

# **WINKLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL:**

## **DRAFT: Minutes of the Parish Council ordinary meeting held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm in Winkleigh Community Centre**

**Cllrs Present:** Cllrs; Phillips (Chair), Jacobs, Findlay, Hodgson, and Maddocks. District Cllr Newton, and 3 members of the public were also in attendance.

*The Chair informed the room that an audio recording was in progress to aid with the minutes and would be deleted once draft minutes were issued.*

### **A) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

- A member of the public mentioned that the previous Council had looked at ways of reducing the speed of traffic on Townsend Hill and recommended that the present Council look at continuing this, further suggesting that the Parish would likely support a 20mph down Townsend Hill, but would not wish to see that being the only measure implemented considering the new development going on, Encouraged the Council to look at the community plan suggestions on traffic calming infrastructure and promote its use by the developers on that estate.

### **B) County Councillor Saywell**

*See Appendix A*

### **C) District Councillor Newton**

Cllr Newton informed those present that TDC had been looking at various regional trends, and provided data on this as follows: wages in the district in the last year have increased by 10.4% but remain 21% below national average; recycling within the district is at 56%, which is an increase of 4% from last year (the site for the new environmental centre has been identified and will take 2 years to complete in Bideford); planning applications continue to be at a 90% increase from last year. Cllr Newton also mentioned that TDC have launched a new interactive website and would welcome feedback on its use - especially useful for anyone with regular, normal inquiries.

#### **1.3.22: Welcome: (Chair)**

The Chair formally opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

#### **2.3.22: Apologies for Absence to be received and considered for approval (Chair)**

Apologies received from Cllrs; Goldsworthy, Naylor, Whitehead, Turner, and Bayley.

#### **3.3.22: Declaration of Interests (Chair)**

None to declare at this time.

**4.3.22: Minutes of Previous meetings (Chair) [Draft minutes can be found on the website]**

Cllr Hodgson proposed all the concerned minutes be accepted as a true and proper account of the events and statements recorded, seconded by Cllr Jacobs. All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR218/21*

**5.3.22: Appointment of Internal Auditor**

Cllr Jacobs proposed the Council seek to appoint Alison Marshall as the Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year of 2021/22, seconded Cllr Findlay. All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR219/21*. Cllr Findlay noted that it would be prudent to appoint a different auditor every other year.

**6.3.22: Role of the Clerk (important relevant documents sent to Cllrs)**

The Locum Clerk suggested that all Councillors, both old and new, reacquaint themselves with the documents pertaining to the proper officer's duties, and re-establish them. He further suggested that Councillors be aware that it is through them that parishioners should be approaching the Council about matters pertaining to the Parish governance – not through him. Councillors present displayed their support for these comments, as did Cllr Newton.

**7.3.22: Planning**

Cllr Findlay proposed that the Clerk contact the Planning Officer and convey that WPC had no objections to either of the concerned planning applications, but wished the comments of the Planning Working Group to be taken on board, seconded Cllr Phillips. 4 in favour, 1 abstention. *RESOLVED RR220/21 (see Appendix B)*

**8.3.22: Request from DCC**

It was conveyed to the Council that Cllr Saywell had requested WPC consider whether they would support a 20mph statutory speed limit being implemented along Townsend Hill. All Councillors present conveyed their support. Cllr Hodgson proposed that the Council fully support this measure, seconded Cllr Jacobs, All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR221/21*.

**9.3.22: Jubilee financing**

Cllr Hodgson proposed the Council accept the proposed amount, seconded Cllr Maddocks. All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR222/21*. The member of the Jubilee Committee present conveyed the thanks of the whole committee.

**10.3.22: Financial schedule (Clerk)**

Cllr Jacobs proposed that the financial payments found within the financial schedule as presented by the Clerk be approved, seconded Cllr Phillips. All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR223/21*.

**11.3.22: Cllrs Verbal reports not requiring discussion or resolution and future agenda items**

Cllr Maddocks noted that the Youth Parish Council proposition had been posted on Facebook, and that she would be printing some flyers to hand out. Cllr Findlay inquired whether her report on repairs to our assets got lost, and would be sending information to the Clerk to follow up on this.

**12.3.22: Confidential matters (PART II) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2)**

**a) Resolution required to move the Council into Part II.**

Cllr Phillips proposed the Council move into Part II, seconded Cllr Jacobs. All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR224/21*

**b) Cllrs to discuss Confidential Staffing Matters, including delegated authority to council employment committee. (Chair) contains sensitive information under employment law.**

**c) Cllrs to discuss contracts for Cemetery Maintenance, Bungalow Maintenance, and Clerk Role.**

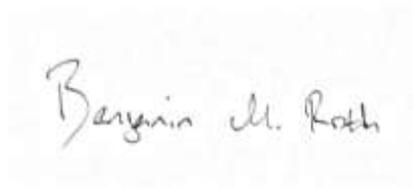
**d) Chair to return the meeting to public session to hear resolutions**

The Chair returned the meeting to public session to hear the resolutions.

Cllr Jacobs proposed that the Council accept the proposed contract by Kelvin Hanagan to maintain the cemetery, seconded Cllr Maddocks. All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR225/21.*

Cllr Phillips proposed the Locum Clerk be authorised to submit a contract for the role of permanent Clerk, All in Favour. *RESOLVED RR226/21.*

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 21:12

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin M. Roth". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Date Published: 14/04/22

*Appendix A:*

**“DCC Report for Winkleigh Parish Council, March 2022**

A shorter report this month as most of the major Budget updates I gave last month but the main issues at DCC:

**Help for Ukraine**

Still lots of work going on behind the scenes but ‘Team Devon’, including DCC, the District Councils and Devon Association of Local Councils have pledged to work together to support Ukrainian refugees seeking sanctuary in the UK, in particular those with relatives in Devon.

Individually, councils have also taken steps to cut Russian links, such as through contracts for energy provision. And any few remaining investments within the Devon Pension Fund, linked to Russian assets, are being sold off quickly.

Ukrainian and Polish Authorities have also asked for financial/charitable contributions rather than donations of equipment etc as they have already been inundated with offers of help.

**Covid Update**

Covid is still here and please be cautious still as we need to try and keep rates as low as possible to reduce outbreaks and pressures in health and care settings and our schools.

We are seeing a rise in cases in all Districts with our overall rate above the national average (1,218 per 100,000 / England 803). Our testing rates in Devon are higher than the national average and if our testing rates were similar our rates would be similar as positivity rates are broadly the same (if you test you find).

Torrige rate is 1177 per 100,000 with cases in all age group.

Hospitalisation rates are increasing latest rates is 405 in Devon ICS of which 5 in HDU. Figures for North Devon is 85 (1 in HDU). **But, need to reiterate that over half of these patients are not in hospital due to covid, they tested positive in hospital having been admitted for other reasons.**

**A386 landslide**

Works are progressing well; early uncertainties over “lead times” for material supply have been resolved without causing delay, which is positive.

Based on current progress on site and thanks to the requested increased resources and weekend working, the specialist contractor’s latest programme of works indicates that we should be able to take the lane closure off in the early part of the week commencing 04/04/22.

**Highways Issues in Winkleigh**

- Expression of interest 20mph, Townsend Hill. I know this is on your agenda tonight. I am seeking to see whether you would in principle support expressing an interest in a 20 mph limit along Townsend Hill and in/around the Primary School. Can’t 100% guarantee at this very early stage it’ll go ahead, but I would like to put this site forward to the County Council to consider.

Hope to see you all next month but as ever, any issues please let me know.

Best regards,  
Andrew

*Appendix B:*

**Comment on Planning Application 1/0082/HEDGE Bullow Brook Winkleigh  
PROCESS**

The Application Form pdf posted on the Planning Portal is blank and holds no information.  
Only the photographic maps are accessible to the public.

COMMENTS

The Google aerial maps show that this grown-out hedgerow is one of mature deciduous trees (probably oaks which take 40 years to reach maturity and can live for 300-600 years). The hedgerows in the immediate vicinity are cut short. So the loss of this part of the hedge would necessitate removal of the few existing mature trees on the site.

It is always of concern to see permission sought for removal of hedgerow with mature trees.

Hedgerows and mature trees are significant and vital parts of the rural agricultural Devon landscape and any removal, however small, will have an impact on the character and appearance of the area. They also provide food, shelter and corridors for wildlife.

We do recognise that sometimes a landowner may need to consider such a step in order to maintain their agricultural business. However as there is no explanation in the document posted on the Planning Portal (it is blank), there are no reasons stated. There is already one access (A) on the road B3220 nearby or a potentially safer access (B) so it is unclear why the hedge and trees should be removed.

In addition, in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031) the protection and regeneration of biodiversity and natural assets is strongly supported through policy. For example, policy states:

**“Policy DM08: Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

13.61 All development will be expected to provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. Where biodiversity assets cannot be retained or enhanced on site, the Councils will support ‘biodiversity offsetting’ to deliver a net gain in biodiversity off-site in accordance with adopted protocols.”

In addition, **Policy ENV1 Natural Capital from The Winkleigh Neighbourhood Plan** is relevant here. Hedgerows are a distinctive part of our landscape and vital corridors for wildlife, and, if removed, restitution and replanting is key to delivering responsible stewardship of our landscape with the goal of an environmental net gain in bio-diversity, a key target in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We would therefore suggest that once the full application, including the application form, has been correctly submitted, if the Hedgerow Removal is considered valid, then conditions should be established on how the biodiversity loss will be offset. This could take the form of native tree-planting on the same site. However, the loss to the environment of mature trees will be long-lasting due to the slow growth to maturity of species such as oaks. Finally, if eventually approved, any removal of the hedge should only occur before the Spring (nesting season) or deferred until Autumn.