

DUNCHIDEOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

Meeting of Dunchideock Parish Council, held on **Tuesday 19th March 2019 at 7.30 pm in Dunchideock Village Hall, School Lane, Dunchideock EX2 9UG**

Present: Cllr Sharpe (Chairman), Cllr Bean, Cllr Cook, Cllr Ellis, Cllr McCarthy, Cllr Moor, Cllr Robson, Mr Harvey (Clerk), TDC Cllrs Goodey and Lake
12 members of the public

1) PUBLIC DISCUSSION: No items raised

2) Apologies for Absence: None

3) Declarations of Interest and Dispensations: *(In accordance with the Code of Conduct)*
Cllr McCarthy declared an interest in the payment of £200 to Mr Houlden in item 25.

4) Minutes – The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 15th January 2019 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 12th February 2019 were presented for approval and signature. Proposed: Cllr Robson, Seconded: Cllr McCarthy. Approved and signed.

5) District & County Councillor Reports: Cllr Goodey said that the Litter Pick was good fun. When he visited the village on Monday 18th March he could not see any litter and it must have been a success. Kenn Valley Ward was being enlarged to 7 full parishes and Powderham. As a result the Ward would have 3 Councillors and he introduced Adrian Ward who was standing for election for the third vacancy.

Cllr Lake said that it was a pleasure to be at the meeting and if residents had any concerns they should not hesitate to contact the TDC Councillors.

6) Public Rights Of Way: Unfortunately Ros Davies, the Devon County Council Public Paths Liaison Officer, was unable to attend. The briefing will be re-arranged.

7) Clerks Report: The Clerk reported that his first two months had been very busy due to the high volume of e-mails that are dealt with later. Some had been spurious and threatened hacking and blackmail. In doing some research he was concerned to read that Dunchideock Parish Council was considered to be a “No Go Area” by other Clerks and that he had found historic grievance letters against councillor(s) that had not been actioned. He had discussed with the Chairman the various documents that we must now publish and these will be reviewed to ensure that the Council complies with current requirements.

8) Planning Approval: Cllr McCarthy advised that approval had been given to Application 18/02553/NPA at Treetops, Higher Ashton for a change of use of an agricultural building to a dwelling. No Community Infrastructure Levy was payable as the floor area remained the same.

9) Highways: Cllr Ellis advised that after the recent road closures and work there were still problems with the drainage and water coming down Blacksmiths Hill. Cllr Robson offered to make enquiries of the Neighbourhood Highways Officer and if necessary the Clerk will write to DCC Highways to formally request that action is taken to get repairs completed.

10) District and Parish Council Elections Thursday May 2: The Clerk advised that elections for District and Parish Councils will be held on this date. Notices had been put up in the parish and on the website and will be in Country News. The Clerk has a small number of Nomination Forms for

the Parish Council election. These forms must be returned by hand to Teignbridge District Council offices in Newton Abbot before 4 pm on Wednesday 3rd April 2019.

11) Defibrillators:

a) Cllr Sharpe advised that the two mains powered units had been delivered. These will be installed by a local electrician who would not charge for the work as his donation towards the funding of the defibrillators. The solar powered unit was waiting for despatch from Community HeartBeat Trust.

b) Cllr Sharpe advised that as part of the Agreement with the providers, Community HeartBeat Trust, they would provide a Community Awareness Session at a cost of £175 and agreement was required for payment of this amount. This will be held on Saturday 27th April for two hours from 10 am and will be advertised on the website and notice boards.

Proposed: Cllr Moor, Seconded: Cllr Cook. Approved.

12) First Aid Session: This had been provided by Stuart Holt, a local paramedic, and was held in the Village Hall on Saturday 9th February and also at Shillingford St George. The sessions were attended by 30 people from both villages. Stuart was thanked for having provided the sessions.

13) 4 x 4 Drivers: Cllr Bean advised that this local scheme had been instituted to help residents in bad weather. He had a list of 5 volunteers but had so far not been used. The scheme will be available all year and is there if residents need to use it. If assistance is required any of the Councillors or the Clerk should be contacted. Details will be on the website.

14) Official Website: The Clerk advised that the address of the Official website for the village is www.dunchideoc.org.uk. As part of the review of documents that we must publish, the layout and presentation of information on the Parish Council part of the website will be reviewed. Having looked at other parish council websites this will include the Copyright Notice.

15) Referendum: Cllr Sharpe advised that for information the council were aware that an elector had asked Teignbridge District Council for the procedure to abolish the Parish Council. This would require a Community Governance Petition signed by 37.5% of the electorate which for the parish would mean 87 signatures. TDC would then have to undertake a Community Governance Review to consult the electorate and we understand that the process could take over a year. With electors being able to exercise their democratic rights in May to elect their new Parish Council, it would appear to be a counter exercise to abolish the Parish Council.

16) Freedom of Information Act:

a) The Clerk advised that the Act gave individuals a greater right of access to information. It also stated that a few people may misuse or abuse the purpose of the Act. The Council had received a large number of requests and complaints from a very small number of electors which appeared to be disruptive or have a disproportionate impact on the Council which is placing a strain on delivering mainstream services. These requests had a history of being frequent with a repetitive context and abusive language that made them Vexatious Requests. One comment to the Clerk was "If you cannot commit the time do not commit the crime". Another comment was that this year would be an expensive one for the Council. 6 other Parish Councils had collectively received 1 request in 12 months. This Council received over 100 requests or related enquiries since September last year. The Information Commissioners Office had been consulted and requests are now being refused as manifestly unreasonable or for other reasons under the Act. They must be dealt with and take time and cost. This cost to the Council is a cost to the electors through the precept and would have an impact on all the electors.

b) The Information Commissioners Office now requires the Council to maintain a Disclosure Log to make available to the public if requested the information that has been provided in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

17) Clerks Hours: Cllr Sharpe gave a briefing on the need for the Clerk to work additional hours for the first few weeks above his contracted hours. This included hours required for essential training and a large number of hours on other problems that were an unwarranted demand and a waste of his time. Thankfully this is offset to a certain degree by the Council not having a Clerk for 6 weeks.

18) Sand Bag Policy: Cllr Bean advised that this was a scheme of TDC whereby a small stock of sand bags was held in each village in case of need by residents. The stock for the village was held in a store at the Village Hall and a new stock had been delivered free of charge. Access in case of need could be arranged by contacting any Councillor or the Clerk.

19) Teignbridge Association of Local Council (TALC): Cllr Moor gave a briefing on the last meeting on 7th February. The Chief Financial Officer of TDC outlined the budget provision for the coming year and the picture looked satisfactory. However for 2020/21 there could be a funding gap of £1.3M. There had been lots of changes in the infrastructure at TDC. The District Council were also looking at a strategy of devolving TDC assets to Town and Parish Councils to see if they could provide them more cheaply. This would not affect this Parish Council.

20) Internal Audit: Cllr Sharpe advised that as part of the end of the Financial Year process it was necessary to:

a) approve the appointment of an Internal Auditor and approve the cost of her services. Penny Clapham who is the qualified and very experienced Clerk of Kenn Parish Council did the work last year and has offered to do the Internal Audit this year at a cost of £50.

Proposed: Cllr Moor, Seconded: Cllr Bean. Approved.

b) approve and sign an Application for Exemption from External Audit. Under current regulations small authorities with an income below £25,000 and in existence before 1/4/2015 are eligible for exemption from External Audit. All documents and figures for the financial year would still be published. Proposed: Cllr Cook, Seconded: Cllr Moor. Approved.

21) Training: Cllr Sharpe advised that

a) It appears that approval was not recorded in the minutes of previous meetings to the attendance of Sara Westcott, the former Clerk, on a New Clerks Course at a cost of £30 and to the attendance of Cllrs Bean, Robson and Sharpe on a New Councillors Course at a total cost of £90. Retrospective approval was requested.

b) the Clerk needed to attend a Preparing for Audit Course at a cost of £48.

Proposed: Cllr Robson, Seconded: Cllr Moor. Approved.

22) Cycle Event May 4th: The Clerk advised that this event was being held and gave details of the times and the route through the parish. Details would be placed on the website.

23) Footpaths: Cllr Bean advised that the circular Footpath Walk and Easter Egg Hunt would be held on Sunday 7th April starting at 10 am at the Village Hall. The footpath is from the car park and it was intended to be a family event with refreshments. A risk assessment had been done and the Insurance Company advised. Details would be placed on the website and notice boards.

24) Finance: Cllr Sharpe presented the following documents that are available to electors and will be published:

a) Budget/Precept for 2019/20 agreed at the January meeting that is in a revised layout for clarity.

b) Budget/Actual Expenditure Comparison for 2018/19

c) Bank Reconciliation as at 1st March 2019 that had been agreed and approved.

25) Expenditure Cllr Sharpe advised that approval was required to the following items of expenditure with the income being noted:

Expenditure		£
Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)-Balance of Membership Fee		4
New Clerks Course – Sara Westcott (See 21)	£25 + VAT £5	30
New Clerks Course – N R Harvey	£25 + VAT £5	30
Preparation for Election Course – N R Harvey	£25 + VAT £5	30
Preparation for Audit Course – N R Harvey	£40 + VAT £8	48
New Councillors Courses – Cllrs Bean,Robson,Sharpe (See 21)	£75 +VAT £15	90
Royal British Legion		25
CHBT Community Awareness Session		175
Mr C Houlden – 2 nd Payment for Website		200
Greenwoods – Payroll	£10 + VAT £2	12
Mrs P Clapham – Internal Audit Fee		50
Clerks Salary		593.40
PAYE		148.20
New Printer	£42.48 + VAT £8.50	50.98
Clerks Expenses Home/Office - £9.60 Consumables	£70.90 + VAT £9.19	<u>89.69</u>
		<u>1,576.27</u>
 Income		 £
DCC Investing in Devon Grant for Defibrillators		500
TDC Communities Together Fund		264
Lloyds Bank compensation – for non-payment of cheque		160
Village Hall Trust Committee – part repayment of part of grant		725
TDC Councillors		<u>140</u>
		<u>1,789</u>

Proposed: Cllr Sharpe, Seconded: Cllr Moor. Approved.

26) Village Hall: Cllr Robson gave details of the following activities and events:-

- a) A blocked drain had been cleared b) There were now Pilates classes on Mondays
- c) Afternoon Teas would be held on 23rd March, 27th April and 25th May from 3 to 5 pm.
- d) Films would be shown in the third week of each month
- e) A pudding Club event on 18th May f) Produce Show on 10th August
- g) Dunchideock Fete on 1st June. All details would be on the website and in Country News.

27) PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A member of the public expressed deep concern at the number of hours spent by the Clerk on dealing with the unwarranted demands on his time from a small number of electors. It was felt that parishioners should be able to know the identity of these persons. The Clerk advised that this could not be disclosed but they were less than 1% of the electorate.

A resident from near the Village Hall asked if the hedge on the Hall wall side of the lane could be thinned as it was making the lane narrow. Cllr Robson will deal with this.

28) Dates of Next Meetings:

- a) Annual Council Meeting followed by Ordinary meeting – Tuesday 14th May 2019
- b) Annual Parish Meeting – Tuesday 21st May 2019
- c) Future meetings – 2019 – Provisional dates are the third Tuesday bi-monthly from May

Minutes Approved

Signed: S Sharpe

Name:

Date: 14.5.2019