

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT LITTLEHAM
VILLAGE HALL
ON THURSDAY 10TH MARCH 2011.

Present: *Cllrs. Atkinson (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Beer (Chairman), Mrs Galvin, Hamilton, Hassall, Heard, Hopkins, Poole, M Smith and Stevens.*

TDC Cllr Pennington. DCC Cllr Robinson.

Apologies: *Cllrs Miss Lamb, G Smith.*

In Attendance: Loraine Kindley [member of the public], and PCSO John McGovern.

Members of the public wishing to address the meeting on a specific agenda item, were, in accordance with Standing Order 24 and Paragraph 12(2) of Statutory Instrument 2007/1159, permitted to do so before that Agenda Item.

1028 - Registration of members Interests: No additional registrations were required.

1029 – To confirm Minutes 1017 - 1027 of 13th January 2011: the Minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting. P: Cllr atkinson. S: Cllr Hamilton. Resolved unanimously.

1030 – Matters Arising – Not covered by Agenda:

- a. The Clerk had written to Mrs Melville as requested, no reply received to date.
- b. Update on Broadband survey. Cllr M Smith advised that the questionnaire was ready and that he now needed volunteers to distribute on a house to house basis. He was concerned that expectations for enhanced connection might be raised prematurely. It was resolved that we go ahead with the survey to provide evidence of need which TDC and North Devon+ are collating, and that 100 copies of the questionnaire be printed [by Clerk] for distribution in Littleham, and an e-version be sent to Cllr Mrs Beer who would distribute in Landcross.

P: Cllr Atkinson.

S: Cllr Heard.

All agreed.

1031 - Planning:

- a. 1/0356/2009/AGR: Edge Mills Nursery: Members had raised concerns [e-mail and telecom to Clerk Feb.2011] regarding earthworks for construction of access. Nigel Marshall [TDC Enforcement Officer] had visited and responded: the “new” owner of the premises had obtained a Licence from DCC Highways to construct an entrance; he did not understand that he also needed planning permission. The owner was asked to cease work – other than to make it safe – and to make a retrospective planning application. This will come before the Council in due course.
- b. 3 Edge Mills Cottages: Concern had been raised at the last meeting regarding the apparent lack of off-road parking provision, was it a breach of planning approval? A letter had been sent to TDC, Planning Enforcement. A holding reply from Nigel Marshall has been received.

1032 – District & County Councillors Reports:

- TDC Cllr Pennington stated that he was pleased to hear that we were planning a broadband questionnaire, Geoffrey Cox was trying to get funding to improve connectivity in the area, he will need evidence for this. At TDC they had just finalised the spending review and pleased that they were able to keep Council Tax at the same level as last year. It was expected that there would be 14 posts reduced [of 240] mostly through non-replacement and voluntary redundancies – with only 2 compulsory redundancies expected. They were also pursuing joint working with other Councils to improve efficiency and reduce costs – eg: a combined Planning Department is to be set up with North Devon Council.
- DCC Cllr Robinson reported: See Appx.1.

1033 – Reduction to bus service route 372: Consider action to be taken given the reduction in peak time services: Alan Rayner, Senior Council for Devon, advised ourselves and other effected Parish Councils that DCC had reduced their subsidy for bus services by 19%; this will result in withdrawal of the 0805 service from Littleham to Bideford, and the 1705 return [Route 372]. The Clerk had, prior to this meeting, placed an item in the Crosslet asking for feedback on the effects of withdrawal of this service. It is noted that the “school bus service” is likely to continue at the same times as the withdrawn service, and non-school passengers may be allowed, but this will still leave problems during school holidays. Two items of correspondence had been received from persons presently using the service but they didn’t state if they used it at the times which would be withdrawn. Cllr Atkinson suggested that if persons needed to attend appointments at times when the bus service was not available then he was sure that lifts could be arranged.

Resolved: without evidence of hardship it was proposed that no action would be taken at this time.

P: Cllr Mrs Beer.

S: Cllr Atkinson.

All agreed.

1034 – Parish Plan: Cllr Mari Galvin agreed to convene a meeting to agree updates to the Plan.

1035 – Torrington Area Advisory Group: Cllr Chris Hassall presented a report of the meeting of March 8th. [Appx.2]

1036 – Jubilee Tree, Littleham: following discussion it was Resolved that the parish Council take no action in the knowledge that Western Power were better equipped to attend to any problems which may occur.

P: Cllr M Stevens.

S: Cllr Mrs Sue Beer.

All agreed.

1037 – Finance & Insurance:

a. Authorisation of Payments and Report on Bank Balance:

Statement #90 was signed showing balance of £3052.30 with cheque No. 142 for £705.60 outstanding.

Payments authorised: see below.

b. Other Financial or Insurance matters:

- I. Members agreed to purchase an external hard drive, capacity 500GB, which will form an electronic archive for the Council, and reduce possible loss of information through use of personal equipment.
- II. Appointment of Auditor: Audit Commission advise that the Audit will be carried out by Jackie Bellard one of a team based in Bolton. Noted.
- III. HMRC ruling on Parish Clerks. Must now be “employed”. Consider which procedure[s] should be used. Cllr Mrs Beer agreed to explore options on who/how the Parish Council would carry out duties as an Employer, including the offer received from Torridge District Council. As procedures would need to be in place prior to the next meeting, Cllr Mrs Beer will advise her decision to Members by e-mail/telephone. The Council is to write [via DALC] criticising the lack of notice given regarding this change.

P: Cllr M Smith.

S: Cllr Mari Galvin.

All agreed.

1038 – Correspondence & Communication Requiring Attention:

- a. Becoming a Councillor: Local information events are being held by TDC in Holsworthy, Torrington and Bideford. Copies have been placed on Parish Notice Boards. Noted.
 - b. TDC Re: Parish Poll Cards; do the Council wish to order separate Poll Cards at cost. Not required.
 - c. TDC: District, Parish & Referendum Elections: Timetable of Proceedings for Thursday 5 May tabled for each Councillor together with Nomination Papers. Advise TDC number of Notices of Election required. [Clerk to run through main points]. 3x A4 Notices required; guidance points noted. TDC Cllr Pennington reminded Members to consider standing for District Elections. Cllr Atkinson undertook to contact the Returning Officer to ascertain numbers of Nominations in sufficient time to enable withdrawals to take place if necessary.
 - d. DCC Adult Social Care Direct: Contact details for Guidance and Assistance placed on Parish Boards; booklets and cards available for councillors to distribute. Noted.
 - e. The Big Sheep: request for “Parish Ambassadors”, and co-operative events and contact details for our Parish Magazine. Contact details for Parish Magazine to be given.
 - f. Devon & Cornwall Police Authority: letter of explanation, and call for views to be lodged, in respect of the police Reform & Social Responsibility Bill. PCSO McGovern spoke regarding this item. The Clerk is to respond advising that, on the information seen the changes would not be for the better, and would entail considerable cost in times of current need to reduce Public Sector spend.
- P: Cllr Hopkins. S: Cllr Mari Galvin. All agreed.
- g. Meeting dates for 2011/12 to be discussed and booked with Village Hall. Should dates be placed on Parish website diary? It was agreed to set dates for future meetings [after those quoted on the Agenda] at the Annual parish Council Meeting on may 12th, following election of the new Council. Meetings dates are to be posted on the Website Diary.

1039 – AOB: None.

1040 - a - Other Correspondence Received: DCC: Minerals Core Strategy – Options Consultation Paper; Baker Associates – localism Bill; Spinal Injuries Association – Great British Fish & Chip Supper; TTVS – Torridge Matters, January 2011; Senior Council for Devon – Newsletter, Jan. 2011; Queensbury Shelters Ltd, catalogue; south Western Ambulance Service – Twentfourseven magazine.

b - On-line Correspondence received: TCVS.Funding Jan 2011: TCVS. Snippets Jan, Feb[3]: DCC Parish Flood Survey: TCVS. Public Sector Cuts: Sustainable Communities Act-Update: TCVS. Funding Reminder: TCVS. Human resources Net: DCC In Touch, Feb: TCVS. Protection of Freedom Bill: TCVS. N Devon Volunteer Coordinators Forum: DSFire- Draft Corporate Plan: TCVS. Events Update: Spinal Injuries – Fish & Chip Supper: SW Devon Waste. Stakeholder Briefing: Torrington Town Council. Community Hospitals: TAAG Agenda 8.3.11: DCC. Minerals Core Strategy: TCVS. Trustee Info & Networking event: NALC. Bulletin Mar.11: TDC. Tell us How were doing: TDC. Community Resilience Programme.

1041 – Next meeting: Thursday 28th April, 2011 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Annual Parish Council Meeting [Election of new officers]: Thursday May 12th, 2011 at 7.30pm.
Annual Parish Meeting [Open meeting]: Thursday May 19th, 2011 at 7.30pm.

LLPC Minutes 10.3.2011. Appx. 1.

Report to Littleham & Landcross Parish Council, for Thursday 10th March 2011.

1/ Planning Application – Edge Mills Nursery. With the Parish Council's permission I will raise the matter of a licence being obtained from DCC Highways to construct an entrance. I am concerned that this should be decided without the DCC Highways seeking for knowledge of a corresponding planning application to TDC before any licence was granted.

2/ Snow Precautions – Grit Box. I had requested and had got approval for a box at Landcross. By now the box, filled, should be in position. I would be grateful for any update on this.

3/ Bus lay-by. I continue to press for this and I await response from Highways to my latest request for this to be progressed. I appreciate that this is ironic at a time of reductions in peak-time services, but the facility will be there for now and for the future.

4/ Pot-holes. The announcement of £100m for repairs nationwide is to be welcomed. We await the allocation to DCC. It is to be hoped that North Area Highways will be as successful as last year when they were able to present a case for c. £2m of the £3m+ that DCC received.

It has been brought to my notice that there is emerging a practice for the SWH crews to dump surplus tarmac after doing their designated repairs. This is both a fly-tipping offence and is wasteful and adds to the per-pothole cost. I would be grateful for any prompt reports of any such behaviour. A telephone call with location details will help to pin-point the perpetrators.

I find that Highways are prompt in addressing any reports that I send regarding pot-holes. However, there is the on-going problem of SWH not always being as prompt in dealing with the problems. To help to focus crews I would be happy to receive any reports, with locations, which I will relay to Highways.

At the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) meeting at Riverbank House on Monday last, when I had the Westleigh Junction on the agenda and got clarification of a few points from officers. Then on Wednesday evening at a joint meeting of Bideford and Northam Town Councils I was able to raise sufficient points of concern about the consultation process and the traffic lights option at that junction to persuade the cabinet member concerned, Stuart Hughes, who was present along with Highways officers, to put the matter back before the cabinet for their cabinet meeting in April (when I shall be arguing the case for a roundabout and for adequate consultation of the communities most directly affected before and decisions are made).

Thank you Chairman, Council.

Sam Robinson.

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TAAG meeting: Torrington, 08/03/2011.

Report for Parish Council.

Joint Core Strategy.

"Feedback Report" coming out imminently.

Rural Settlement classifications: Larger P.C.s being consulted about "Rural Hubs" etc.

Town Studies – Issues and aspirations being assessed.

Green Infrastructure Study – Consultants working on this to produce a strategy.

Housing Land Availability Study: A "Stakeholder Panel" has been working on this, to identify land that could be available for housing in the future. 400 sites currently identified (mainly sites put forward by developers/landowners). Details are confidential at present due to financial sensitivity.

This last point led to considerable indignation among the P.C.s present as the parishes have not been told if they have any land identified on the list, and their views have not been sought.

Winter Roads Strategy.

Maps of gritting priority routes will be distributed.

There was much discussion about grit/salt bins etc. but to little effect. More encouragement for self-help.

Designated Routes Maps for HGVs.

It was revealed that there never were any firm plans to provide such maps beyond a sample one drawn up for Barnstaple but not extended to other areas. Apparently Highways never got round to telling anyone the idea had been abandoned. (I don't know who's going to tell Mrs. Melville !)

Parish Clerks to be employed and subject to PAYE etc.

This is cause of much consternation and many PCs say they will lose their Clerks if this goes ahead. We are advised to write to the DAPC (?) and to our MP to point out the inappropriateness of this ruling for small Councils.

