

Frithestock Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th November 2013 at 7:30pm in Frithestock Village Hall

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

Clerk: Mr P Blossie

Also in attendance: Adrian Green, Richard Joseph, Gwen Barrow, Arthur Poole, David and Mrs Debnam, Sam Robinson, Cllr Phil Pennington (TDC) and Cllr Gaston Dezart (DCC)

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

1. Welcome: The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Apologies: Cllr Heathcliff Pettifer, PCSO Melissa Baker and Terry Warrington.
3. Public Participation

Adrian Green explained that the trust deed for the village hall was no longer fit for purpose and was being revised. The Parish Council acts as custodian trustees and also provides a number of administrative trustees together with a number of other organisations. Adrian also pointed out that it had not been minuted which councillors would act as trustees and that this should be rectified. **It was agreed that the revised deed would provide for 5 Parish Councillors to act as Administrative Trustees and that they would be elected each year at annual parish council meetings.**

4. Minutes: The minutes of the meetings held on 3rd September and 9th October 2013 were approved and signed.
5. Presentation by NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group: Kerry Burton gave a presentation on behalf of the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group. The group is a revised version of the previous PCT, now led by GPs. There had been a marked increase in demand for services for the elderly, many now having more than one condition, and significant cuts in health funding planned by 2015. Research indicated that more people recover better at home and that it takes only 2-3 days for patients to become institutionalised in hospitals. There has also been a rise in the demand for A&E services since 2010 but this is not always the best place for people to be treated. The Commission is tasked with developing a plan for the future and believes that getting the plan right for the rural areas of Torrington and Holsworthy will mean that it should work anywhere. Research shows that 40%-50% in hospitals don't need to be there but, in spite of this, lengths of stay have gone up and the small turnover of patients leads to loss of nursing skills. During the current 8-week consultation period, the beds at Torrington Hospital have been re-opened by transferring nursing staff from South Molton. The Commission is using an independent oversight group to evaluate their plans over the coming 6 months. The Commission is seeking to use resources more creatively. Key themes include improving end-of-life care and they are considering opening clinics that combine additional social support like old style day centres. A question and answer session followed. Cllr Mike Baker asked if the nursing staff jobs would be protected. Kerry stated that nurses would still be needed to provide care in homes and for offering more creative services. Cllr Mike Stokes asked if the beds at Torrington Hospital will close. Kerry said the beds will close again when the consultation period ends on 26th

November 2013. They were not being decommissioned but it would not be possible to staff them. Cllr Roger Hunkin asked if any staff would be made redundant. Kerry said they would not be and would be given a choice about where they wanted to work. Cllr Mike Stokes asked if any building works were planned. Kerry explained that there were no plans as yet and this would depend on the outcome of the review. Questionnaire forms were provided for the parish councillors to distribute throughout the parish.

6. Clerk's Report:

6.1 The clerk presented 20 items of correspondence, many of which had been distributed earlier by email.

- 6.1.1 **Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust** - Reopening of Torrington Community Hospital inpatient beds – distributed by email 1/10/13
- 6.1.2 **Torrington Area Advisory Group** – meeting 22nd October 2013 at Monkleigh Village Hall. Agenda distributed 01/10/13
- 6.1.3 **Connecting Devon and Somerset Parish Briefing** – distributed by email 01/10/13
- 6.1.4 **Great Torrington Health Care Review, correspondence between Great Torrington Town Council and North Devon Health Care NHS Trust** – distributed by email 22nd October 2013
- 6.1.5 **Invitation to Wind and Solar Power Seminar, 15th November** – distributed by email 22nd October 2013
- 6.1.6 **DCC: Mobile Library Consultation** – distributed by email 23/10/13
- 6.1.7 **Torrington DC: Emergency Planning and Community Resilience** – Encouragement to develop a Community Emergency Plan
- 6.1.8 **Schedules of Planning Applications**
- 6.1.9 **War Memorials Trust** – Flyer regarding care of memorials
- 6.1.10 **Devon Highways** – Travelling in Winter Leaflet 2012/13
- 6.1.11 **Community Council of Devon** – Surgery in Holsworthy 20th November
- 6.1.12 **Clerks and Councils Direct** – November 2013
- 6.1.13 **Get Active Devon!** – Distributed by email 1/10/13
- 6.1.14 **DCC – Day Service Provision** – distributed by email 4/11/13
- 6.1.15 **DCC – Highways Safety Awareness Training Events**
- 6.1.16 **Northam Town Council** – Grass Cutting **It was agreed to take no action**
- 6.1.17 **Healthwatch Voices Issue 1**
- 6.1.18 **Change to Register of Electors October 2013**
- 6.1.19 **Letter from Jenny Wallace re Wind Turbines**
- 6.1.20 **Devon Senior Voice – October 2013**

6.2 DALC Health Check Scheme: The clerk explained the workings of the scheme, which was designed to help Clerks improve their administration of Council affairs, particularly in relation to paperwork. The cost would be £50 plus the travel expenses of the DALC consultant. Buckland Brewer had suggested sharing the cost with Frithelstock and Monkleigh Parish Councils. **It was agreed to wait until after the Clerk's training day on 20th November before deciding whether to pursue the scheme.**

6.3 Preparing for 2013/14 Budget: The clerk asked councillors to consider the budget for 2014/15 and, in particular, the level of precept, which needs to be considered at the next Parish Council meeting. This was most important in the light of the continuing cuts in County and District Council funding which may well result in more demands falling on the Parish Council.

6.4 Crime Report: Logs created following calls to the police – 1 – abandoned call; 1 tree down; crimes created – 0

7. MVF Best Kept Village Competition: The presentation ceremony on 1st November was well represented although the Chairman was disappointed that few parish councillors attended. Mackie Poole will send a letter of thanks to the judges. Feedback from the judging and a short list of possible improvements will be posted on the website and published in The Prior. The gates at the entrance to the playing field have been damaged and these need to be repaired. **Mackie Poole to approach a suitable contractor.**
8. Balsdon Trust: Grant applications have been invited, to be considered at a meeting in January 2014. Various options were discussed. **It was agreed that applications for two schemes should be submitted: a flashing speed sign and the defibrillator.** In relation to the flashing sign, Richard Joseph suggested that a competitive tendering process might result in a lower cost and advised seeking police approval for the sign. He also believed that Devon County Council still had secondhand stocks available. In order to progress with the grant application, **it was proposed by Mike Stokes, seconded by Mike Baker and agreed unanimously that the defibrillator should be sited in the telephone kiosk.**
9. Clerk's Pay and Conditions: Deferred for consideration under Part Two.
10. War Memorial: Mike Stokes reported that no decision had been made about the grant application for the War Memorial steps. In discussion with the War Memorials Trust he had been asked if access could be obtained from the side of the memorial and he had explained to them that it was because this was unsatisfactory that the plans for the steps had been developed.
11. Payment to Village Hall: The Village Hall Committee had applied to the Parish Council to meet the cost of installing new sound equipment at a cost of £578.59 including VAT. **It was proposed by Greg Ball, seconded by Mike Baker and agreed unanimously to approve the payment.**
12. Bus Stop: Mackie Poole had received a letter from Stagecoach admitting their liability for the damage caused by a bus reversing into the bus stop. He had also received a letter from Simon Phillips at Devon County Council stating that he thought the bus stop "constituted a danger", had not been submitted to a safety audit and asking for it to be removed as a matter of urgency. Mackie Poole disagreed strongly with the request and explained that the Parish Council had been told by Julian Roskilly of Devon County Highways Department that the position chosen was the only place it could go. Garden Cottage is up for sale imminently and, with the agreement of new owners, it might be possible to site the bus stop slightly further back from the edge of the road. In the meantime **it was suggested by Sam Robinson that he should discuss the issue directly with Simon Phillips. This was proposed by Roger Hunkin, seconded by Mike Baker and agreed unanimously.**
13. Members' Reports:
Mackie Poole had spoken to Sarah Chapple about pieces of Rothern Bridge that were in the river. **Cllr. Phil Pennington to pass on the information to DCC.** Phil suggested this should be a police matter as it was damage to a monument. DCC had been asked to make it restricted access but no response had been received .
Mackie Poole also reminded all present that there would be Remembrance Service on Sunday 10th November at 10:30am.
Roger Hunkin reported that building and scaffolding rubbish had been left adjacent to the Jericho property on what he thought was 'no man's land' and that it had been there for 3 months. Mackie

Poole said that he knew who owned the land. **It was agreed that the clerk would send a letter to the owner of the property asking for it to be removed.**

Michael Stokes gave a resume of the Torrington Area Advisory Group held in Monkleigh Village Hall on 22nd October. Andrew Hewitt of Buckland Brewer Parish Council had been elected vice-chairman. John Hart, leader of Devon Council, gave an overview of the substantial cuts that the County would need to make in the coming years' budgets. Mike Stokes notes to the meeting are shown at appendix 1. He highlighted the warning that Parish Councils could be asked to take on more duties and responsibilities and should be prepared to reflect this in their precepts. Mackie Poole suggested that this would be services such as a Snow Warden and speeding issues, which Frithelstock was already doing.

14. Planning

- a. A request for consultation regarding 1/0764/2013/FUL, The Parlour, Frithelstockstone – single storey kitchen extension. The clerk had distributed the item by email as a response was required by 25th October. Only one member had responded to say that he did not wish to object. No submission was made to Torrington Council
- b. Decision: 1/0017/2013/FUL – Erection of 500kw wind turbine at Bowden Farm, Buckland Brewer – amended size from 74m to 67m to blade tip – Permission Granted

15. Finance:

- 15.1 The following expenses were approved:
 - Clerk: Salary – Net Pay: £281.80; PAYE element £67.40
 - Insurance Renewal: £243.80
 - Village Hall sound system: £578.59
 - Remembrance Day wreath: £17.00
- 15.2 Bank balances: Community Account - £4,255.40 as at 11/10/13
Business Money Manager - £663.85 as at 11/10/13
- 15.3 Second instalment of precept of £2,125.00 received 23/9/13
- 15.4 A new bank mandate was completed

At this point the public was asked to leave.

PART TWO

Clerk's Pay and Conditions: The clerk reported that a national pay award increase of 1% was effective from 1st April 2013, increasing his hourly rate to £8.43. The Clerk explained that the number of hours spent preparing for and attending meetings, producing the minutes, maintaining the accounts etc. took about 10 hours per month. Extra time was required to keep up to date with the flow of 'correspondence', most of which is dealt with by email, but he was willing to continue at the previously agreed terms of 10 hours per month, amounting to approximately £1,000.00 per year, plus expenses. **These terms were agreed unanimously.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10:05pm

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: (Chair)

NAME: DATE:

Next meeting will be held in Frithelstock Village Hall on Tuesday 7th January 2014 at 7:30pm.

DRAFT

**Notes from the Torrington Area Advisory Group meeting held on 22nd October at
Monkleigh Village Hall**

At the previous meeting held on 23rd July, Cllr Cathrine Simmons of Torrington Town Council was elected Vice Chair of the Group. However, she now has a further role with Torrington Town Council and so is not able to fulfil the Vice Chair role for the Advisory Group. In view of this, Andrew Hewitt was elected as Vice Chair.

After the usual agenda items, i.e. Minute approval, matters arising etc., John Hart, Leader of DCC, was invited to speak.

Essentially, his message was that there will be many more cuts to budgets in the coming years.

- Excluding education, due to government grant reductions, spending has been cut from £600m to £500m and this has resulted in reduced staff numbers and a change to working practices. There has however been no real apparent change to service.
- Another £110m cuts are necessary by 2017
- There will be no support to parishes who will be required to undertake some duties currently undertaken by DCC (nothing specific yet)
- Library Services- under consultation. The current 8 library buses likely to be cut to 4 because 4 are nearing their 'end of life'
- Youth Services will be targeting those not in employment. There is quite a small percentage take-up of younger people of the services available (youth clubs etc.)
- Day Centres – these too will be looked at
- Currently, DCC subsidises the bus service by £6m. DCC receives £7m from the government for bus services but pays the bus companies £12m!!
- DC is looking at a 1.98% increase in Council Tax next year. Anything over this percentage requires a referendum which would cost the county £1m to organise
- DCC only receives 50% of the Business Rates, the rest goes to central government (and forms part of the grant distribution)
- New Homes bonus (a levy on every new home built- £250) is of the order of £20m, of which DCC keeps 20% and Districts 80% (Parishes get nothing!!)
- Fast Broadband – Torrington is a priority
- 407 parishes in Devon

Local Plan Update (Ian Rowland of Torridge District Council)

The 4,000 comments received following the January consultation are being worked through.

A new draft consultation will be published early in 2014 but with a very short turnaround period.

Torrington Hospital

Contrary to perhaps popular belief, the beds closure has only been delayed for an 8-week evaluation period and the feeling is that the closure will still take place.

- Only 2 beds are currently occupied
- An independent survey is being undertaken of people's views
- Cllr Martin (Mayor) holds a surgery every Saturday morning at 10:00am to receive views
- An Oversight Group is being setup to oversee the survey results

TDC Budget (Jenny Wallace of Torridge District Council)

The current year grant of £10m will be cut to £6m by 2016/17

A number of services have been tendered giving savings of £2m

More cuts are to come and TDC will be consulting in the coming months on what services can be cut.

Parishes were strongly advised to seriously consider their precepts in view of DCC expectations that we will be asked to take on more duties and responsibilities.