

# WINKLEIGH PARISH MEETING

Under The LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

## The Annual Parish Meeting for Winkleigh

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

**TUESDAY 4th May 2021 at 6.45pm.**

The annual Parish meeting is open to the public and is authorised to discuss all Parish affairs.

**Chaired by Cllr Alice Turner**

Minute taker - Melanie Bickell

13 persons also present

**The business transacted at the Meeting was as follows: -**

**1. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019**

Approved with no objections

**2. Matters arising from foresaid minutes**

None

**3. Reports**

• **Winkleigh Parish Council Chairpersons Annual Report – Alice Turner**

Time seems to have flown by since I was first elected as Chair to the Council back in January 2017, now a little over 4 years later it is time for me to write and present my last Chair's Annual report, I have every intention of keeping it as short as possible but if anyone has any questions about the workings of the council either in general or specific, please do contact our Clerk Mrs Melanie Bickell on 01837 89095 or by email: [winkleighpc1@btconnect.com](mailto:winkleighpc1@btconnect.com) Office hours are; Mon & Thurs 10-3 & Wed flexible.

**Finance:** During the 2020-21 financial year the Council have approved the following grants which will be paid to the recipients once we are in receipt of the 1st instalment of the Precept:

£318 to the Parochial Church Council towards the Cost of maintenance of the Clock.

£500 to Okehampton District Community transport group (O.D.C.T.G) towards the continuation of their current services including the Ring and Ride bus service, voluntary car service and wheelchair accessible transport.

£2000 to the Village Hall committee towards the cost of their ongoing refurbishment project.

£300 to the North Devon Records Office towards their running costs, the ND Records office houses many of the Parish Council records which can be viewed but contacting the records office <https://swheritage.org.uk/devon/archives/visit/north-devon-records-office/>

£75 to the Royal British Legion for wreaths to commemorate Remembrance Day.

The Parish Council are within budget for 2020/21. The overspend on running costs is due to higher than predicted street cleaning costs and a rise in electricity costs during the year, which is offset by underspend on other budget heads.

General reserves is £7171.96 held in the reserves account, and a working balance of £3897.58 in the current account (which includes the £1735.15 business rates refund), to pay for April 2021 bills/subscriptions prior to receipt of the precept which normally is received end of April.

**Winkleigh's Neighbourhood Plan:** The group have been working hard behind the scenes to get the final version of the Neighbourhood plan ready and submitted to Torridge District Council. Following some minor adjustments TDC agreed that the plan was ready for referendum, unfortunately this had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, a date has been set and the Parish will have the chance to vote for or against the adoption of the Winkleigh Neighbourhood Plan as a statutory planning document on Thursday 17th June 2021, so keep an eye out for your polling cards which will give you all the information you need in order to be able to cast your vote, if at least 51% of those who vote say 'yes' Winkleigh will be able to formally adopt the plan. The Final Neighbourhood Plan Document can be viewed

either by visiting: [http://www.winkleighpc.org.uk/Neighbourhood\\_Plan\\_31569.aspx](http://www.winkleighpc.org.uk/Neighbourhood_Plan_31569.aspx) or <http://site9505718.92.gfivedesign.co.uk/>

Thanks to all those who are or have been part of the Neighbourhood Plan Group for their work on behalf of the Parish.

**Covid-19 Support:** During the pandemic the Council has been lucky enough to secure a significant amount of grant funding and donations from various sources to enable the Council to set up its Covid-19 Support Group, which has been an enormous help to many in the Parish since March 2020 with tasks such as grocery shopping and prescription collections being carried out by a group of volunteers, to which we are extremely thankful.

This service has been Co-ordinated by Cllr Angela Findley with support from the Clerk, Melanie Bickell, and I would personally like to thank them both for all their hard work and time in making this service such a success.

**The Council's "Email Me" list:** For those of you who were not aware the council has an "email me" list which the clerk sends out information that might be of use or interest to parishioners i.e. Council minutes, agendas, road works notices etc. for more information or to sign up to this list please email [winkleighpc1@btconnect.com](mailto:winkleighpc1@btconnect.com).

Finally: I would like to extend my thanks to County Cllr Andrew Saywell for championing the repairs to the roads around Winkleigh and Hollocombe, amongst other projects. Also, to District Cllr Simon Newton for providing the Parish Council with an invaluable link with TDC especially on Planning matters. Thank you to all the parishioners who have attend our Zoom meetings, these meetings have on occasion been a technical challenge for some Parishioners and Councillors alike so I would like to thank all of those who have managed to join our meetings and we look forward to resuming our face-to face meetings in a Covid safe way as soon as possible. I would like to conclude with my personal thanks to all Cllrs who have served during this past year and our Clerk, Melanie Bickell for the time and effort that has been put into council business thereby helping to keep the Parish Council functioning during the challenges of the last year.

- **County Councillor – Andrew Saywell**

It has been an extraordinary year for all of us here in Winkleigh and Torrington Rural. Like everyone else, the pandemic has had a huge impact on the work of Devon County Council.

But I would like to begin by saying **thank you**. Thank you to you, the people of Winkleigh, for looking after those in need over the last year, particularly our more elderly residents and clinically vulnerable residents who have had to spend most of the last 14 months shielding.

**Thank you also for keeping our Covid infection rates, both locally and across Devon, low.** Throughout this crisis Torridge District and Devon County as a whole have had some of the lowest Covid infection rates in the entire country. I don't believe this is just down to good luck and geography, throughout the pandemic there has been good adherence to the public health guidelines – people have observed social distancing, worn face coverings in enclosed spaces, and have kept washing their hands. All of this I believe has helped in ensuring our area has had one of the lowest infection rates in the entire UK and puts us in a good position now to come out of the pandemic with hopefully the worst behind us.

Like the Parish Council, Devon County Council switched to 'Remote Working' as the lockdown was introduced. Virtual meetings have become the norm. Instead of spending hours of the day travelling down to County Hall and back in the evening to Parish Councils, I've been able to do it all from home over Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams!

Devon County Council, as the Public Health Authority, has taken a leading role in helping to combat the pandemic. Very early on, 'Team Devon' was formed which brought together all of the District Council leaders, DCC's leaders, representatives from Town and Parish Councils, Police, Fire, the NHS and other agencies. It has meant there has been joint working and co-operation, with faster results and avoiding bureaucratic delays or obstructions.

Over 35,000 shielding or medically vulnerable people in Devon have been supported by DCC during the pandemic. Over £600,000 was allocated to a Hardship Fund to support people who had been made redundant but were not yet in receipt of benefit support. The County Council has helped with the delivery of food parcels to children on free school meals.

Devon County Council has also been working hard to support the Devon Economy and I was delighted that we were able to secure funding from DCC towards getting a new 'Work Hub' here in Winkleigh to provide office space and support for home workers and micro businesses.

Locally, during this time, I have endeavoured to keep my Parishes as up to date as possible with the latest developments. Anyone who cares to read the Parish Council minutes will see that I have always provided the latest information regarding Covid-19 in and around our area.

As we come out of lockdown Devon County Council is running community testing sites. These are designed mainly for key workers and to pick up asymptomatic carriers of the virus. There are mobile testing sites available in the major towns, including Torrington and Okehampton. I hope in time we can also have a mobile testing facility in the Winkleigh area. However, home testing kits are also becoming more and more available.

Of course, while Covid-19 has dominated my work, and that of the Council, the everyday issues continue. Highways is always a topical conversation and following a bad winter we have had a lot of potholes in the area. However, the very bad potholes at Winkleigh Airfield have now been repaired, and I am hopeful going forward that both the Airfield, plus Eggesford Road, can get resurfaced. Several roads in and around Hollocombe are also in a bad condition, we have repaired some over the last 4 years but there is still more to do. They will remain on my radar and to do list!

BUT, on the positive side, we have had patching on Torrington Road, Coopers Hill and Townsend Hill. There has been resurfacing and drainage works on the A3124.

Going however, back to Covid-19. Looking forward we are in a good position. The current situation in Devon is as follows:

- Infection numbers are now broadly static over the past couple of weeks, seeing 10-15 new cases a day on average, but given low numbers we are seeing marginal rises/falls but can play out as large percentage swings.
- Seeing cases predominately in young people and working age adults (picked up through asymptomatic testing) so it is important we all still adhere to the public health measures and restrictions (Hands, Face, Space, Fresh air) both within work and outside work.
- Phase 2 over the vaccine programme (under 50's) has commenced. Please wait to be contacted and then you can book 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> jab.
- DCC are still encouraging people to get a rapid Lateral Flow test twice a week, even if you have been vaccinated as you can still catch COVID and be infectious. Please visit [Devon.cc/testing](https://www.devon.gov.uk/covid-19/testing) to find out how you can get tested.

The vaccination programme has been a success in Devon, with over 680,000 people having received their first dose, and 270,000 second doses being given. The uptake of those aged 55 and above has been **95%**. So, looking forward, I am hopeful that we can come out of this pandemic and return, at the very least, to a sense of normality.

This is my last meeting with Winkleigh before the County Council elections on Thursday May 6<sup>th</sup>. This is not an appropriate forum to discuss the issues of the election, but should I not be returned this week, I would like to put on record my thanks to the people of Winkleigh for their support and kindnesses over the last four years. It has been a real privilege to represent Winkleigh on Devon County Council and, whatever happens to me, I can look forward with confidence in knowing that Winkleigh has a great future ahead of it.

- **District Councillor – Simon Newton**

The covid situation in terms of the parish council and specific councillors within the council who have carried that responsibility have given valuable service to their community. There are a number of people who have been in need of and have received a lot of support within the last year, which would not have happened if the council had not organised it and I thank you on their behalf

Cllr Findlay has been involved in referring case work for individual people below the radar and diverting resources in the community with other people being brought in to assist with what is going on in the village so well done

I Urge and encourage the parish council to build on being a local centre within the Local plan and the Neighbourhood Plan continues to be held up as an example of best practice

As a local centre identified for growth, the parish have 3 major developments around the village which already have outline permission, and I urge people to use the Neighbourhood Plan to make sure these developments are integrated with the village, fit for purpose and fit for the future of the village

I encourage the council to continue to find ways to reach out to businesses outside of your immediate development boundary and to continue to look for a way to engage businesses further with greater connection and involvement with the community you serve and represent

I urge the council to strive to get more people to take an interest in what the parish council are doing on their behalf.

Thank you for your support, it has been a privilege to serve the community over the last year and look forward to continuing do so over the next year and I am open to people coming to me to see how we can do things better

#### **4. Questions and Public Period**

To receive questions from the public concerning matters over which the Parish Council has control or some influence

- The council were asked to seek clarification from DCC why the street cleaner is not permitted to clean along the 30mph area of Eggesford Road

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