re online Councillor Training

*Draft to be approved at the next scheduled meeting*

05/03/2024	Email from Devon Communities Together – Village Halls Audit data
05/03/2024	A361 Traffic Bulletin
11/03/2024	NDDC Planning applications received and decided
11/03/2024	Email re Northern Devon Community Mediation
13/03/2024	Confirmation email from NDDC planning re comment submission for 78368
13/03/2024	Request for consultation on planning application 78290
13/03/2024	Email from Devon Community Foundation with council survey
15/03/2024	Confirmation email from Alison Marshall re 2024 audit required items
18/03/2024	NDDC Planning applications received and decided
18/03/2024	Email from OPCC regarding Councillor Advocate for Parish
18/03/2024	Email re Surface Dressing Programme – Knowstone Parish

Cllr Pomfret stated that the surface dressing programme impacted mostly on surrounding parishes with only a small bit by the Millennium stone being within Knowstone Parish and that the information had been published on the Knowstone facebook page. Cllr Pomfret asked that any Councillor let him know if they were interested in the position of Councillor Advocate for the Parish (as per email from Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, deadline 14<sup>th</sup> April).

The following correspondence received after the preparation of the agenda was NOTED.

- 18/03/2024 Email from AGAR external auditor
- 19/03/2024 Email from DevonBus regarding schedule changes
- 19/03/2024 Resignation email from Cllr Dey
- 21/03/2024 Email re. Police and Crime Commissioner Election information leaflets
- 25/03/2024 NDDC Planning applications received and decided
- 25/03/2024 A361 Traffic Bulletin
- 26/03/2024 Email re. funding for rural community green spaces

Cllr Pomfret stated that he believed the accounts needed to be externally audited as a statutory requirement but that the auditor sending the email of 18/03/2024 did not necessarily need to be used, therefore this would be organised in due course.

Cllr Pomfret stated that Cllr Dey's resignation due to ill health left a position to be filled on the Council and asked that the other council members consider possible replacements.

Cllr Pomfret stated that he will place leaflets on each noticeboard with regard the Police and Crime Commissioner election being held at the Parish hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

Cllr Pomfret is to circulate the email re. funding for rural community spaces.

Cllr Clarke asked which other councillors had signed up to planning alerts and it was ascertained that both Cllr McGregor and Cllr Pomfret (in his role as acting clerk) received the alerts.

Cllr Pomfret wished Cllr Dey the best and gave thanks for her service to the community as a Councillor and especially for her endeavours with the Twenty is Plenty campaign in the parish.

## **23/82 Public Questions**

None, as no members of the public were present at this point.

**23/83 Finance**

- (a) Copies of the accounts to date for 23-24 and bank reconciliation were reviewed. Cllr Pomfret outlined that due to a formatting issue the columns were out of sync, however the total column was correct which meant the figures did reconcile. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would reformat and recirculate but that the accounts would be accepted in lieu of these changes.

It was RESOLVED to accept the accounts to date for 23-24 and the bank reconciliation. Cllr McGregor proposed, Cllr Parry seconded, all agreed.

It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would ask the auditor if the accounts needed to be signed at each meeting.

- (b) Cllr Pomfret stated that the Friends of the Log Cabin did not have charitable status so could not apply directly to the Batsworthy Fund for reimbursement for a replacement battery and pads for the defibrillator at the Log Cabin Diner. Cllr Pomfret also outlined that as the Parish Council has significant funds in the bank, they would be unable to do so either so there were two options, either the Parish Council pays for reimbursement or declines to do so on this occasion. Cllr Clarke asked for clarification on the life expectancy of the batteries / pads and Cllr Pomfret felt that this was c. five years. Discussion followed with regard who had paid for the replacement batteries and pads for the defibrillator located at the hall and whether the Parish Council should pay for something retrospectively, with it being ascertained that the Parish Council had paid for the replacement items and that there was general unease at paying for something after the event. Cllr Pomfret wished it to be noted that the Friends of the Log Cabin had only asked for help with applying to the Batsworthy Fund and had not asked for funds directly from the Parish Council.

It was RESOLVED to respond to the Friends of the Log Cabin stating that the Parish Council would be willing to consider funding replacement batteries and pads on the next occasion they were required if sufficient notice is given and prior to any purchase being made. Cllr Parry proposed, Cllr McGregor seconded, all agreed.

- (c) Cllr Pomfret stated that an approach had been made with regard taking on the role of repairing the parish noticeboards but that this offer had been declined by the person in question. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would ask if one person per village could take on the responsibility of maintaining their noticeboard.

One member of the public joined the meeting at 7.55pm.

- (d) It was RESOLVED to agree to settle the following accounts, Cllr Pomfret proposed, Cllr Stanbury seconded, all agreed:

• Wendy Vigus – minute taking and production for January’s meeting	£59.14
• DALC invoice re online training for Cllr McGregor	£18.00
• Senior Internet – Website Hosting & Support Package	£234.00

- (e) Cllr Pomfret provided an update on the progress toward digital banking stating that Cllr Pomfret and Cllr Stanbury had the gadget necessary to do online banking and Cllr Maidment and Cllr Parry were in the process of acquiring theirs. Cllr Pomfret stated that online banking would help with the production of the accounts as figures could be checked in real time as opposed to historically on the paper statements which would make it easier for the figures to tally. Making purchases would also become easier.

*Draft to be approved at the next scheduled meeting*

**23/84 Budget 2024 / 2025 preparation**

Cllr Pomfret highlighted that the budget includes a Parish Clerk salary and working from home payments which were higher than required. Discussion with the previous Parish Clerk indicated that the typical hours worked were between 11 – 13.5 hours every two months at a wage of £12.67 per hour and that the budget had been based on more hours being required to work on the East Hill Farm project. As this did not come to fruition, Cllr Pomfret felt that this budget could be reduced in the coming financial year.

**23/85 Electric Vehicle Charging Point**

Cllr Clarke stated that the charging point was continuing to be used more frequently. It was AGREED to remove this item from the next agenda.

D/Cllr Milton joined the meeting at 8pm.

**23/86 Planning**

(a) Applications notified since last meeting;

**i) Ref 78368 – The Stables, Roachill Farm**

Cllr Clarke reiterated his declaration of interest in this planning application as he works for the company involved in submitting the plans. Cllr Clarke outlined that the planning application was for an increase in garden size following the approval of the Class Q planning application.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would state that they had no objection to 78368. Cllr Pomfret proposed, Cllr Parry seconded, all agreed.

**ii) Ref 78290 - Extension to dwelling at Lockett Wood**

Cllr Clarke outlined that the applicant wished to extend their dwelling due to a growing family and need for further space. The applicant was present but no questions were asked of them.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would state that they had no objection to 78290. Cllr Clarke proposed, Cllr Parry seconded, all agreed.

(b) Applications notified since the preparation of the agenda

**i) Ref 78437 – Certificate of Lawfulness for barn at Cavalry Close, East Knowstone by Mr Richard Stanbury**

Cllr Stanbury asked to speak given he had declared an interest in this planning matter. This was allowed. Cllr Stanbury detailed that the barn had been rebuilt following storm damage. Although the barn had been in existence for many years it was now classed as a new development and therefore required certification before further planning applications could be made. Cllr Clarke stated that due to the type of application, the Parish Council is unable to see the documentation that has been submitted to support the application.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would state they had no objection to 78437 with the following caveat “ as long as the correct, required evidence had been presented to NDDC”. Cllr Clarke proposed, Cllr Pomfret seconded, all agreed.

(c) Other planning matters

i) **Ref 78266 Tower Farm**

Cllr Pomfret stated that the original planning application had been withdrawn and the planning officer was following up the enforcement of planning breaches.

**23/87 Third Party Reports** (if present):

- a) **District Councillor** – D/Cllr Robin Milton mentioned that Council Tax had increased but services would continue to be stretched. The Local Plan is currently in the process of being redrawn. There is still a shortage of staff on the planning team and planning application decisions are typically taking 14-22 weeks to complete. He noted that successful legal action had been taken against an illegal dog breeding enterprise in East Anstey which had resulted in a £10,000 fine. He mentioned that the bin collections seemed to be ok at present but are dependent on the onboard computer operating correctly. Discussions were ongoing with regard combining the local authorities into one unitary body. D/Cllr Milton stated that NDDC had submitted their response to this proposal and that there was some concern over funds being moved away from North Devon to closer to the M5 corridor if the unitary body comes into force. D/Cllr Milton highlighted that the majority of planning applications would now need to implement Biodiversity Net Gain as a planning consideration.

D/Cllr Milton stressed the importance of reporting potholes online and ensuring it was reported more than three times. Cllr Pomfret mentioned that the drainage problem at Knowstone Mill had been resolved which would help reduce pothole occurrence in this area. It was AGREED to highlight the importance of reporting potholes on the Parish facebook page and website.

D/Cllr Milton summarised his conversations with the Batsworthy Fund and that he was pleased to see that grant applications above £2000 were now being accepted. In due course he would be contacting the relevant parishes to understand what requirements they had and to encourage applications to the fund.

- b) **County Councillor** – not present

**23/88 Members Reports**

- (a) **Highways** – Cllr Pomfret covered this report due to Cllr Dey's resignation. Cllr Pomfret reiterated that the drainage had been resolved at Knowstone Mill and that the surface dressing would be taking place near the Millennium Stone.
- (b) **Footpaths & Beaples Stone** – Cllr Parry stated that he is still trying to acquire the most recent parish map from the new Footpath contact despite sending numerous emails and leaving weekly telephone answer phone messages. D/Cllr Milton offered his assistance in approaching the Footpath officer which was accepted. Cllr Parry detailed that repairs to the footbridge on Footpath 6 (near Owlaborough) would be completed in due course but it was not deemed dangerous enough to close.
- (c) **Moors Management Association** – Cllr Maidment detailed that the Association were looking to apply for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and that no swaling would be taking place this year due to the weather conditions. Cllr Clarke enquired who was responsible for replacing the broken wooden stakes on the moors and it was clarified that the Moors Management Association in conjunction with Devon Wildlife Trust would be responsible for this and that the matter was in hand.
- (d) **Welcome Pack** – Cllr Maidment reiterated that the welcome packs were being sent out without a Parish Map.
- (e) **Emergency Plan** – Cllr Pomfret reminded everyone of his current thinking on the location of the generator storage box and mentioned that he would approach a company in Bampton with regard its construction.

(f) **Parish Hall** – Cllr Pomfret read out a report from the Chair of the Parish Hall committee detailing a successful quiz night, well attended coffee mornings and popular skittles nights. There would be a bingo on 19<sup>th</sup> April. The governance document had been retrieved from the archives and was found to require updating as it was created in 1986. There has been a slight increase in booking fees. A grant is being sought from the Batsworthy Fund to update the kitchen and to make safe the wall in the car park. One of the committee members will be responsible for cleaning going forward. A new member has joined the committee.

(g) **Police Liaison** – Cllr Pomfret stated that no one had yet come forward to take on this role.

(h) **Snow Warden** – Cllr Stanbury had nothing to report.

**23/89 Business at the Chairman’s discretion**

(i) Cllr Pomfret stated that he had approached local parish clerks to ascertain if they would be interested in an additional parish. There was some interest from one but the hourly wage was less than expected.. It was AGREED that Cllr Pomfret would recontact her to state that the wage could be discussed.

(ii) Cllr Pomfret confirmed that the Annual Meeting of the Parish would take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 and that Devon Ring and Ride were confirmed to present.

**23/90 The date, time & venue of next meeting were confirmed** as Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.30p.m. in the Parish Hall and that this would be the Annual General Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed as a true record .....

Date .....