

Frithestock Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd March 2015 at 7:30 pm in Frithestock Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr M Poole (Chairman), Mr M Baker, Mr G Ball, Mr Andrew Heard, Mr Roger Hunkin, Mr H Pettifer and Mr M Stokes.

Clerk: Mr P Blossie

Also in attendance: Cllr. Phil Pennington (TDC), PCSO Melissa Baker and 8 members of the public: Gwen Barrow, Dave Debnam, Adrian Green, Audrey Hunkin, Richard Joseph, Mary Pearce, Arthur Poole and Terry Warrington.

KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type Decisions are shown in bold red type

152 Welcome: The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting

153 Apologies: Heathcliff Pettifer had sent apologies that he would be late due to another commitment and joined that meeting at about 8:30pm.

154 Review of Standing Orders in Relation to Public Participation: Following the heated discussion at the last meeting, the Chairman explained that the Parish Council needed to amend its rules relating public participation to clarify what could be discussed and how parishioners should conduct themselves. He explained the key points of a proposed policy, based on Torridge District's policy, which would limit the public participation session to 15 minutes and each speaker to a 3 minute presentation. A register would be kept to record who would like speak and on what topic. By signing the register, speakers would be accepting to abide by a code of conduct. It was proposed by Greg Ball, seconded by Andrew Heard and **agreed unanimously to adopt the policy immediately. Item 2 in the Parish Council's Standing Orders will be replaced with the wording "The Public Participation at Parish Council Meetings Policy and Code of Conduct shown at Appendix 1 was adopted at the meeting of Tuesday 3rd March 2015."** Copies of the new policy and code of conduct were made available to parishioners attending the meeting and are attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

155 Minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2015: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2015 were approved and signed. Mike Stokes pointed out that these minutes had not been posted to the website despite having seen an email from the Clerk asking the website manager to add them. The matter was deferred for discussion under item 158.

156 Matters Arising:

- a. Parking in Hele Lane: The Chairman reported that there was still a problem with large vehicles parking in Hele Lane and blocking access for tractors and emergency vehicles. PCSO Melissa Baker asked to be told about any future events and said that she would ask the offenders to move their vehicles. Adrian Green said that some progress was being made with allowing a small number of vehicles to be parked in the village hall car park. This would be discussed at the next Village Hall Management meeting and **he will report back to the next Parish Council meeting.**
- b. Potholes and drainage issues: **To consider a Parish Plan of drainage issues compiled by Cllr. Heathcliff Pettifer:** This item was taken at the end of the meeting after

Heathcliff Pettifer had arrived. Although he had identified some of the drainage problems in the parish, he felt that it was not necessary to draw up a parish plan because any issues could be added to the DCC Highways interactive map on the their 'Report A Problem' website.

157 Public Participation: The Chair reminded parishioners that this session was now limited to 15 minutes with a maximum of 3 minutes per speaker. PCSO Melissa Baker gave a crime report. Only 1 crime had been reported in the past 3 months. This was a drink/driving offence which she noted had been reported as happening in Taddipport – possibly on the border between the two parishes. There had been 10 logs for Frithelstock: 2 highways disruptions, 3 nuisance/anti-social behaviour complaints, 3 road traffic collisions, 1 complaint to the police and 1 report about a tractor. She felt that this represented a very low level of crime/police activity in the area. The Torrington Area had been quiet over the Christmas period. Melissa reported some staff changes, with Sally Middleton returning as Acting Sargent until August 2015. Staff numbers should be back up to 5 police officers and 3 PCSOs by that time. She also said that there had been a few shed break-ins and fuel thefts in North Devon, including one from a car. Some suspicious activity had been reported with travellers selling from the back of a van. Police were aware and recommended vigilance. They did not think that any of the goods being sold were stolen but suggested that if any parishioners were concerned they should obtain vehicle registrations if possible and report them by calling 999 or 101.

Adrian Green pointed out that there is no formal mechanism for adding an item to the agenda for Annual Parish Meetings. **The Clerk will clarify this before the next meeting on 21st April 2015.** There was a brief discussion about the advisability of holding joint annual parish meetings/village hall etc. AGMs and whether the meeting also included official Parish Council business. The Chair stated that the meeting had never included Parish Council business. This called into question the Councils 'agreement' to fund the purchase of a marquee, which had been suggested at the last Annual Parish Meeting. It was noted that this year's grant would be used to fund the marquee and that the **Adrian Green would submit an invoice made out to the Parish Council by 31st March 2015.** The Clerk pointed out that the setting of a budget approving an annual grant of £750 to the Village Hall meant that it was not necessary to formally resolve what the grant would be used for (provided it met the legal restrictions on the Parish Council and the Charity). Adrian was also concerned about the conflict of interest of those members who are both parish councillors and Village Hall Trustees but the Clerk pointed out that a dispensation had been approved at the start of this Council's term to permit all members to take part in any debates and voting concerning the village hall because it could otherwise leave the remaining members inquorate.

158 To consider a paper by Richard Joseph

159 disputing previous Parish Council minutes and other matters: The Chairman invited Richard Joseph to present his paper. Richard said that he was not disputing all of the previous minutes. When asked why the January 2015 minutes were not on the website he said that he had not put them on as he considered they were incomplete because they did not include the paper that he gave to the Council at the last meeting. The Clerk said that it was not usual policy to post any papers on the website before they had been discussed by the Council. It had been distributed to members with the draft minutes before this meeting as per the Chair's intention and attached as an appendix to the approved minutes. This had been explained to Richard a number of times. Mike Stokes said that he was very concerned that the web manager should

take it on himself to censor the content of the website. He said that, although the minutes are approved by the Council, they are carefully compiled by the Clerk to ensure that they do not include potentially defamatory remarks. The Chairman asked Richard to present his paper and told him that the Council would respond to each of his points in turn. Richard said that he wanted the Clerk to read out the paper. The Chair said that was not necessary as the members had read it. He asked Richard to present his case himself and explain why he had said what he had. Richard Joseph refused to do that. Mackie felt that, given that Richard was not willing to put forward his case, it should not be necessary for the Parish Council to make any response. He asked the advice of Cllr. Phil Pennington if he felt this was admissible. Cllr. Pennington said that the Council had clearly gone to some trouble to give Mr Joseph an opportunity to put his case but that the matter was now at the discretion of the Chairman. The Chairman thanked Cllr Pennington for his advice and brought the item to a close.

160 Report by Councillor Phil Pennington: Torridge District Council: Cllr. Pennington updated the meeting about the North Devon/Torridge Draft Plan that was soon to be submitted for approval. He was concerned that it did not include enough infrastructure to support the amount of proposed housing development. The latest draft contained a number of minor amendments. The Clerk had been told by a member of the Planning Strategy Team that these would be submitted to a final public consultation period prior to the May elections. The latest draft includes a brief reference to Frithelstock. Cllr. Pennington also explained that Torridge had announced a zero increase in Council Tax. The other major precepting authorities had settled on a 1.99% increase, the maximum allowed without the need for a referendum.

161 Report by Councillor Gaston Dezart, Devon County Council: Cllr. Dezart was not present.

162 Clerk's Report: (a) The clerk had distributed by email 26 items of correspondence since the previous meeting:

1. DCC Flood Risk Management - Flood Investigation Reports for September and October flood events now available online
2. Devon Countryside Access Forum – invitation to join the panel (Deadline 20/2/15)
3. Road closure Frithelstock 16th January
4. DALC E-bulletin January 2015
5. Temporary Traffic Order - Various Streets, Devon (TTRO1509495)
6. A388 Monkleigh Corner Closure
7. Up and Coming Events from Devon Communities Together
8. Torrington Area Advisory Group Meeting, Agenda, 27th January 2015 (see item 167)
9. DALC Update - legal updates and briefings, including a copy of the Transparency Code (see item 161 b.)
10. TDC: SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO DELIVERY OF NOMINATION PAPERS (see item 161 c.)
11. NEW CCG: Urgent & Necessary measures update
12. DCC: Public Transport Review (Members had been asked to respond individually)
13. DCC: Community News Roundup - January 2015
14. Citizens Advice Bureau Newsletter, January 2015 (see item 162)
15. New planning rules to protect community pubs
16. TDC: Legal Briefing - February 2015
17. DALC E-bulletin February 2015
18. DALC: Local Government Finance Settlement
19. DCC Scrutiny survey
20. Rural Services Network: RURAL TRANSPORT - FEBRUARY 2015

21. Rural Services Network, Newsletter, 16th February 2015
 22. Rural Services Network: RURAL BROADBAND - FEBRUARY 2015
 23. Rural Services Network: Newsletter 23rd February 2015
 24. DCC: Community News Roundup, February 2015
 25. Rural Services Network: SPOTLIGHT ON OLDER PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS
 26. Rural Services Network: Newsletter 2nd March 2015
- b) The Transparency Code: The Clerk explained that a change in the law will now permit small parish councils, (those with a turnover of less than £25,000 per year), to avoid the need for an external audit provided that agendas and minutes, lists of financial transaction of more than £100, annual accounts, the governance statement and details of members' responsibilities were shown on the Council's website within certain specified timescales. The Clerk did not feel that these demands were onerous and recommended that they were met with effect from 1st April 2015. Since it would be easier and more informative to list all transactions and not just those over £100, he recommended that the Council took this approach. The change in the law does not affect the Council's right to have an internal audit carried out and the Clerk recommended that this is continued. **The change in the law was noted and it was proposed by Mike Baker, seconded by Andrew Heard and agreed unanimously to adopt the Transparency Code.**
- c) Preparing for a Parish Council Election: The current Parish Council's term expires in May 2015. The Clerk had distributed an **election timetable which he will now put on the notice boards**. He had also provided some background papers for the website to help prospective candidates to understand the roles and duties of councillors and Parish Councils. These had not yet been uploaded by Richard Joseph as he said that they represented a lot of work. He also said that the Clerk was breaking the law because mention of some political parties had been omitted. **He was advised to give the Clerk more details of what he meant.** An election will only be required if there are more than 7 candidates. The Clerk had been informed that a District Council election will almost certainly be required on 7th May, as well as the General Election, and that, if this were the case, the costs would be split 3 ways. The best estimate of the cost to the Parish Council was in the region of £350.00. (The cost would be about £500 if shared between 2 parties or nil if there was no need for a Parish Election.) There had been two significant changes in the law this year. Candidates (or their proposer or seconder, and no-one else) **MUST** deposit their nomination papers with the Elections Officer at Riverbank House IN PERSON by 4:00pm on 9th April. Any nomination papers submitted by post will be ignored. Secondly, there is no longer a grace period after that deadline to withdraw a nomination before the *Statement of Persons Nominated* is published on the following day. Nomination papers will be available from either the Elections Office at Torridge District Council or the Parish Clerk from Friday 5th March 2015. The law requires the new Parish Council to meet within 14 days of the election. As the next Parish Council meeting is due to take place only 2 days before the election **it was agreed that this meeting will be deferred to 19th May 2015.**

163 Grant Request – Citizens Advice Bureau: A letter had been received from CAB requesting a grant of an unspecified amount towards their running expenses. It was proposed by Roger Hunkin, seconded by Mike Baker and **agreed unanimously to approve a grant of £25.00.**

164 Defibrillator: The Chair reported that Mrs Ann Carrington had kindly offered to help with the administration of the defibrillator. Mike Stokes informed the meeting that he had registered the machine with the South West Ambulance Service and they had issued a certificate of accreditation. Usefully, ours was the same as the machine carried by them. He confirmed that Ann Carrington will take over from him the weekly checks (including confirming that pads and batteries do not need replacing) and submitting monthly reports to the Ambulance Service. Terry Warrington had also offered to assist so there is now a small network that can provide cover at all times. The Council offered it's thanks to Mike Stokes for the excellent work that he

has done on the scheme. **Greg Ball highlighted that the electricity supply needed to be checked as he thought the present supply to the telephone box might be time-limited and that a new contract might be required. He will pass on the details to Mike Stokes.**

165 Flashing Speed Signs: A site meeting had taken place on 12th February 2015 with Simon Phillips of Devon Highways. He had been supportive of the plan and could see no objection to placing a flashing sign on parish owned land on the bank outside the village hall. The outer edge would need to be 18" away from the carriageway. The Clerk reported that £331 had been granted towards the scheme by the TAP Fund. **It was agreed to create a small working group comprising Mike Baker, Roger Hunkin and Mackie Poole to obtain quotes for putting in the electricity supply and to determine how best to proceed with the installation.** The Clerk advised that two quotes should be obtained for the electrical works and it was **agreed to approach two local contractors, Glyn Brown and Mr Millman.** To avoid digging and reinstating a trench across the car park, it was suggested by Arthur Poole that a cable could be laid around the outside edge. Adrian Green confirmed that power would be supplied from the village hall and its cost would be absorbed by the Village Hall Trustees.

166 Snow Warden: Terry Warrington had kindly agreed to take on the role of Snow Warden. Greg Ball had forwarded copies of the documentation and will continue to assist him with checking grit bins etc. **The Clerk will ensure that Terry is registered as the new Snow Warden with Devon Highways and will arrange the appropriate training.** Richard Bond's supply has all gone. Mackie Poole and Roger Hunkin both still have 90% of their stocks but it is severely deteriorated and needs to be replaced. Mackie Poole said that he would ask Pete Hutchins whether he would be able to modify his machine to accept the salt that we have. **It was agreed that salt supplies should be reviewed each September and that more volunteers would be sought at the same time to help with checking supplies and distribution where necessary.** Greg Ball had been told by Devon Highways that the Clerk should have been asked if we needed more salt last Autumn but the Clerk had had no contact from them about it.

167 2014/15 Budget Monitoring Review and 2015/16 Budget and Precept: The Clerk had issued a budget monitoring report for 2014/15 including a forecast to the year end and budget for 2015/16. A precept of £5,000 had been approved at the last meeting and the Clerk explained the impact of this decision on anticipated reserves. It was expected that a minimum reserve of about £2,900 would be available to meet the cost of the flashing sign and any unforeseen expenses, of which £300 was earmarked for meeting any ongoing costs associated with the defibrillator. The 2015/16 budget included an increase in the annual grant to the Parish Church from £250 to £500 as previously approved and £500 to meet the cost of any election. It was noted that most reserves were earmarked for the flashing signs project and that these might need to be replenished in future years but the fact that the finances were being closely controlled was welcomed. **The 2015/16 budget was agreed unanimously.**

168 Members' Reports:

Mike Stokes gave a report of the Torrington Area Advisory Group meeting that he and Mackie Poole had attended on 27th January 2015. Paula Hunter, the Elections Officer, had outlined the arrangements for the forthcoming elections. The Torridge Council 2015/16 budget had been explained. The nil budget increase had been achievable due to staff cuts, especially among senior posts, and other initiatives. Further cuts would be necessary as the Council expected to lose another £1 million of central government grant over the next 4 years. Further savings were being planned through rationalising the use of buildings, introducing home working, more online reporting and

establishing enforcement officers as first points of contact for communicating with the Council. A workshop is due to be held in April to discuss the proposals. Kate Little had confirmed that no public conveniences were earmarked for closure. Progress on the Draft Local Plan had been reported, which it was hoped would be submitted for approval this spring. The introduction of electronic consultation on planning applications was going ahead.

168 Planning:

- a. Electronic delivery of planning applications wef 1st April 2015: From 1st April 2015 Torrridge Planning would no longer be sending printed copies of planning applications when consulting with the Parish Council on planning applications. The Planning Authority hoped that parishes would use laptops or tablets to link directly to their website and display the plans through projectors. Where broadband isn't available Clerks would be expected to download the files from the Torrridge website. Roger Hunkin said that he had noted a suggestion in the minutes to a meeting of Buckland Brewer Parish Council that equipment costs to meet the demands of electronic planning consultation could be shared by Buckland Brewer, Frithelstock and Monkleigh. The Clerk explained that this idea had been dropped because it could not be guaranteed that the Clerk would always be employed by all 3 Councils, and that ownership and insurance matters would be problematic. He explained that nothing had been added to the budget for any equipment as he would seek to fund this from a grant application if it proved necessary. To be effective the scheme would need broadband access in the village hall. Adrian Green said that he was already in touch with WildWestNet about this and hoped that it would be installed fairly soon.
- b. Applications: 1/1349/2014/AGMB – Drexill, Southcott, Langtree: Change of use of agricultural building to 1 dwelling class MB (a) + (b) – Already supported following consultation by Chairman. Mackie explained that a letter had been received from Mary Goaman about a potential problem with scaffolding.
- c. 1/1124/2014/FUL, r/o7 Meadowstone Close, Proposed dwelling - resubmission of refused application 1/0556/2014/FUL - Already supported following consultation by Chairman
- d. 1/0184/2015/TRE, St Mary And St Gregory's Church, Pollard all limes in Church Yard – **It was agreed that the work was essential and should be supported.** However, the Clerk reported that it had already been permitted at 5 day'' notice by officers due to urgent need.
- e. Decision: 1/1203/2014/FUL – Caer Bryn: Extension to front elevation – Granted Permission – Noted. It was reported by a parishioner that an objection due to a dispute over a boundary had been resolved.
- f. Appeal: 1/0845/2014/FULM, Appeal Ref: APP/W1145/W/15/3002659, Erection of a single wind turbine with a tower height of up to 50m and tip height of up to 77m along with associated infrastructure. Horwood Combe. It was proposed by Andrew Heard, seconded by Mike Baker and **agreed**

unanimously that the Council should repeat its previous objection to this application.

169 Finance:

I. The following expenses were approved (£239.44):

Clerk: Salary – Net Pay and expenses (Net £180.04 including £10 paid to Mr Parish for electricity supply for Christmas lights; PAYE element £34.40). This month’s expenses also included the cost of a printer cartridge.

Citizens Advice Bureau - £25.00

Bank Balances:

Community Account - £7,141.25 as at 11/01/15

Business Money Manager - £664.45 as at 11/01/15

151 Chairman’s Report: Mackie Poole was (i) concerned about the amount of litter in the village and suggested that some clearing up would be needed before the Best Kept Village Competition got under way this year. Dog litter in Hele Lane was also highlighted as a problem. (ii) He was also concerned that no progress was being made on Rob Daniels’ suggestions for improving energy efficiency at the village hall. Adrian Green explained that Marcelle Paton-Smith had not been able to take on the project and that it had been passed on to him to work with Rob. **He will contact Rob to get the project moving again.** (iii) Adrian also explained that the Welcome Pack that he had promised at the last meeting would be available very soon but that the recent power cuts had caused him to lose data from his computer systems and he had to recover the work. (iv) Mackie reported that 3 signs in the parish needed replacing. The Clerk had already reported the damaged crossroads sign at Catsborough Cross but there were 2 other signs at Furzedon and Horwood Combe that need replacing. **Cllr. Pennington undertook to pass on the reported damage to Cllr. Dezart.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:00 pm

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: (Chair)

NAME: DATE:

Next meeting will be held in Frithelstock Village Hall on Tuesday 19th May 2015 at 7:30pm.