

Frithelstock Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd July 2013 at 8:00pm in Frithelstock Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr M Poole (Chairman), Mr R Hunkin (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Stokes, Mr G Ball, Mr M Baker and Mr A Heard

Clerk: Mr P Blossie

Also in attendance: PCSO Melissa Baker, Adrian Green, Richard Joseph, Gwen Barrow, Margaret Hutchings and Susan Bowman

1. Welcome: The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Bluecoats: Beth Simons of Bluecoats Children's Centre was unable to attend due to ill health and will be asked to give a presentation to the next meeting.
3. Apologies had been received from Councillor H Pettifer and Terry Warrington
4. Clerk's Position: The Chairman introduced Patrick Blossie, who had taken over from Angela Snell as Parish Clerk following interviews that had been held on 24th June. Mr Blossie is a local resident, running, with his partner, The Cottage Cattery at Catsborough Cross. He is a book-dealer, a wedding registrar and is also Parish Clerk to Buckland Brewer Parish Council. He is a member of the Society of Council Clerks and a Chartered Accountant with a long history of working in local government. Members had also interviewed a second candidate, Philip Hackett, who also interviewed well and had demonstrated good research into Frithelstock parish. Although both were strong candidates, the local applicant, Mr Blossie, had been the unanimous choice of the councillors undertaking the interviews and his appointment was supported unanimously by the councillors present at the parish council meeting.
5. Crime Report: PCSO Melissa Baker reported another quiet period with only 9 call-outs, including 3 crimes, one of which was a burglary at a garage in Langtree with the loss of some expensive equipment. Although incidents of crime are few and far between, she recommended taking suitable precautions to secure property and take any measures that make theft more difficult for would-be perpetrators. There had been some changes in senior staff with Sergeant Penny Channing now being shared with Holsworthy. Officer numbers remained the same with 3 PCSOs, 1 Neighbourhood Manager and 1 Response Officer. There might be a possibility of appointing a 'hybrid' officer at a later date. Melissa had been concerned about response times and hoped that these would improve in future.
6. Public Participation: None
7. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 7th May were approved and signed. (Proposed by M Stokes and seconded by M Poole)
8. Matters Arising:
 - 8.1 Pavement Petition: Nothing further to report. Members agreed to remove from future agendas.
 - 8.2 Telephone Box: Greg Ball reported that it had been decided to adopt the telephone box, which had been acquired for £1.00. Its condition had been one of the few negative points raised in the Best Kept Village Competition. The Parish Council will be responsible for its future maintenance but, as it had been used only 8 times in the past year, it was likely that BT would have removed the box. The Rowing Club was raising money for a

defibrillator which, it was suggested, could be fitted into the telephone box. It is a suitable size, dry and already equipped with a power supply. The alternative of siting it in the village hall would be less convenient in an emergency. Mr Poole wished to record his thanks to Phil Pennington for his help in getting planning approval granted by Torrridge DC so quickly. The scheme was approved in principle.

8.3 Speeding: Richard Joseph reported that he had written to Tony Hogg seeking support for signage and had received a reply from John Hart, Leader of Devon County Council, with an offer of a flashing sign but no indication of the cost was given. Speed checks were continuing and Richard highlighted one motorbike that had been clocked at 83 mph outside the 30 mph limit and 61 mph inside it. Mr Poole suggested contacting the Devon County Councillor, Gaston Dezart, to request a grant from his Locality Budget. **It was unanimously agreed that the clerk would write to Councillor Dezart.**

8.4 Best Kept Village Competition: Richard Joseph had been painting the stones and had a few still to do.

8.5 War Memorial Grant: It was proposed by Mr Baker and seconded by Mr Stokes that steps should be cut in to the approach to the war memorial and this was agreed by the Council. Mr Stokes had submitted a pre-application to The War Memorial Fund and had been told that the scheme should be eligible for a 'small schemes' grant provided that the Parish Council match funded it. The grant application had asked for a history of the memorial but this information was not available. Granite blocks suitable for the job were already available and Mr Stokes provided draft plans which were approved in principle, subject to any modifications that might be suggested during discussions with contractors. Two quotations will be sought which will be arranged by Mr Poole and Mr Hunkin. **It was unanimously agreed that the Council would match fund the project.**

9. Highways Issues: (i) There was no further update on Hele lane. (ii) Mr Poole informed the meeting about a road closure between Catsborough Cross and The Glen on 29th July 2013. (iii) Mr Poole raised the issue about cars parked at the bottom of Rakeham Hill and the danger to traffic. It was proposed by Mike Stokes, seconded by Greg Ball and unanimously **agreed that the clerk would write to DCC Highways asking for warning signs to be provided.**

10. Correspondence:

10.1 A letter had been received from Jenny Wallace, Head of Paid Service for Torrridge DC, apologising for another error in the revised Council Tax bills that had been issued last month. The error related only to the percentages of parish precept quoted on the bills. The amounts were correct and therefore Jenny Wallace, on legal advice, will not be issuing another replacement. The error should have been detected and resolved by Capita, the company responsible for issuing the bills, and she was taking up the matter with them.

10.2 The next meeting of the Torrington Area Advisory Group will be held on 16th July at 7:00pm in the Methodist Church, Torrington.

10.3 The latest copy of Parish and Community News was made available for inspection.

10.4 A letter had been received detailing the route of a road rally taking place on Sunday 22nd September 2013. The route will go from Langtree into Frithelstock parish, turning left at Southcott, past Bibbear Farm and will then approach the A388 turning left and, after 200 yards will turn right down past Cholash-Ashbury, left onto Caste Water, and then will proceed on towards Thornhill Head.

- 10.5 The Devon Rural Housing Partnership had asked for feedback about the Parish Council's position regarding affordable housing. **It was agreed that the clerk would respond setting out the Council's views as per its recent response to the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan consultation.** (i.e. opposed to any further development other than infill applications from local residents.)
11. Finance:
- 11.1 The following expenses were approved:
- Clerk: Salary - £300.00; Office expenses - £14.00
 - M Poole: Reimbursement re. phone box repairs, G Chanter - £145.00
- 11.2 A new bank mandate has been obtained and will be completed to include all Parish Councillors as signatories and to record Mr Patrick Blossie as the Responsible Officer.
- 11.3 Issues raised by the Internal Audit report were discussed and it was agreed that:
- **An annual Receipts and Payments Account would be made available for public inspection. An example was provided by the internal auditor. (Proposed by Roger Hunkin and seconded by Mike Baker)**
 - **All items of expenditure would be minuted, including regular direct debit payments, which would also be reviewed annually as part of the budget review process.**
 - **Following the recent purchase of the salt gritter, bus shelter and telephone box, a fixed asset register will be created**
 - **Insurance cover will be increased to provide cover for up to 200 people attending public events.**
- 11.4 Consideration was given to joining the Torridge payroll database but, as Mr Blossie was already familiar with the HMRC 'real time initiative' and the previous clerk had already established Frithelstock Parish Council as an employer, **it was agreed that the clerk would deal with PAYE issues directly with HMRC.**
- 11.5 Members noted that a VAT reclaim for £823.03 had been received.
12. Planning: There were no applications to be considered.
13. Chairman's Report: Mr Poole reported that there had been no reply to the Torridge District Local Plan survey, which he found disappointing.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm