

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT
LITTLEHAM VILLAGE HALL
ON THURSDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2008

Present: Parish Cllrs Atkinson, Hamilton, Hassall (Vice-Chairman), Heard, Poole, G. Smith, M. Smith, Stevens and TDC Cllr Pennington.

Apologies: Parish Cllrs Mrs Beer, Mrs Galvin (Chairman), Ms Lamb and Devon County Cllr Barton.

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Hassall (Vice-Chairman) presided.

Members of the Public and Parish Councillors wishing to address the meeting, as Members of the Public, on a specific agenda item, are, in accordance with Standing Order 24 and Paragraph 12(2) of Statutory Instrument 2007/1159, permitted to do so before that Agenda Item. No members of the public were present.

761 Registration of Members Interests: No additional registrations were required.

762 Minutes 750–760 of 7th August 2008:

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr M. Smith seconded by Cllr Atkinson that Minutes 750 – 760 of 7th August are approved and signed as a correct record.

763 Matters arising from Minutes 750 – 760 above:

(a) **(Min 752a) Landcross Parish Councillor Co-option Vacancy:** Nothing to report.

(b) **(Min 752b) Unitary Council for Devon:**

The Clerk has written to the Boundary Committee. Cllr Hassall reported on a TDC meeting that he attended and Members noted receipt of the DAPC Response to Boundary Committee Draft Proposal for Devon; a DCC message stating that a single unitary council could save £29 million in the first 5 years after fully paying back transition costs; September details of DCC Update Events; a DCC message titled “Boundary Committee Review into Local Govt in Devon, outlining draft proposals and NDDC’s submission to the Boundary Committee.

(c) **(Min738a) Postwatch & The Post Office; Post Office Closure Programme, Devon:**

Members noted that Buckland Brewer is still proposed to become an outreach Post Office.

(d) **(Min 758c) BT proposal to realign payphone provision; red telephone kiosks:**

Members noted that BT has introduced a Sponsored Kiosk programme to enable Parish Councils to contribute towards retaining kiosks that are no longer viable. They also noted receipt of an Adopt a Kiosk Agreement for Sale and Purchase of Telephone Kiosks to a Local Authority. Some Parish Councils wish to retain redundant red telephone kiosks as “icons “. There are no redundant red telephone kiosks in Littleham or Landcross.

Cllr M Smith commented on considerable vandalism at the Hoopers Water telephone kiosk.

(e) **(Min 758e) TDC “Towards the Future” Strategic Plan:**

Members noted receipt of the TDC Strategic Plan.

(f) **(Min 758k: Torridge Voluntary Services (TVS):** Receipt of papers relating to the TVS AGM and an Annual Review Feedback on TVS Services questionnaire were noted. The Parish Council was not represented at the meeting, but Cllr Poole agreed to complete the questionnaire.

(g) **(Min758m) DAPC Democracy Week and DAPC: “Councillors Make a Difference” Celebration:**

Parish Councillor Mike Smith has been nominated for an award at a ceremony at County Hall on 15 October, 7.00pm for 7.30pm. The Parish Council has been invited to send the Chairman or another council representative to this event.

RESOLVED, that the Parish Council welcomes Cllr M Smith being part of this ceremony and that Cllr Atkinson shall represent Littleham & Landcross at this event.

764 Planning Matters:

(a) **The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for S. West 2006-2026 - Govt Office S. West; Proposed Changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy, further consultation :**

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council should comment on the Proposed Changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West as follows: -

(1) The Parish Council’s general response is that, as a small rural Parish Council, we do not have the expertise or resources to comment in detail on a Strategy Document of

this magnitude, but as residents of the region we have views on how the South West should change.

- (2) The Parish Council notes that the Sustainability Appraisal points out many cases where the Secretary of State's changes have substantially changed, or even reversed, provisions in the original Draft RSS that attempted to promote environmentally sound, sustainable policies and resist ecologically damaging development.
- (3) Parish Councillors applaud the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and urge that all the proposed changes which fail to enhance sustainability as assessed in the Appraisal should be deleted.
- (4) Torridge D.C. is currently working on its Local Development Framework, in consultation with local interests. In developing the L.D.F, the local authority has to take into account policies imposed by a remote higher authority in the form of the R.S.S, which is itself in a state of flux, being subject to changes imposed by an even more remote authority (the Secretary of State). The chain of remote control is confusing to both Parish Councillors and the local electorate and must be frustrating to the local authority staff trying to produce an L.D.F. acceptable to the local populace.
- (5) We ask that views expressed by local District Councils and County Councils should become the main influences on any changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy document.
- (6) The figure of 10,700 additional houses has been quoted for Torridge. What is the evidence for this large number? There is an obvious need for affordable housing, but there must be safeguards in place to ensure that affordable housing does not end up as second homes. These safeguards should be addressed in the RSS document. The Parish Council expressed concern about this in earlier correspondence and they are very disappointed not to have received a response making clear why so many additional homes are required in Torridge District.
- (7) There still appears to be an inequality in the proposed provision of travellers' pitches within Torridge District. The proposals are excessive when compared to those for neighbouring districts. The Parish Council expressed concern about this in earlier correspondence and they remain very disappointed not to have received a reply.
- (8) Page 189 of the draft document contained the following wording in Section 5, "*Seeking better linkage between jobs, houses and services based on role and function, so that cities, towns and villages and groups of places have the potential to become more self contained and the need for travel reduced.*" Section 5 has been re-written, but the new wording is not as forcefully expressed as in the original draft. The Parish Council requests that the original draft statement is retained.
- (9) There is a need to retain community facilities within rural parishes. Rural post offices, village shops, village schools, village pubs and village halls all contribute towards sustaining self contained communities. Their value should be noted and stronger policies should be developed to strengthen rural village communities.

Minute 764 (b) Confirmation of Planning Approvals: Applications 1/0444/2008/FUL; Agricultural building, Ashridge Farm, Littleham and 1/0874/2008/FUL; Old Rectory, Littleham: RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Atkinson, that APPROVAL of Planning Applications 1/0444/2008/FUL and 1/0874/2008/FUL is confirmed.

- (c) **Planning Application: 1/1013/2008/LBC; proposed new garage block, Old Rectory, Littleham:**

Members were disappointed to learn that when the Chairman had asked TDC whether Listed Building Consent would be required when Planning Application 1/0874/2008/FUL, Old Rectory, Littleham was received, she had been incorrectly told at that time, that LBC approval was not required, but TDC are now considering an LBC application.

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr M. Smith, that 1/1013/2008/LBC is APPROVED for Listed Building Consent.

765 Highways and Footpaths:

- (a) **ASDA Store traffic:**

D.C.C. advises that traffic monitoring has revealed that feared traffic problems near the Abbotsham Cross roundabout have not arisen.

(b) Passing Bay, Springfield Lane, Littleham:

Cllr Hamilton declared an interest and after addressing the meeting as a member of the public, he left the meeting.

A letter received from Mrs N Beckley asked the Parish Council to comment on whether the passing bay/ drive-way to the east of Springfield is part of the highway, or privately owned land and particularly whether, " *the public, as of Right, have used this piece of land as a public right of way for as long as anyone can remember and at least for 20 years.*"

RESOLVED, that Mrs Beckley is advised that the Parish Council is not the highway authority and that as this appears to be a dispute between neighbours, the Parish Council has no comment to make, but the Parish Council will write to Devon C.C. to request that the matter is dealt with as a matter of haste.

Cllr Hamilton was invited to return to the meeting.

766 Littleham Village Hall & Playing Field; VAT:

The Clerk advised that HMRC have replied to his enquiry about treatment of VAT, when the Parish Council makes payments for Village Hall or Playing Field facilities. The six pages of advice provide useful guidance and will be held on file.

767 Parish Plan:

(a) Parish Plan Steering Group: Nothing to report.

(b) Gt Torrington & District Local Community Partnership: Review of MCTI Action Plan 2003 "Working Towards 2020":

Cllr Atkinson reported on a report received earlier in the day. The MCTI Review covers Gt. Torrington and 27 neighbouring parishes and describes plans to develop a vision for the future. In five years 15 mainly Torrington based projects have been completed. 80% of parishes in the area have completed Parish Plans. The main themes include traffic speed, roads, pavements, cycle-ways, improved signage and improved facilities for tourism. Cllr Atkinson was thanked for promptly reviewing this lengthy report.

768 Finance & Insurance:

(a) Authorisation of Payments and Report on Bank Balance:

The Chairman endorsed a Bank Statement showing a cleared Bank Balance of £3,610.47 at 20th Sept. 2008. The final instalment (£1,420) of 2008/09 Parish Precept has been received. **Resolved, on the motion of Cllr M Smith, seconded by Cllr Poole, that payments of £36.48 to Thomas Westcott (photocopying) and £ 344.23 to N.H. Jackson (1/4 Yr salary + expenses) are approved.**

(b) Audit Commission: Audit Return 2007/08:

District Audit had requested further information about the Parish Precept and the "trustee" relationship between the Parish Council and the Littleham & Landcross Community Website Association. With effect from 2007/08, an additional £20 audit fee can be charged when additional questions arise. The Clerk had proved that the Parish Precept figure was correctly stated and this was accepted by District Audit. The Clerk had also explained the extent to which the Parish Council had assisted the Website Group. It was agreed that, for audit purposes, the Parish Council had acted as Trustees to the Website Group and Section 2, Question 9 of the 2007/08 Audit Return response was amended from "NOT APPLICABLE" to "YES" and initialled by the Chairman and the Clerk. No additional audit fee would arise.

(c) D.A.P.C. Subscription 2009/10: An increase from £78 to £82 was approved.

769 Correspondence requiring attention:

The following correspondence was received: -

(a) TDC Flood Protection: Aqua Sacks:

TDC advise that they are not required to supply sand bags when flooding arises. They advise Parish Councils in risk areas to consider maintaining a supply of sandbags within the community. TDC has a limited supply of Aqua-sacs (i.e. equivalent to sandbags) which Parish Councils or members of the public can purchase for £2.94 each (including VAT).

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Atkinson, seconded by Cllr Heard, that a notice is placed in "Crosslet" magazine, recommending vulnerable householders to take

advantage of this facility and to ensure that drains are kept clear of fallen leaves, twigs and other debris. Information sheets will be displayed on Littleham and Landcross notice boards.

(b) **DAPC Sept Oct Newsletter & Notice of AGM:** Receipt noted.

(c) **DAPC : Councillors Indemnity – Code of Conduct:**

The Clerk is to report back, after checking the Parish Council's insurance cover.

(d) **DAPC: Home grown – Community Owned:** Noted

(e) **DAPC; Research on revised Bus Route 86:**

Heart surgeon, Mr Hyder ali Pirwany advises that a new bus timetable has been thrust upon North and West Devon. It has discontinued Route 86 which used to go from Barnstaple, via Bideford, to Derriford Hospital and Plymouth, where he has a bypass surgery and where he meets many patients who travel to Derriford from Torridge and N. Devon. The new replacement Route 118 terminates at Tavistock and patients have to take another bus to Plymouth from there.

Mr Pirwany is researching what inconvenience this is causing to patients and asks these vital questions: -

1. How is the new bus timetable (discontinuing Route 86) affecting travel to Plymouth, especially to Derriford Hospital?
2. What is the return journey like if the hospital appointment runs late?
3. How is it affecting the disabled people who have to travel to Plymouth and back?
4. Do passengers have to pay more fares now that there are two buses to catch from Barnstaple to Plymouth and back?
5. Was anyone in the area along the route consulted about the change?

He points out that Devon County Council has no control over the commercial decisions of the bus companies to change timetable and fares.

D.A.P.C advises Parish Councils to contact Mr Pirwany if they have concerns regarding changes to former Bus Route 86.

Minute 769 (e) Continued: -

RESOLVED, that Mr Pirwany is advised that the Parish Council considers a direct bus service from Barnstaple to Derriford to be important. It is unreasonable to expect patients, or concerned elderly relatives, to have to change buses at Tavistock. The Barnstaple to Plymouth bus service replaced the rail link when it closed. The importance of Derriford to the people of Torridge has increased over the years and it continues to do so. This is a matter of great concern. These changes also affect local Plymouth University students.

(f) **Devon & Cornwall Police Authority: Local Policing Summary 2008/09:** Noted.

(g) **Gt Torrington Community School: Foundation Status:** Noted.

770 Consideration of other correspondence received since the last meeting:

A file was made available to Parish Councillors containing correspondence about: -
TDC Register of Electors up-date; TDC Torridge First magazine; Town & Parish Standard bulletin; DCC Junk Mail magazine; DCC Devon Talk magazine; DAPC Annual Report 2007/08; Clerks & Councils Direct magazine and promotional and other correspondence.

771 Sustainability Act:

Cllr Poole reported that a local Authority (i.e. County or District Council) is required to opt into this legislation. TDC Cllr Pennington advised that he would be attending a conference in Gloucester, with a senior TDC Planning official, to enable TDC to consider the implications of the Sustainability Act. Parish Councillors noted that the Parish Council had supported the Charter 88 movement, which had pressed for a Sustainability Act and remained always mindful of community obligations towards sustainability.

RESOLVED, that a letter is sent to TDC, requesting the District Council to consider opting into working within the requirements of the Sustainability Act.

772 North Devon's Biosphere Reserve:

Members commented on newspaper headlines announcing that Littleham & Landcross is part of the U.K's first new-style UNESCO approved Biosphere Reserve, which is equivalent to a World Heritage Site.

RESOLVED, that a letter is sent to Devon CC Biosphere Reserve Co-ordinator, congratulating the County Council on this achievement and commenting on today's interesting news article.

773 Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: 20th November 2008 7.30pm.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.55 pm.