

Draft Minutes subject to Confirmation

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Held in the Nicholls Hall
Tuesday 18th September 2007

87-2007 Present:

Mrs L Ellicott (Chairman): Ms J Gannon (Vice-Chairman): Mrs L Cole: Mrs S Holland: Ms C Moriarty: Mr I Hammerton: Mrs A Martin (Clerk)

Parishoners and others in attendance:

Cllr I McPhie (WDBC). In addition seven parishoners were in attendance.

88-2007 Apologies for Absence:

Mrs K Boyd (on holiday)

In opening the meeting the Chairman paid tribute to the late Mr Ted Lyon, who will be sadly missed in the Parish, both as a friend and as a supporter of a wide variety of village activities, especially the Nicholls Hall. The Council will send condolences to the family.

89-2007 Parishoners and Visitors Time:

The residents of Heatherlands and Taradale both expressed concerns regarding the planning proposal at Downtown Farm, which is in close proximity to their properties. These concerns included the access road along which is also a Public Footpath, the increase in traffic through the village and the possibility that visitor numbers might grow in the future so that what started out as a small educational enterprise might metamorphose into an attraction drawing up to 50,000 visitors annually.

90-2007 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17th July 2007 were signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

91-2007 Matters arising:

91.1 Progress re: Ancient Spring – The Site Plan has been sent to the DNPA and has met with their approval, and steps will now be taken towards the work being carried out. The solicitor has begun work on the Registration of the Land, and a map showing which land the Council intends to register was shown to the meeting. Individuals who had requested sight of this map have also been consulted, and no objections have been received to date.

91.2- Progress re: Captain Hunter's Plaque - The new plaque has been commissioned and work has started on its construction. Contributions to the funding are being provided by the Parish Council, the Duchy of Cornwall, the Dartmoor National Park and the family of Captain Hunter. The Council is co-ordinating the work. When it is completed the old plaque will be taken down and if it is not damaged in the process will be retained by Captain Hunter's family. Once the new plaque is in place there will be a dedication ceremony at the site, possibly on or around the 90th Anniversary of Captain Hunter's death.

91.3 – C&CC Site – Representatives of the council visited the Site at the invitation of the owner and the C&CC manager, and received hospitality in the form of drinks and nibbles. The delegation was given a tour of the Site, including the opportunity to look into the sewage holding tank and to witness the lack of odour emanating from it. The Chairman reported that the Environmental Health Officer is happy with the improvements that have been made, although it must be noted that the poor weather this summer means that the system has not yet stood the test of a long hot spell.

91.4 – Smells in the Village – A meeting was held earlier in the week attended by the Chairman and Clerk, Mr George Greenaway (Principal Environmental Health Officer for West Devon), Mr Doug Yates (Works Manager, SWWA) and Mr Dave Webb (Area Supervisor, SWWA). The Chairman reported that the following points emerged from the meeting:

- i) SWWA is aware that the Treatment Works are far from ideal and need replacing. This will take some time and a suitable site has not yet been identified.
- ii) SWWA is taking remedial actions at the current site in that it is trying to improve the quality of the beds and it is also tanking out the site (similar to emptying a septic tank) on Monday and Thursday mornings.
- iii) To assist the monitoring of the effectiveness of the above works anybody wishing to report an odour should ring the following free number, which is manned around the clock, and ask for their complaint to be passed on to Dave Webb. The number is **0800 169 1144**. Alternatively contact the Clerk and she will pass on the complaint, stating the place and time that the odour was detected.
- iv) An inspection was also carried out at the manhole next down from the one by the War Memorial, which revealed a blockage caused by a root ball formed when tree roots creep into the pipework. Mr Webb promised that this would be cleared by the end of the day. Mr Greenaway reminded SWWA that a dropping pipe still needs to be fixed in the manhole by the War Memorial so that the Campsite discharge is led down to sewer pipe level whereas at present it sprays over the manhole wall some two feet above this level and odours may emanate from this spray.
- v) All the professionals present were happy that the manhole covers are not sealed, as sewerage systems require a degree of ventilation, and sealing the manhole covers can actually create more problems.
- vi) The problem which occurred in the village last month, when raw sewage ran down through the village on a warm Sunday morning, was caused by a child's nappy blocking the system, and an item was included in the September Parish Magazine to promote awareness of the limitations of our sewerage system and to encourage "responsible flushing".

In conclusion to this item the Chairman recorded her thanks to Mr Greenaway. During the course of the meeting it became clear that he has made numerous visits to the village, including many outside of office hours, in the pursuit of an odour-free Lydford.

91.5 – Parish Plan Update – At the beginning of this item the Chairman acknowledged the correspondence received from Mr Ellington, which was responded to by both the Clerk and the Parish Plan Committee at the time. Ms Gannon reported that the draft version of the main questionnaire has been completed and has been sent to Devon for a correctness check. When this has been completed it will be distributed to every household in the Parish. It is hoped that this will happen around mid-October, and that the questionnaires will be returned by Christmas with the resulting plan coming out in the New Year.

91.6 Post Office – The Clerk reported that she has made contact with the Post Office in the Nicholls Hall regarding making the public aware of its existence, and in particular the many visitors who might wish to make use of it. An item has already been published in the Parish

Magazine, and a small notice displayed in the Parish Notice Board outside the hall. It was felt that a larger sign is now needed, which can be seen from passing cars, and it was suggested that this might be attached to the building. The Nicholls Hall Committee will be consulted, and the Parish Council will consider how the cost of providing such a sign might be met.

92-2007 Receive Reports from Councillors on respective outside bodies:

92.1 DNPA Consultative Forum– No meeting this month.

92.2 Police Authority – No meeting this month

80.3 Southern Link Committee – will meet this Thursday

80.4 Nicholls Hall Committee – Mrs Holland reported that a grant of £5000 had been secured for the refurbishment of the WI Room, although this comes with a lot of conditions attached. Additional funding of £4000 from West Devon Borough Council and £4000 from Devon County Council has also been secured. This is in addition to the £2500 funding from West Devon Borough Council for the upgrading of the kitchen. The outside painting is almost finished. The September Bistro Nite raised £327, and there is a healthy level of bookings for the forthcoming months.

93-2007 Receive the financial report:

93.1 The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, presented members with a supplementary written report detailing the following points:

i) Pre-authorised cheques were paid in August: Mainly Stationery £4.68: Grass Cutting £17.00: Chilcotts (solicitor, re Spring) £50.00

ii) A bank error occurred on 25th July 2007 when the bank transferred £50 instead of £500 into the current account, which only came to light when the statement to the end of August was received. The bank were immediately informed of the mistake, and sent copies of the original mandate. It transpired that the original had not been dealt with in the branch, but had been forwarded on to a central unit, and the bank seemed unable retrieve the mandate to check for their error. To facilitate the correction the Council submitted, at the Bank's request, a further mandate for the transfer of the remaining £450, having received assurances that it would not be charged for the resulting overdraft. In spite of these assurances the bank applied a £90 penalty charge plus a £2.50 interest charge. After a further telephone call to Mr Collins, the Manager at the Tavistock Branch of Lloyds TSB, the clerk was assured that the charges had been withdrawn and that he would personally confirm this in writing. This confirmation has not yet been received. It was RESOLVED that the council will invoice the bank for the administrative work caused once the matter has been settled.

iii) As a result of the above the Clerk has requested that the Current account statements are sent monthly rather than quarterly as at present.

iv) The first payment has been made from the Ancient Spring Account, a £50 advance to the solicitor. The Clerk will invoice the Account quarterly for administrative costs, and this will involve an internal transfer of funds from the Spring Account to the General Fund. The first such transfer is included in this month's accounts.

v) The invoice from the foundry for Captain Hunter's Plaque has not yet been received. This will be paid in full by the Council, and the grants and donations will then be reclaimed. The Clerk will keep the money in the interest-bearing account as long as possible, the expenditure having already been authorised, and will get the mandate and cheque countersigned when the invoice is received.

The following balances were reported:

Current account – £226.06

Deposit account - £4534.08

Parish Plan - £1491.38

Ancient Spring - £10,000.00

93.2 The following cheques were authorised from the general budget: Clerk salary & expenses £256.85; Grass cutting £34.00; M Jones (Parish Plan) £160.00. A transfer mandate of £500 into the current account was authorised and signed. Provisions held as shown on the sheet circulated to members and attached to the master set of minutes.

94 -2007 Correspondence:

94.1 A consultation document from the NHS regarding plans to run as an NHS Foundation Trust. Members noted the contents but did not wish to respond as a body.

94.2 and 94.3 West Devon's Core Strategy and Local Development Framework. These were received at the end of July with comments invited by 6th September. Members felt some disquiet that these documents had been sent out to Parish Councils for consideration during August, when PC's have no meeting, and that the cut off date was so early in September. The Clerk reported that she had already mentioned this to a representative of the Standards Committee, and that a follow up letter will be sent to Mr Chris Dunford, the Planning Policy Manager at West Devon Borough Council.

94.4 A recommendation from Mr R Ellington that members look at the website of Kingsnorth Parish Council, which he feels is "an example of good practice in respect of the Freedom of Information Act". Members had looked at this site. There was unanimous agreement that they felt no need to change the Lydford Parish Council website at present.

94.5 Notice of the Annual Dartmoor Society Debate

94.6 DAPC Notice of the AGM

94.7 An update from Devon County Council on their opposition to Exeter's Unitary Bid

94.8 A letter from Devon County Council informing the Council that the Devon County Waste Local Plan has now been published.

94.9 Correspondence regarding the wedding reception and party held at the Sports Field on Saturday 28th July. Comments have been passed on to the Sports Field committee, which does not come under the jurisdiction of the Parish Council.

94.10 Correspondence from West Devon regarding a Polling Places review: the Clerk reported that the enclosed Notice had been displayed as requested, and that the letter had been replied to listing the facilities (eg disabled access, toilets etc) available at the Nicholls Hall, our current Polling Station.

94.11 A letter from the DNPA Local Development Framework, thanking the Council for its response to the Core Strategy Document, and informing it that there will now be an Examination into the Core Strategy as a result of concerns expressed by the Government Office for the South West.

94.12 A letter from the DNPA Planning Department enclosing new guidelines for Site Inspection Procedures. The Council noted that two representatives of Parish Councils (only one to act as spokesperson) would be included in DNPA Site Inspections. The Council will be guided by the DNPA Inspection Procedure when conducting its own Site Inspections.

94.13 A letter from West Devon offering to store empty sandbags in the Parish, and informing us of a series of Flooding Advice Roadshows.

94.14 A letter from Devon County Council regarding Bus Information Strategy. This is entirely about how information about bus services is disseminated to the community.

94.15 A letter from the South West Regional Assembly regarding a review of additional pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers in the South West

94.16 Information from Devon County Council regarding the cessation of the 09.30 bus service from Okehampton to Tavistock. This is presented to us as a fact, not a consultation.

Nevertheless the council will write to the County council expressing concern. Mrs Holland took the enclosed timetables to pass on to the local community.

95-2007 Planning Applications

95.1 Application for the conversion of the former builder's office opposite Prince Charles Terrace to affordable (low cost) dwelling: *Mrs Cole declared a personal interest, being related to the applicant, and took no part in the ensuing discussion.* A site inspection had been held earlier in the evening, and members had received a letter from the occupiers of the neighbouring property at "Maylin" raising no objection provided the existing roof level were not raised and no window was incorporated to overlook their garden.

The council were in general agreement that the building in its present state is visually unattractive, that it is unfortunate that the building is serving no useful purpose, and that its renovation would be desirable. There was some discussion about the cost of this renovation, noting in particular that the plans submitted specify a roof of Delabole Slate. Mrs Holland felt that she would like to see the building remain in the employment sector, and this gained agreement from Mr Hammerton and Ms Moriarty. The members were, however, sensitive to the fact that it might not prove economically viable for any business to put in the capital investment necessary when the finished building would be so small as to limit its commercial potential. The Council felt that it would be detrimental to the village if the property ended up as a holiday let or a second home, and Ms Gannon suggested that local occupation be specified via Section 106.

It was then unanimously RESOLVED that the council should make the following recommendation:

The Council believes that the premises should be retained in employment use.

However if this proves not to be viable the Council would support the building's conversion to an Affordable Residential Unit provided that a Section 106 is entered into restricting the occupation to local people.

For the avoidance of doubt: it can be sold, but only to those who work, live or have a connection with the Parish.

95.2 The following planning decisions have been received:

Conversion of redundant agricultural building to holiday unit and works to improve highway visibility, Lower Watervale Farm, Lydford has received permission subject to a number of conditions.

Addition of solar water heating collectors at Langworthy, Lydford has received permission

95.3 Applications received since the Agenda was published:

95.3.1 Proposed solar powered domestic hot water system (two panels on south facing roof linked to replacement cylinder) at Little House, Skitt Lane, Lydford: There was unanimous agreement that:

the Council supports the principle of renewable energy and has NO OBJECTION to this proposal

95.3.2 Proposed removal of highway access, demolition of garage and erection of new garage and studio/garden tool store at Gorse Hills, Vale Down, Lydford – amended plans:

The Chairman remarked that the current access to the the A386 from the existing garage at this property is "a potential death trap". The members were unanimous in registering *NO OBJECTION* to the proposal.

95.3.3 Proposed change of use from agricultural to mixed agricultural use to include conversion of redundant barn to tea room and teaching space and provision of visitor parking at Downtown Farm, Lydford: A site inspection had been held the previous evening and members had received letters voicing concerns and objections from Dr C. Barker and from Mrs S Barker, both of Heatherlands, which is adjacent to the site. The concerns expressed included the increased traffic, including the possibility of coaches; the adequacy of the access lane which is also a public footpath; the possibility that in the future the visitor attraction will grow (Pennywell Farm apparently has up to 50,000 visitors per year), and the threat to trees growing close to the boundary hedge at Heatherlands. Dr Barker, along with his neighbour from Towerdale, also voiced concerns and objections during Parishoners and Visitors time. Ms Gannon opened the Council's deliberations by pointing out that this seemed to be exactly the kind of farm diversification that the DNPA are promoting to make farms more economically viable, and that she was happy to support the proposal. Mrs Holland questioned the size of the proposed development, the possibility of coaches traveling along the public footpath and the number of people who might visit the attraction. Ms Ellicott pointed out that the owner has stated that he anticipates a maximum of 40 cars per week. Mr Hammerton felt that the enterprise would be self limiting by the size of the existing car park, and that to provide further hardstanding would in any case require a subsequent planning application: on these grounds he supported the proposal as an asset to the village. Ms Moriarty and Mrs Cole agreed with this support. The members were in agreement that they supported the small educational enterprise that the current owners have described to them, but wary about opening the door to a larger, more commercial enterprise growing out of it. Mrs Ellicott pointed out that any commercial enterprise can be granted permission subject to conditions on operating times, and Mr Hammerton proposed that the Council should seek to impose a limit on the opening times. It was also felt that the tea rooms should only be open to visitors who came to the educational facility and not to the general public. After much discussion the following proposal was arrived at, and was unanimously RESOLVED:

The council supports the application provided restrictions are placed on the opening times, and requests the Planning Authority to put in place such conditions as will prevent the enterprise growing to a point where it overpowers, or causes a nuisance to, the neighbouring properties.

96-2007 Items raised at the previous meeting for inclusion on this agenda:

There were none.

97-2007 Items raised for inclusion on the October Agenda

No items were raised for the Agenda. The Chairman, however, pointed out that the Clerk will have completed her six month probationary period next month and that her employment is therefore due to be reviewed. A sub-committee comprising the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman was appointed to this task.

98-2007 To agree the date of the next meeting:

The date of **Tuesday 16th October 2007** was agreed commencing at 7.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 8.50 pm.

Annie Martin
Clerk to the Parish Council

19th September 2007

Signed as a true and accurate record..... (Chairman)

Date.....