

## LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL

### DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Littleham Village Hall on Thursday 01 February 2024 at 19.15

**Present:** Councillors: S Beer (Vice Chair), C Hassall, G Gray, G Smith, S Read, I Lawrence and M Brooks.

**Also Present:** Mr Luke Batty

**Apologies :** Councillors: P Jollands (Chairman), N Tregoning and A Longstaff.

District Councillor P Pennington, County Councillor L Hellyer

**In Attendance:** *David Edwards Clerk to the Council*

#### **2797 - WELCOME.**

In the absence of Councillor Jollands, it was **RESOLVED** Councillor Beer take the Chair. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and apologies were accepted.

A minute silence was observed as a mark of respect and to remember Mr Geoff Crofts (a former Parish Councillor) who passed away recently.

*[DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillors are invited to declare any declarable interest, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting. They are also reminded to consider whether any items within their Register of Interests should be updated].*

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**2798 - Public Open Question Time - The Council RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders and adjourn the Meeting to receive questions and comments from the public.  
(Time limited to 15 minutes in total - Public can only speak for 3 minutes per person)

There were no questions from the public.

**Report by County and District Councillors** (*Allowance should be made for the District and County Councillor to speak later in the meeting should they be unable to arrive in time*).

The County Councillor Report had been circulated and noted. There was no written report from the District Councillors.

**County Councillor report** One of the main things going on at County Hall this month is the setting of the budget. I am on Childrens scrutiny and health and adult care scrutiny and both committees have additional meetings this month to look at the budget. The budget for the new financial year from this April, will be agreed at the full council on February 15th.

When it is ready the budget book is about the size of the yellow pages book. The budget has to balance by law, so in order to increase the budget for one area, would mean taking the money from somewhere else. Currently 50% of the budget goes on adult social care for people of working age, between 18-64 years. The council does not employ anyone on the minimum wage/national living wage, but recent wage increases have added £28million to the budget bill. This is because Dcc pays for care from residential and nursing homes etc, who have all seen their wage bills go up.

The next biggest cost is Childrens services, with children with high needs being the biggest expense. We are a large rural county and school transport costs are also very high. Placements for children with complex needs are very expensive.

Adult care and childrens services are both statutory services. Currently, 70% (to 77%) of the budget gets spent on 3% of the population of Devon. You will have seen in the news that some authorities e.g., Somerset have declared themselves bankrupt and often cite the costs of adult social care. Devon County Council is not going bankrupt because of very careful financial management over the last 14 years...

We did get £6.7 million extra money from central government before Christmas, for highways repairs, and are promised the same amount again in the new financial year. Budget constraints are very frustrating for everyone, including our highways officers. With 8,000 miles of highways the money does not go far and highways costs have gone up between 30-60% since the cost of living crisis around the time that Russia invaded Ukraine.

The other big issue is devolution. The government has given the go ahead for Devon County Council and Torbay to become a unitary authority. Originally, Plymouth was going to be included but they have dropped out. Dcc cabinet is meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup> to agree to go ahead with this, and Torbay council will be doing the same. Thereafter, there will be a six-week public consultation. There will then be a special one agenda item meeting at Dcc to vote whether to go ahead.

Please keep on reporting issues to Devon County council. If you google Devon County council report a problem, a page will come up with icons e.g., potholes, drains, overgrown vegetation, streetlights etc. Just click on the appropriate icon and follow the simple instructions.

Alternatively, you can telephone the customer care desk. 0345 155 1015 Highways 0345 155 1004

Speeding, or mud/slurry on the roads is a matter for the police. They can be contacted in non-emergency situations, via the Devon and Cornwall police website. I am always happy for residents to contact me. [Linda.hellyer@devon.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.hellyer@devon.gov.uk) Telephone 07828758360

***District Councillor P Pennington report:***

Councillor Beer advised that Councillor Pennington had spoken to her and he had nothing to report except the information related to the District Council budget for 2024/2025. It had been confirmed that the increase would be within the 3% accepted figure.

***It was RESOLVED to reconvene the Meeting***

**2799 - To Approve Minutes 2789 – 2796 of the Parish Council meeting held on 14 January 2024.**

**It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes.**

***Matters Arising -***

2794 - It was noted that the Grit Bin in Landcross had been moved. Thanks were due to Councillor Ian Lawrence and Mr Luke Batty

**2800 - To consider the support or actions that the Council will take towards a Memorial event for the late Rosemary Gent.**

**It was RESOLVED that the Bideford Music Group make the appropriate arrangements with the Village Hall.**

**2801 - FINANCE:**

**It was RESOLVED:**

- **To approve and ratify the Cashbook as at 25.01.2024 .** Councillor Beer to sign the Cashbook statement and Bank Statement to ratify the balance being reported. *(the cashbook is attached and forms part of the Minutes)*
- **To approve the transfer of the balance of the Nat West Bank Account to the new Council Lloyds Bank account. The balance transferred £6213.53.**

**2802 - To agree in principle support for the proposal that a “Men’s Shed” is set up in Littleham.** *At this stage there is no specific request for financial support but the Council could offer some administrative help which could include Public Liability Insurance and the investigation of the required health and safety obligations.*

**It was RESOLVED that the Council supports this initiative but no action is taken by the Council. The organisers are advised to contact the neighbouring “Mens Sheds” and the National organisation.**

**2803 - To receive an update on the actions of the Biodiversity Group and the planning for the event on 16 March 2023.** *The Council has set aside in its budget £500 towards Biodiversity work and projects.*

**This was noted.**

**2804 - To discuss the Village Hall/Range Field Grass cutting contract.**

- A decision to continue with the current contractor (H G Wivell) or look to tender for other contractors.
- To agree/discuss the details of any new contract with reference to number of cuts during the year. See copy of last invoice. Current 21 cuts pa and ancillary works.
- To consider the option to employ the contractor to undertake other works with the option to include this within the new contract.

**It was RESOLVED to obtain two additional quotes for the works. The current contractor to also provide a quote.**

**2805 - To review the Council Standing Orders and consider any updates or changes that might be required. See attached.**

**It was RESOLVED that no changes are required.**

**2806 - It was RESOLVED to post the Notice of a vacancy for a Councillor for the Littleham Ward**

**2807 - To consider correspondence & communications requiring attention. Emails circulated include:**

DALC/NALC newsletter/updates/events	Public Sector - various
Devon County Council - various newsletters	Torrige DC – various
Torrige DC - Weekly Planning applications	The Rural Bulletin
Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.	

**These were noted.**

**2808 - Items for next meeting and Next Full Council Meeting - 07 March 2024.**

*(Please can you ensure that any items for the next meeting are received by the Clerk by Monday 26 February 2024)*

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the Meeting closed at 20.40

Signed..... Date.....

Chair of the Council