

# WINKLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING

Councillors are Summoned to a Meeting of Winkleigh Parish Council  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7.30pm

To be held remotely in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020

Members of the public wishing to attend the meeting are asked to identify themselves on screen – Any member of the public wishing to remain anonymous will not be permitted to speak during public participation in accordance with our Standing Orders

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**PLEASE NOTE THIS MEETING WILL BE RECORDED (VISUAL AND AUDIO) TO FACILITATE MINUTE TAKING AND WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** unless the clerk has received notification the is meeting subject to a complaint investigation

## Agenda

**90.20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** to be received and considered for approval (*Chair*)

**91.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS** to be received (*Chair*)

**92.20 PUBLIC PERIOD** (*Chair*)

*Time for this session is limited to 20 minutes (3 minutes per person. Each person may only speak once). In accordance with standing order 2(f) a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given, or the matter placed on the agenda for the next parish council meeting. Only matters raised during public participation that require an answer from the Parish Council will be minuted.*

**93.20 MINUTES** (*Chair*)

To Resolve to approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held remotely on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 as a true and accurate record

**94.20 PLANNING MATTERS**

**94.1. Planning Applications for Council resolution**

**94.1.1. 1/0613/2020/REMM Reserved matters application** for layout, appearance, landscaping and scale for construction of 70 dwellings pursuant to permission 1/0346/2017/OUTM | Former Kingsley Plastics Western Barn Hatherleigh Road Winkleigh EX19 8AP

**95.20 LIFE ON THE VERGE** (*Doc 056/20*)

Cllr Turner proposes that Winkleigh Parish Council resolve that, in principal, members support and are keen to move forward with planting wildflower on the verges of the parish

In response to enquiries made by the Clerk, members to discuss the following

**95.1. DCC Natural Environment Officer response** – Tom Whitlock (Ecologist) (*Doc 057/20*)

*It is great that Winkleigh Parish are looking to manage all of your road verges for wildlife! Currently, DCC are advising that seeding of verges with a wildflower mixes is the last resort when managing your verges, as seed packets can be expensive and sometimes struggle in Devon's soils and climate – we are encouraging communities and local councils to manage their road verges for wildlife in the first instance, to see what species are already present.*

*make a list of which road verges you would like to manage for wildlife and to discuss these with your Neighbourhood Highways Officer to see whether they are suitable. Your NHO should be able to inform you of things such as whether the verge is already managed for road safety etc.*

**95.2. DCC Highways Officer response – Darryl Jagger (Doc 058/20)**

*we would not let all verges be managed in this way as some have visibility splays which have to be cut regularly this is usually at junctions or in front of warning signs. In these cases, the visibility splays have continued to be managed in the normal way and the rest of the verge has been managed as a wild verge.*

*I also think once the parish start to fill out risk assessments they may decide that managing the verges on the 60mph roads in the parish requires to many control measures for them to undertake the work safely, so I suspect this may go from All verges in the parish to verges in a 30mph speed limit and not cut for visibility and are at least 0.5m away from the edge of the carriageway.*

*The parish council really need to read through the website and the documents on it to understand the health and safety steps they need to take, how to assess the existing verges and then the ongoing maintenance of the verges in the future.*

**95.3. Identification of verges to be cut**

*“It is important to note that any verge management plans developed by your parish or community group, need to be agreed with Devon County Council Environment Group prior to any work beginning”*

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/managing-verges-for-wildlife>

**95.4. Training requirement for members/volunteers**

DCC Life on the verge requires that before beginning work on any verge, it is essential that

*Everyone involved understands what hazards they may encounter when working on verges and how to manage them. To this end, work must be carried out by people who can evidence that they have undertaken the DCC highway safety awareness e-learning course. The cost of DCC highway safety awareness e-learning course: Free Chapter 8 is only required if traffic management is required, the e learning course will outline when its needed. When required it would need the people installing the traffic management to be qualified.*

**95.5. Risk Assessment and Insurance requirements (Doc 059/20)**

DCC Life on the verge requires that *before beginning work on any verge, it is essential that A risk assessment form is completed prior to any works being undertaken*

WPC insurance would cover this activity and volunteers/members provided the activity is lawful, all necessary risk assessments have always been carried out and Health & Safety training carried out and observed

**95.6. Plant identification survey**

DCC Life on the verge requires that before beginning work on any verge *a survey is carried out of what is currently growing on the verge and how can the botanical value of the verge be enhanced? It is important to get this survey right so if you don't have any botanical expertise in your community group, or think you may have found a rare species, please visit the Life on the Verge webpage for a list of Devon based botany experts to see if any are local to your area - <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/managing-verges-for-wildlife>*

**Invasive plants.** It is illegal to cause some species such as Japanese knotweed to spread and these therefore need to be identified and may need special management e.g. never strim Japanese knotweed. Other introduced species such as winter flowering heliotrope are beginning to dominate our verges to the detriment of native flora. For useful links see [www.devon.gov.uk/wildlife](http://www.devon.gov.uk/wildlife).

**Protected species.** Species protected under wildlife legislation may be present on your verge (e.g. slow worms, common lizard, nesting birds and dormice) and care should be taken to ensure that these species are not harmed. Further information on these species can be found at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/wildlife-and-geology-planning-guidance>

**95.7. Budget Provision (Doc 060/20)**

The Parish Council have not made any budget provision for this project in the current financial year.

Members to consider

- whether it has the reserves to cover this unbudgeted purchase/project and whether the use of the council reserves would drop below the minimum recommended threshold in accordance with the Councils reserves policy (to ensure the council have sufficient funds to carry on its business to meet incorporated approved expenditure in the event of an income shortfall). Current reserves level £7,171.  
The Council is required, under statute, to maintain adequate financial reserves in order to meet the needs of the organisation. **Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992** requires that billing and precepting authorities in England and Wales have regard to the level of reserves needed to meet estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. The approved budget of the Parish Council for 2020/21 included the level of reserves currently amount to 3 months running costs, as modest

contingencies. The legal guidance on unrestricted reserves is 3-6 months running costs as a maximum to be held as contingency

- If the council doesn't have the reserves to cover the purchase, they would need to consider what other services may need to be withdrawn to cover the cost during the current financial year
- Alternative is for parish council to make budget provision recommendation for 2021/22 financial year

Purchase or scarifier £250-£500 (Doc 061/20)

Hire of Scarifier £63.55 per week (Doc 062/20)

Purchase seeds £100

Purchase H&S equipment £50

Hire private contractor to scarify verges £900-£1200

**95.8. Verge Assessments prior to work being carried out**

DCC Health warning - *Not all commercial wildflower mixes contain purely native species. They are not therefore all suitable for use on our verges. Please do NOT sow a wildflower mix on your road verge without first agreeing this with DCC. Locally sourced seed should always be the first option. Also note that whilst sowing annual seed mixed provides instant colour in urban areas the seed needs to be re-sown annually and this is therefore very time intensive. For ecological and time reasons commercial annual mixes are not suitable for rural verges*

**95.9. Maintenance and responsibility** (Doc 056/20) & (Doc 063/20)

*There are several methods used to manage verges around the Biosphere area, some provide better results for wildflowers and biodiversity than others. Sadly, some are detrimental to biodiversity and are even responsible for the disappearance of the wildflowers.* Seed sowing is most successful when carried out in the autumn (September – October) Or in early spring, March

Members to determine responsibility and maintenance programme

**95.10. Grass cutting contract going forward** (Doc 064/20)

Grass verges are currently cut by a private contractor for the parish council at £800 per year. This is due for renewal/tender following October pcm. Members to determine if there will still be a requirement for a grass contractor if they approve 'Life on the Verge' for the parish

**96.20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

28<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 7.30pm via zoom

*Alice Turner*

ALICE TURNER

Winkleigh Parish Council Chair

1st October 2020