

Frithelstock Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 3rd March 2016 at 7:30 pm in Frithelstock Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr M Baker, Mr Mark Goldman, Mr Andrew Heard, Mr Roger Hunkin, Mr M Poole and Mr M Stokes.

Clerk: Mr P Blossie

Also in attendance: 4 members of the public: Dave Debnam, Adrian Green, Judith Seaman and Mrs Sparrow; Tim Newman of Wild West Net Ltd. and Cllr. Phil Pennington (DCC)

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

- 127. Welcome.** Mike Stokes welcomed all to the meeting.
- 128. Apologies for Absence** Cllr. Liz Hunkin, Richard Joseph and Terry Warrington
- 129. Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2016** The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2016 were agreed and signed.
- 130. Declarations of Interest** None
- 131. Public Participation** Adrian Green pointed out that the Annual Parish Meeting had been advertised in The prior as 12th April but it was in last year's minutes as 19th April. The Clerk will clarify and ensure that the correct date is advertised. Dave Debnam reported that the Speedwatch Team had three new volunteers (including Sid Adams). Data from the flashing sign will be available soon and it was hoped that Richard Joseph will be able to report some findings to the Annual Parish Meeting. Reference was also made to flooding in Hele Lane. Cllr Pennington said that it should be referred to Devon Highways. There had been many similar complaints. Mackie Poole pointed out that Peter Hutchins services had been offered to clear out the drains but Devon Highways had refused the offer.
- 132. Presentation by Tim Newman, Wild West Net Ltd** Tim displayed a map showing the extent of Wild West Net's coverage in North Devon and explained how his company provided broadband via transmitters taken initially from Barnstaple and bounced via equipment based at high points such as Buckland Brewer church tower. Signals can be transmitted at ground level from building to building, which means that virtually everyone could be linked provided that their property is in line of sight with another building from which the signal could be bounced. The cost of the service is £100 for the initial installation and £25 per month (£50 for businesses) rental. Speeds of up to 20 mbps can be obtained depending on location and the time of day. There is a limit currently of 100 gigabytes per month. There would be no advantage to users with access to fibre optic cables but these are not planned to be made available in Frithelstock. Fibre optics are also only effective if the property is no more than 300 meters from the nearest fibre optic box. (The nearest to Frithelstock is at Rakeham Hill.) Mark Goldman said that BT had no

plans to improve the current provision locally. Tim demonstrated an example of the receiver that would need to be attached to the property (a white plastic box about 7" x 4" x 3") and said that some savings could be offered on the installation costs if more than one property was done at the same time.

133. Matters Arising:

- a. **Parish Notice Boards** The Clerk distributed catalogues showing some examples of notice boards, which started at prices of about £450. Andrew Heard suggested that the Council should consider changing one a year. Cllr Pennington said that he would have more funds to distribute in grant money in the next financial year. It was decided to defer any decision to a later date.
- b. **Rakeham Hill Traffic/Highways Signage/Flooding Problems** Cllr Pennington apologised that he had not been able to do anything about this yet. Mike Stokes said that Mark had suggested implementing a 40mph speed limit whilst the road works were going on but this had not been possible. It was noted that some highways signs were out of alignment. Roger Hunkin volunteered to adjust the one at Frithelstock. Mackie Poole said that he had investigated a complaint about a fence at Stone Cottage that was reported to be too high but he had determined that it was within the legal limit.
- c. **Welcome Pack** Adrian Green reported that the Welcome Pack was now complete and had been submitted to the Clerk in A4 format. It was agreed that this should be reformatted into A5, that 50 copies should be printed and distributed to members, the pub and the village hall, and that it should be published on the website.

134. Report by Judith Seaman: Devon Remembers Heritage Project Judith gave a report of the Devon Remembers Heritage event that she had attended in Torquay on behalf of the Parish Council. Most of the attendees had been from South Devon but Judith had met up with a contingent from Buckland Brewer. There had been 3 talks. The first was by Katherine Findlay, the Project Officer for the Devon Remembers Heritage Project, a 3-year project which will culminate in the Armistice Celebration in November 2018. Frithelstock received a mention as Judith had already contributed material for the project. The Second Talk examined the work of the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments in Devon and the third was a presentation of songs, letters and poems from the First World War. Mike Stokes thanked Judith for attending and for her interesting account of the event.

135. Clerk's Report:

- a. **Correspondence** The clerk had distributed 39 items of correspondence by email since the January meeting. He highlighted the DALC Highways Conference that was scheduled for 16th March at Exeter Football Club. No-one from Frithelstock was available to attend on that day but the Clerk thought that Cllr Hewitt of Buckland Brewer Parish Council might be prepared to report to this Council. An acknowledgement letter had been received from Doug Parrish regarding the Christmas Lights. Barnstaple Town Council were organising a Planning and Environment Seminar on 12th March. High Bickington Parish Council had drafted a letter to the two local MPs asking for them to put pressure on the government to improve the local rural road network and were asking for the support of other parishes, which Frithelstock were pleased to do. A letter

had been received from the Boundary Commission summarising their recommendations following the recent review of Devon, which was noted by members. Various papers had been received about the proposed celebrations for the Queen's 90th birthday, including a beacon event planned for 21st April and an opportunity to purchase commemorative medals. Members did not wish to pursue either of these.

- b. **Litter Picking/Village Signs etc.** An email had been received from Jenny Hearn about the amount of litter in the village and general lack of cleanliness. It was agreed that there would be a litter picking session on Tuesday 5th April starting at 6:00pm from the Village Hall.
- c. **Risk Assessment:** The Clerk had prepared a draft Risk Assessment document, as requested in the last external audit report. It was proposed by Mackie Poole, seconded by Andrew Heard and agreed unanimously to approve the document without amendment.

136. Members' Reports:

Cllr. Phil Pennington (i) said that he would liaise with Cllr Gaston Dezart to progress the joint meeting on various highways matters. (ii) Devon County had approved an increase in council tax of 3.99%, which included 2% for social care. Torridge Council's increase amounted to an additional £2.90 per household (based on a band D property). (iii) Cllr. Pennington explained a new grant scheme starting in 2016/17 that would provide him with an additional £10,000 per year to divide between the parishes in his ward. The scheme was being funded by the New Homes Bonus and applications would need to be supported by evidence that the parish supported the building of new homes in its area. His existing Locality Budget of £1,000 per year would also still be available. (iv) He explained that now that the Boundary Commission had completed its investigation of county divisions, it was now looking at ward boundaries within Torridge District Council and this could lead to a revision of some parish boundaries. He was worried that the review could result in spending becoming more centralised in urban areas. (v) The Route 39 Academy School planning application, which had been turned down by the Council and for which the refusal had been upheld on appeal, had now been overruled by the Government. He felt that this represented a huge issue for local democracy.

Mike Stokes had been contacted by a representative of a group campaigning against turbines who said that Government guidance now said that turbines should only be considered in areas where they had been included in local neighbourhood plans and had the support of local people. On this basis, Mike questioned Cllr. Pennington about why Torridge felt the need to include its wind turbine policy in the draft local plan.

Roger Hunkin talked about the road to Little Torrington which was badly deteriorated. There was a discussion about potential claims for damage to cars and Mackie Poole advised that any claims must be made very promptly to ensure that the event could be linked to the damage. **The Clerk will report to Highways.**

137. Planning

- a. Appeal: 1/0587/2015/OUTM, Torridge Vale Ltd, Hybrid full application for the erection of 13 dwellings on northern part of site with new access to Limer's Hill, outline application for the erection of up to 136 dwellings, etc. This item was noted by members.
- b. Report by Mike Stokes on his attendance at Planning Committee and email to Cllr Lock Mike Stokes had attended Planning Committee to register the Council's

objection to the application for 3 dwellings in Hele Lane. It had been approved by 7 to 2. Cllr. Sam Robinson had supported the Council's viewpoint but Mike was not pleased with the way that the item had been conducted or discussed. The Planning Officer had presented it in glowing terms without any reference to the Parish Council's objections about access. The applicant's representative had chosen not to speak, saying that the Planning Officer had said all that was necessary. Mike Stokes had given his report in the 3 minutes that he was permitted but was not allowed to address the Planning Committee on a wider planning issue. He had therefore followed up his attendance with an email to the Chair complaining about the way many applications were decided without any reference to parish council opinions and that a planning officer had been recorded as saying this. The Chair had referred the complaint to the Head of Planning but no reply had been received. Cllr. Pennington said that he had called in this application on 7th October 2015 but it had not been actioned and he found the call-in form on David Green's desk some time later. **Mike Stokes will forward his email to Cllr Pennington who will follow it up on behalf of the Parish Council.**

- c. North Devon and Torrington Local Plan Consultation **It was agreed that the Parish Council should reiterate its comments from previous consultations.**

138. Snow Warden's Report Terry Warrington was not present but it was noted that he had secured a delivery of new salt in plastic bags. Mackie Poole said that any adjustment to the salt spreader to enable it to deal with damp salt would not have been possible in any case.

139. Playing Field Grant Application Julian Carrington had met with the Clerk and they had agreed that, as the Playing Field Association, is a charitable trust in its own right, the application that it is making for a final contribution towards a trampoline should be made directly to the PFA and not the Parish Council. However, Mark Goldman said that the original constitution had not been activated, that the charitable trust had not been established and that, therefore, it should be considered as a Parish Council responsibility. He will send a copy of the revised constitution to the Clerk who will advise at a later date how the Parish Council's relationship with the Playing Fields Association should be treated. The grant application will be submitted in the name of the Parish Council.

140. Website Development: The website had been substantially completed and was demonstrated by Mark Goldman. It was agreed that Mark, Lizzie Hunkin and the Clerk would work together with the developers to formulate the final product.

141. Devon Air Ambulance: Night Time Flying Mike Baker has arranged a meeting with DAAT for 21st March 2016. Funding would be needed to meet the cost of providing landing lights.

142. Village Hall Grant There was a discussion about the annual village hall grant. Adrian Green said that there were no items of equipment that the hall needed at the moment. Most of its spending plans involved maintenance issues such as the painting. It was agreed that it was not essential to use the money before the end of the financial year and that it could be deferred to a later date or rolled in with next year's grant.

143. Funding for the North Devon Records Office A report had been received from Barnstaple Town Council explaining how the North Devon Record Office will be managed and funded in future years and asking for confirmation that the Parish Council was willing to contribute towards its costs in future years. The Clerk had replied explaining that that Frithelstock had added £100 to its annual budget for this purpose.

144. Finance

a. The following expenses were approved (£391.12):

Clerk: Salary – Net Pay and expenses, Jan/Feb (Net £179.85; PAYE element £43.10)

Parish Council Websites, deposit re website development £140.70

Judith Seaman, Devon Remembers Seminar expenses £16.20

Great Torrington School, Prior Printing £11.27

b. Receipts since last meeting (£0.12):

Interest on Savings Account - £0.12

c. Bank Balances:

Community Account - £5,699.19 as at 11/01/16

Business Money Manager - £664.93 as at 11/01/16

145. Chairman's Report Mike Stokes was pleased to report that Mackie and Bridget Poole had been selected to attend this year's Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 24th May 2016.

The Clerk was sorry to report that he was offering his resignation as Parish Clerk due to increasing pressures on his time. **He will start the process of finding a replacement and will remain in post until a suitable replacement can be found.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:55 pm

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: (Chair)

NAME: DATE:

Annual Parish Meeting: Frithelstock Village Hall, Tuesday 19th April 2016 at 8:00pm

Next Parish Council meeting will be held in Frithelstock Village Hall on Thursday 5th May 2016 at 8:00pm. (Annual Parish Council Meeting)