

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Littleham Village Hall on Thursday 06 June 2024 at 19.15

Present: Councillor – N Tregoning - Chairman
Councillors: G Gray, S Read, M Brooks, G Smith, C Hassall and L Batty.

Apologies : Councillors P Jollands, I Lawrence and A Longstaff
County Councillor L Hellyer

Also Present: District Councillor P Pennington

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

2840 - The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting, apologies were accepted.

[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.

The Council RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders and adjourn the meeting.

Public Open Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

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 were noted. The report is attached to the Minutes. The Chair made reference to the Devon and Torbay Combined Council Authority (CCA) new initiative and the doubts over its future after the General Election.

It was also noted that Councillor Hellyer had spoken to a resident about the speed of vehicles on the Whitehall road.

District Councillor Report:

Councillor Pennington reported on :

- The recent deaths of Sue Tait and Claude Nicholls and expressed his sadness at the loss of two well liked residents who had contributed so much to the community.
- The change of Polling Station from the Methodist Chapel to the Village Hall
- Recent email correspondence related to the development 1/0431/2024/FULM. This is the large housing build off Clovelly Road and is not within his Ward of Monkleigh and Putford although due to its proximity he has received various objections from residents. He felt that any action to “call in” could not be justified.
- There is a problem with the District Council Planning Portal on the Website which has caused some issues with responses.

- Xlinks consultation meetings have been taking place and the deadline for responses has been extended to 11 July 2024.
- The District Council has a statutory duty to provide the Planning service but enforcement is not included as a statutory duty.
- A recent article in the Times newspaper reporting on the results of a survey which showed that Torridge District had the lowest crime figures in the country by District..

Councillors questioned the legal process regarding the enforcement of Section 106 and the requirement for Development Companies to fulfil the obligations as laid down in the Planning consents.

Councillor Pennington explained that it was subject to viability and the Government policy on the required housing needs.

The Council reconvened

2841 - The Council RESOLVED to Approve Minutes 2829 – 2839 of the Parish Council meeting held on 09 May 2024.

Matters Arising

2833 - The Planning Application 1/0359/2024/FULM as discussed is not the same Application as that which a letter of objection has been received from Mr and Mrs Thorne, however, it is part of the overall large development along Clovelly Road. Councillor Hassall commented that the tree line and hedges on the opposite side of Scratchface Lane will be retained as it is not part of the development site.

The letter from Mr and Mrs Thorne is as follows:

1/0431/2024/FULM Land South of Clovelly Road, Littleham Landscape proposals

Drawing References:

JBA/21/247-21K

JBA/21/247-23K

JBA/21/247-18 and 20

We would like to register our objection to the landscaping plan of the developers, drawing references listed above, on the grounds of the apparent significant loss of trees and hedgerows proposed for the site.

On the Key to the right of the plans, there is a symbol of a black tree (21st symbol down from the top of the Key) which indicates the trees which are to be retained. As there are no symbols indicating trees being retained on the plan, it appears that the intention is to demolish all the trees, north to south on the site alongside Scratchface Lane.

The trees, west to east, below the existing farm buildings (Ref JBA/21/247-18 and 20) indicates the existing hedges will be removed and replaced with alternative planting, as well as the existing trees being demolished. There is no symbol of existing hedge or tree retention on the plan. There appears no need for this removal of trees and hedges, given the large scale building area of this site.

We have already made comments on the landscaping of this site previously, in November 2021.

The retention of trees and hedgerows is essential on this site for the following reasons.

- a. It is essential to break up the massing of this large scale urban development to at least retain some of the character of the present rural environment.
- b. Trees and hedgerows provide essential natural habitats for wildlife as well as being of great environmental benefits.
- c. Retention, and indeed, enhancement of the mature trees and hedgerows make a huge contribution to a reduction in global warming, as well as contributing to the well-being of residents.

It is not necessary to lose trees and hedgerows in this location. The housing layout should be designed around the existing field pattern and link the urban development with the natural environment. The area of building being so vast should not warrant demolition of mature trees and hedgerows, especially alongside the east of the site which is mature woodland, bordering Scratchface Lane.

In our opinion the only trees that might need removal are those that prove to be dead, dying, or dangerous, in the opinion of an independent tree surgeon or landscape architect. The retained trees can then be backed up by a tree preservation order to ensure that there is no incremental destruction of the trees.

Despite our best efforts, it is difficult to understand what is proposed, especially details of which trees and hedgerows the developer proposes to retain. It would be helpful if the developer provided a detailed plan showing all the trees and hedgerows to be retained, as well as those to be removed.

We can only hope that Torridge Council cares enough for the environment to wish to retain the existing trees and hedgerows in order to respect the environment of long established properties outside, but impacted by this site, as well as the existing long established woodland on the site.

The Council resolved that a submission should be made to Torridge District Council Planning Department in support of Mr and Mrs Thorne's comments.

2834 - Thanks were expressed to Councillor Batty for the work he is doing on the installation of a new sign for Landcross Church.

2839 - Councillor Brooks said that the local Horse riding group were organising an "Awareness Ride" to take place in September. The plan is to ride as a group along some of the local roads to make drivers see how careful they need to be when passing horse riders.

The update on creating a public right of way from Groves Cross to Bridleway 12 is that the landowner is concerned that dogs will be coming through his land and might cause distress to his livestock. It was left that Councillor Brooks reviews the options with a possible informal arrangement between local horse riders and the landowner.

2842 - PLANNING:

To discuss and/or respond to the following Planning Application:

Planning Application: 1/0444/2024/FUL

Proposal: Erection of extension and alterations to form ancillary accommodation

Location: Deepwell Barn, Landcross, Devon

OS Map Reference: (E) 246341. (N) 124311

Councillor Hassall explained that the building was hidden away in the landscape away from other buildings.

The Council RESOLVED that it had no objections.

2843 - FINANCE

Financial Year-End (documents attached and will form of the Minutes)

- To receive Internal Auditors Statement for financial year 2023-24 and supporting report.(*to follow*)
- To resolve that the Council Certify it is Exempt from external audit or to submit to a Limited assurance review by PKF Littlejohns (External Auditor)
- To complete and approve Annual Governance Statement 2023-24.

To note the significant variances as follows:

Precept increase from £5500 to £6700 - 21% increase:

Additional £1000 to be set aside each year to cover Defibrillator costs.

Total other receipts decrease from £8628 to £3257 - decrease 62%

One off Lottery Grant in year end 31.03.2023

All other payments decrease from £15236 to £5307 - decrease 65%

Payments in year end 31.03.2023 increased due to expenditure related to one off Lottery Grant, payment to cover cost of Defibrillators (4 year cycle), Website set up costs and new Notice Boards purchase.

- To approve Annual Accounting Statement 2023-24 & supporting documents.
- Dates for Exercise of Public rights. To consider arrangement with Publication to be 30 consecutive days and include the first 10 working days in July. *Publication on 15 June 2024 to 26 July 2024.*
- To approve the Cashbook as a reconciliation of the Bank balance £8527.97, including payments to:
 - Npower re the electricity supply to Defibrillator at Littleham Bus shelter £81.23.
 - Receipt of Vat claim for year end 31.03.2024 - £570.62
- To approve payment of £155.88 to Community First Trading Limited in respect of Annual Insurance Policy premium.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Financial Year end documents and supporting statements.(The Accounting statements are attached and form part of the minutes).

It was RESOLVED that the Dates for Exercise of Public rights and the Publication would be 30 consecutive days and include the first 10 working days in July. Publication on 15 June 2024 to 26 July 2024.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Cashbook reconciliation (to be attached and form part of the Minutes) and the payments as listed.

2844 - To discuss any action the Council can take to support its policy for reducing the Carbon footprint and improving the bio-diversity in Littleham and Landcross.

The Council has no plans at this stage and it was agreed that any future actions are in partnership with the Biodiversity Group.

The Clerk advised that he had discussed the grass cutting contract with Mr Wivell and it was agreed that the cutting of the verges around the Village Hall be left to grow. This will be in agreement with the Village Hall Committee (to be confirmed).

2845 - To discuss the recent consultation process by Xlinks and consider a response from the Council.

There was a general comment that generating power outside the UK was a risk to the UK energy security. The Chair said that she had read that solar panels in desert areas become wet with condensation and can be covered by wind blown sand reducing their efficiency.

It was questioned that the cables did not link in with the wind turbine project (Whitecross) off the coast near Braunton. The Council also were surprised that the cables were not brought up the Torridge river.

A comment was the need to make it a statutory requirement for all new houses to have solar panels installed on the roofs and more research and funding into capturing sea and river tidal flows.

It was a concern that the number of heavy vehicles could cause serious disruption and added pressure on the road network.

It was RESOLVED that the above comments form the formal response by the Council.

20.10 - District Councillor Pennington left the Meeting.

2846 - To discuss and consider the Council response to the E mail from Mr R Bailey (forwarded on 22 May 2024) regarding the support of Parliamentary Bill to make provisions for the safety of Electric-powered microbility vehicles and secondary lithium-ion batteries used to power such vehicles.

It was a general acceptance that any action to improve the safety of lithium-ion batteries was to be supported. Councillor Smith pointed out that there are already rules in place for all suppliers and retailers to only sell goods that meet the UK standard safety requirements. It is the lack of enforcement of the standards that allow low quality products to be sold. There should be additional enforcement measures and resources to ensure the batteries are disposed of correctly. The actions should also be focused on the methods and controls within the recycling process.

It was RESOLVED to support the Bill in principle.

20.15 - Councillors Smith and Hassall left the Meeting.

2847 - To Resolve that the Council takes the action required and informs Torridge District Council that a vacancy has arisen following the resignation of Councillor Sue Beer.

The Chair advised that she proposed to send a card and a gift voucher to Sue Beer in recognition of her long service on the Council and other work within the community.

It was noted that the Council had the option of creating a budget item "Chair's Allowance" which can be used to purchase gifts and make presentations to residents that have made a worthwhile contribution to the community or for notable events : for example 100 birthday celebrations. The discretion is held by the Chair on when to make the gifts, but the Chair made to known that she would consult the Council prior to making a decision.

The Council vacancy will need to be advertised in accordance with the Representation of the People's Act 1983 s39.

It was RESOLVED to inform the District Council that a vacancy has occurred on the Council and to vire £100 from the General Reserve to a Chair's Allowance.

2848 - To consider correspondence & communications requiring attention. Emails circulated include:

1. DALC/NALC newsletter/updates/events
2. Public Sector - various
3. Devon County Council - various newsletters
4. Torridge DC – various
5. Torridge DC - Weekly Planning applications
6. XLinks - Statutory Consultation exercise
7. Rural Network
8. Mark Crocker Digital and Social Media Officer - Torridge District Council regarding any events or plans to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

Item 8 was discussed and it was noted that no specific events had been organised. The Clerk explained that it was the Council as the local Statutory Body to lead on National and Civic Events taking place within the area of control.

It was noted that any action the Council takes for future events require a notice period and time to make the appropriate arrangements.

2849 - Items for next meeting and Next Full Council Meeting - Thursday 11 July 2023.

The date of the next Meeting is a week later than the usual schedule due to the 04 July now being the date of the General Election.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the Meeting was closed 20.30hrs

Signed:

Councillor N Tregoning (Chair to the Parish Council)

Date.....

