

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT LITTLEHAM VILLAGE HALL
THURSDAY 29th April 2010

Present: *Cllrs. Mrs Beer (Vice-Chairman), Hamilton (Chairman), Hassall, Heard, Hopkins, Ms Lamb, Stevens, TDC Cllr Pennington and DCC Cllr Dr Robinson. Mrs R. Stevens was the only other local member of the public to attend.*

Apologies: *Cllrs. Atkinson Mrs Galvin, Poole, M. Smith,*

Parish Council Chairman Doug. Hamilton presided and thanked those present for attending.

2010(a) Minutes 2009 (a) to (f) of 2009 Annual Parish Meeting:

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Hassall, seconded by Cllr Ms Lamb, that the Minutes of the 2009 Annual Parish Meeting are approved and signed as a correct record.

2010(b) Matters arising from Minutes of last Annual Parish Meeting: None.

2010(c) 2009/10 Chairman of the Parish Council's Annual Report:

Chairman Cllr Doug Hamilton thanked Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their work during the year. He welcomed new Cllr Hopkins, who was co-opted as a Landcross Parish Councillor last May.

Cllr Hamilton then summarised **2009/10 Parish Council business**, by referring to: -

Planning Applications: Six applications were considered during the year.

Finance: Receipts £3,150: Payments £3,796: Balance at 31st March 2009 £1,162.

Parish Council business during 2009/10 included: -

Continued response to the N Devon & Torridge Strategies & Options Report, Torridge Local Development Framework and Core Strategy & Options Report.

Continuing to move forward with the Parish Plan Action Plan (Housing Survey).

Notifying DCC of several highway problems: Mt Pleasant parking; Speeding at Landcross, in Yeo Valley and in Littleham Village where a 20mph limit has been discussed.

Working closely with Mr Steve Elsworthy of DCC to cope with pot holes and ice problems.

Attending meetings and commenting on proposed Unitary Local Government in Devon.

Making Power of the Community (Sustainability Communities) Act proposals to TDC.

Assisting Littleham Village Hall and Playing Field and granting £1,000 towards Village Hall works; the Hall also received DCC and TDC Community Grants. The Parish Council has a trustee member on the Village Hall & Rifle Field Charity.

Requesting TDC to provide Allotments and we considered other local options.

Arranging for the Littleham Jubilee Tree to be lopped.

Safeguarding Littleham telephone kiosk and learning about "Adopt a Red Phone Box".

Receiving the N Devon & Somerset Coast Shoreline Management Plan Review.

Resolving Mobile Library issues at Landcross, at least for the time being.

Continuing to press for the postponed new Bus Bay at Landcross.

Supporting South West Ambulance's bid for Foundation status.

Pressing TDC about their negotiations relating to Travellers Pitches in Devon.

Continuing to support the Littleham & Landcross Biodiversity Audits.

Congratulating Mrs Jenny Barker of Landcross on being awarded an MBE.

Parish Councillor Hamilton also thanked County Councillor Dr Sam Robinson and District Councillor Phil Pennington for attending most of the Parish Council meetings. They have supported Littleham and Landcross in many other ways during the year and their work in the Parish is much appreciated.

20010(d) County Councillor Dr Sam Robinson:

County Councillor Dr. Robinson reported on his Devon County Council work, especially on ensuring that due consideration is given to requests for speed limits on the Yeo Valley road and in Littleham. He has asked questions about the poor quality of some pothole repairs and he has ensured that the Parish Council continues to be notified, well in advance, of the weeks when the Highways Lengthsmen will be working in the two villages. As a member of the DCC Torridge Area Highways & Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC), he regularly monitors progress on matters concerning Littleham and Landcross. The provision of a new bus lay-by at Landcross has been delayed because of financial constraints, but Cllr. Dr. Robinson remains aware of the need for this facility.

Outside Littleham and Landcross, Cllr Dr. Robinson is seeking to retain Hartland Light and promote awareness of the continued need for a third bridge over the Torridge, up-stream of Bideford Longbridge.

The Devon County Precept this year enabled an increase of only 1.95% to be achieved (the lowest ever) and Torridge D C has kept its increase to 2%. He explained how the Council Tax bill consists of levies for County Council, Police, Fire and Rescue and District Council and Parish Council requirements. He mentioned how the rural counties and districts suffer under a Government Grant system that has, for several years, been biased to favour the major conurbations. Devon suffers a shortfall of almost £400 per pupil in Pupil Support and keeping Devon's costs down, whilst providing quality services, is always a struggle, but despite this, Devon performs well.

Parish Councillor Hamilton thanked TDC Cllr Pennington for his presentation.

20010(e) Torridge District Councillor Phil. Pennington:

Cllr Pennington's main points were: -

1) Boundary Commission: Whilst there are further legal challenges pending the outcome of the general election regarding the Exeter Unitary Council decision, it is almost certain that Torridge D C elections will go forward next May.

2) Chief Executive: Torridge now shares Chief Executive Nicola Bulbeck with Teignbridge D C. and there are likely to be other future alterations required in TDC

3) Refuse Dept: The Refuse and Civic Amenities Cleaning services have worked well even though it was a difficult winter.

4) Housing Benefits: The number of new claims has increased because of the recession. Workloads have also risen because of amending on-going claims, due to change of circumstances. Even so, the Housing Benefits service is seen to be performing well.

5) Planning:

- (a) There have been many changes in personnel. This creates continuity problems. Although the Parish Council had complained about Planning performance earlier in the year, these problems appear to have abated.
- (b) Planning permission call-ins do not always fit to Parish Council meeting cycles. Other Parish Councils need to be as pro-active as Littleham & Landcross.
- (c) Ward members & Planning Committee members have a right to call-in a Planning Application within a 21 day window.

6) Finance: Very difficult financial decisions are required in the next few years with a very likely 10 -20% cut back in Central Government Rate Support Grant.

On Balance: - A RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Cllr Pennington also advised that Neighbourhood Empowerment is a rapidly developing concept, whereby grass roots involvement in service provision is likely to increase. He complemented

Littleham & Landcross on their Parish Plan work. Torridge is a low income area and during a recession, this increases the need for local authority support. In difficult times, local communities, District Councils and County Councils need to co-operate to make the most of meagre resources.

Cllr Pennington once again praised Littleham and Landcross for their admirable community spirit. It is something to be proud of and envied by those who live in larger urban areas.

Parish Councillor Hamilton thanked TDC Cllr Pennington for his presentation.

2009(f) Guest Speakers PC Tony Ellis, PCSO John McGovern and Mr Tom Carrick:
Reviving Littleham Neighbourhood Watch (NHW):

Mr Tom Carrick (Chairman of Torridge Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) and NHW Member Mr David Bradiel, set up a stall in the foyer of the Village Hall, so that those attending the meeting had opportunity to select leaflets on Neighbourhood Watch and Community Safety when they arrived.

PC Ellis summarised local crime statistics and the benefits of the Police Community Messaging System. The Messaging System is available to anyone, even those who are not members of NHW.

PC Ellis advised that a Neighbourhood Watch can operate for only a few properties. It does not have to be the whole of Littleham. The smallest local NHW consists of 3 dwellings and there are special schemes for isolated premises through Farm Watch. PCSO Mc Govern spoke of the benefits of good local liaison with Police. The Police are keen to establish local contact and PCSO McGovern has recently visited outlying communities with the DCC Mobile Library. He will also help local volunteers to get their Neighbourhood Watch underway.

Cllr Mrs Beer pointed out that Landcross has benefitted from its own NHW for years. Mr Robert Beer is the Landcross NHW Co-ordinator.

Mr Tom Carrick then described the facilities available to NHW Members and gave examples where being in NHW had helped to reduce crime in local areas.

PC Ellis emphasised that anyone who wants to establish NHW in Littleham, should contact Bideford Police Station (tel: 08452-777444). IT IS NOW UP TO LITTLEHAM.

Parish Councillor Hamilton thanked PC Ellis, PCSO Mc Govern, Mr Carrick and Mr Bradiel for their informative presentation.

The meeting commenced at 8.00 pm and ended at 9.15 pm.