

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT LITTLEHAM
VILLAGE HALL
ON THURSDAY 24TH JUNE 2010.

Present: *Cllrs. Atkinson (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Beer (Chairman), Hamilton, Hassall, Heard, Hopkins, Poole Stevens and also DCC Cllr Dr Robinson*

Apologies: *Cllrs. Mrs Galvin Ms Lamb, G Smith, M Smith and TDC Cllr Pennington*

In Attendance: Lorraine Kindley [member of the public] and Neville Jackson [Asst Clerk]

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.

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

965 To confirm Minutes 941-955 of 5th May 2010, and 956-963 of 2nd June 2010

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Heard, that the above are approved and signed as a correct record.

966 To consider matters arising from above Minutes: to be covered by agenda items.

967 Planning Matters:

Matters arising from previous minutes:

[a] Church Lane, Landcross: Cllr Mrs Beer advised that the last Enforcement Notice had expired on June 1st. A full Enforcement Notice – to stop all engineering works, and re-instate land within 3 months had been executed on June 7th, giving to July 7th to appeal.

[Cllr Mrs Beer left the meeting at 7.40pm; Cllr Atkinson took the Chair]

[b] Planning Notifications: Horsehoes, Landcross : Permission granted, conditional upon first floor en-suite window on south elevation to be retained in perpetuity in obscured form & non-opening.

[c] 1/0440/2010/FUL: 9 Mt. Pleasant, Littleham. This application has been called in by TDC Cllr Pennington: Cllr Hamilton had been advised by Cllr Pennington that Members can attend to speak at such meeting [either in their Member or Personal capacity, subject to Planning Meeting Protocol]. The Clerk was asked to check Protocol and advise Members; and also advise when Notice of the Meeting was received.

Planning Applications: None.

[d] Other matters: Land at Edge Mill, Yeo Vale: Notice received that an appeal has been lodged by Mr Mahony

against the enforcement notice to cease residential use, and remove the caravan. An inquiry is to be held in November, any representation to be with Inspectorate by July 19, 2010. The Clerk was instructed to obtain a copy of the Decision Letter in due course.

968 District & County Councillors' Reports:

Report received from DC Cllr Robinson – see Appx. A

969 Highways & Footpaths:

(a) Matters arising from previous Minutes: Direction Sign, Old Chapel, Landcross.

We are advised by DC Highways that a works order has been issued, there is a backlog, matter will be attended to asap

[b] Road Closure Notification: C461 Yeo Vale Bridge, 19-21 July incl; between 0800 – 1800 hrs.

[c] Work of the Parish Lengthsman – pamphlet tabled, we are advised that he is due to work in our Parish during week commencing 28th June.

[d] Highway Parish Surgery - 6th July, Barnstaple

Following discussion on Members availability DC Cllr Robinson agreed to make representation on the behalf of the Parish

[e] Other Highway & Footpath matters: The Clerk is asked to contact Mr Saltmarsh of Pillmouth requesting that high grass and vegetation be cut on Bideford side of Landcross bridge to facilitate clear views across the bridge for vehicles wishing to turn right in to the Yeo valley.

970 Littleham Village Hall & Playing Field: Cllr Hamilton encouraged Members to attend the Village Fete on July 3rd; a wide range of events was planned. Cllr Poole advised that a celebrity would be opening the event. Cllr Poole confirmed that a Permanent Licence had been granted to the Committee, negating the need for future Temporary Events Licences.

971 Parish Plan: Gt Torrington & District LCP meeting held on June 10th : Cllr Atkinson reported that Councils had been questioned on their follow up actions as stated in the individual Parish Plans. He responded that LLPC had been “ticking off” matters as they progressed, some Parishes had not yet started their plans. Overall he believed that the Plan had been a benefit to the villages. The next meeting of the LCP would be held at Littleham Village Hall on Sept 23rd at 7pm, he hoped members would attend. Neville Jackson also attended and had been asked by the LCP to stay on in his private capacity; he tabled a paper “Community Engagement Opportunities”[Appx.B]. He believes that Community Engagement may provide a partial solution to expected Government cutbacks, and that youngsters will be encouraged to participate in Local Government.

972 Finance & Insurance:

[A] Authorisation of Payments and Report on Bank Balance: Cheques authorised at last meeting now in, and after receipt of Precept £1731 [net of DALC sub], and VAT refunded of £138.26. The Vice-Chairman endorsed Bank Statements with a cleared balance of £2544.63 as at June 20th. The following payments were authorised: N Jackson – final salary claim £363.54; Thomas Westcott [copies] - £10.83; and L&L Comm Website £25.

[B] Audit Comm: Members were advised that a query was raised in 08/9 [as well as previous year] regarding funds of £75 which had been held whilst Website assn formed. NJ had written, and the question had been satisfactorily answered and resolved.

[C] Other Financial or Insurance matters: Bank Mandate: the change of officials requires a new Mandate to be completed. The current signatories are Cllrs. Hamilton, Hassell and Mrs Galvin.

Resolved: that Cllr Mrs Beer should replace Cllr Mrs Galvin as authorised signatory. The Clerk will complete the new Mandate and ask Cllr Mrs Beer to present relevant documents to HSBC to effect the change.
Proposed by Cllr Hamilton; Seconded by Cllr Hopkins.

973 Torrington Area Advisory Group: Report on the meeting held 8th June, 2010 was tabled by Cllr Hassell. He reported that under matters arising he had questioned “with the expected scrapping of the Regional Spatial Strategy would TDC be producing a new core strategy which the people of Torridge could agree with.” Reply: a Joint Core Strategy would be prepared for the next TAAG meeting. TDC Housing Manager had led a discussion on the Housing Needs Surveys, expressing surprise that one Parish [not named] had not identified a need for any Affordable Housing. Ruth Staddon of TDC Officer gave a presentation on Emergency Planning Procedures. Parish Councils` concerns majored on whether they could be confident that no one would be sued if emergency help resulted in damage or injury. Only vague assurances were given by TDC.

974 To consider correspondence & communications requiring attention:

- (a) TDC – Volleyball Courts, Expression of Interest [21/5]. Noted. Cllr Poole asked to place content in the Crosslet magazine.
- (b) Rural Community Council, Devon: Parish Online [17/5]. Noted.
- (c) Torridge Community Transport Ass. Ring & Ride Service [6/4] . Noted.
- (d) Torridge District Council Wind Energy Policy. Noted.
- (e) Torridge CVS – Survey - Voluntary & Community Sectors. Requested data on current state of Voluntary/Community Sector across Devon. Our Chair had responded on behalf of the Parish Council.
- (f) P Tucker – Parish Magazine Printing. Noted and a copy would be passed to Anne Davies.
- (g) Sustainable Communities Act. Noted. NJ reminded Members that they had supported this Act which may give Town & Parish Councils some responsibilities formally held by TDC.
- (h) L&LX Biodiversity Group – notes of meeting held 7th June. A report from Cllr Galvin had been e-mailed prior to the meeting [Appx C], and copies were tabled.

[I] Other mailed correspondence requiring attention

Torridge Cultural Strategy – survey. Not applicable to LLPC as it does not own or lease premises.

TDC Housing & Council Tax benefit. Poster to be displayed.

Grime Busters. Contact number given to Members for future use.

Great Torrington & District Local Community Partnership – Empowering Communities event. Noted.

Police Authority Liaison Mtg. Barnstaple – change of date – from 7th to 5th July. Noted.

Headed Paper: The Clerk tabled notepaper template incorporating the Parish logo. Approved.

975 To consider other correspondence received since the last meeting:

TDC Register of Electors – update 4.6.2010; Minutes of Torrington LCP for 25.2.2010; DALC Newsletter- May/June 2010; D&C Police –Policing Your Neighbourhood, Bideford, newsletter May 2010; R A Rowe & Co, Bude –Affordable Dwellings [25/5]; Alan Rayner –Support the Saturday Bus [25/5]; Please Support Vitalise [May 2010]; Cemetery Management Course, June 30th [17/5].GM Planning Services.

ON-LINE Parish Councillors have also received: - DACB Conference and AGM, 14 July 2010, Bridestowe; www.whitehilldirect.co.uk- Picnic Tables; Letter to the new Prime Minister concerning Fairer Funding for Rural Services, RSN; Weekly Rural News Focus – [x4], Rural Services Community; NALC Events Bulletin, 14/5; Torridge CVS Snippets, 10,20,26 May, 9 June; Big Summer Savings on Glasdon Litter Bins; Devon County Council – InTouch May & June; SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Devon Branch meeting June; DALC Free event for Community Building Committees/Trustees; Devon FA Pitch Maintenance Event Free to DPFA members; Torridge CVS, Training and Events Bulletin [x3]; Celebrating Trustees Programme 7th June, TCVS; CCD, Devon Playing Fields Association Conference and AGM; NALC Events Bulletin, May; RSN Parish Newsletter, June; DALC, fund for communities working with their local Neighbourhood Beat manager or PCSO; CCD, notification of 3rd Sector survey and help wanted; TCVS, Funding news, June; TCVS, Charity Commission warning on bogus calls; TCVS, BIG Lottery Consultation; DCCs Emergency Planning Newsletter -June : Police Property Fund (South West): £1000 up for grabs for a local sport and play project:

976 Next Meeting: Thursday 12th August 2010: at 7.30 pm.

The Meeting closed at 2110hrs.

Clerk to the Council: Venn Farm, Rectory Lane, Instow, EX39 4LZ: Telephone 01271-860286: e-mail danestanley@breathe.com

APPENDIX A TO LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF JUNE 26TH 2010.

Below are my notes for the PC meeting: -
Report to Littleham & Landcross Parish Council, for Thursday 24th June 2010.

1/ Motion re. Bus services in the Bideford area. I raised this issue at the recent County Committee meeting for the Torridge District. My concern was that on the one hand there were reductions in the frequency of services on some subsidised routes while there appeared to be a surfeit of services in others where there are operators competing against each other. Nicholas Rees of Transport Services and Bruce Thompson of DCC have taken away some points for consideration, including proposals for closer liaison between all the interested parties.

2/ From a grant of £100m for road repairs nationally, Devon Co Council were granted £3.6m of which £2.1m has been assigned to the North Area. Credit must go to our team, who were prompt in getting in the data to support their requests. I think it fair to say that considerable improvements have been notice in the state of the roads in most areas. I must also report that Highways are also listening to representations following last winter's severe weather, and we can expect that improvements will be in place for next winter. Again, though, I must say that our Area North team did an excellent job with the means at their disposal.

3/ From Children & Young People Service Scrutiny Committee I wish to report that the proposals from the Coalition regarding the creation of Academies is the focus of the attention of the relevant officers at the moment, and the proposals are in a state of flux. Many questions remain to be answered not least of them being the possible affect on the service the county presently provides to all 365 primary, special and secondary schools throughout the county and the possible per-school cost increase should a number opt to go the way of becoming stand-alone Academies. The Directorate have promised to keep us informed as matters progress.

4/ Specific to East-the-Water, I have raised the matter of the growing school-going population there and the belief that Bideford College will be at or near full capacity by the time it is opened. I have thrown out some thoughts to the County Committee for Torridge: a Junior secondary school for East-the-Water, a second campus for Bideford College there, a new school for the Bideford-Barnstaple corridor, etc. All thoughts welcome.

5/ Finally I wish to report that there is to be a speed limit review for the whole of Devon. I would hope that the parishes will be copied in on any consultation that may be sought. I have already raised, once again, the Yeo Vale area for consideration of a 50 mph speed limit.

Any questions?

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Sam Robinson.
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APPENDIX B TO LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF JUNE 26TH 2010.

GT&D LCP: Community Engagement Opportunities

Preparing and actioning Parish Plans places local residents at the heart of decision making. It engages the community in influencing how councils and other bodies provide services.

Through Community Engagement, local people become more aware of the local services available. They feel that their involvement is part of providing those services, but the way ahead is uncertain.

The Government announcement, concerning the extent of the anticipated cuts in local authority grants and budgets, will impact on services provided and the ability to assist with the running of voluntary groups over the whole of Torridge, but this threat of retrenchment also provides opportunities to increase Community Engagement.

The Coalition Agreement commits the new Government to promoting "decentralisation and democratic engagement" and ending "the era of top-down government, by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals." The Government will take action to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another." as part of the "Big Society" programme.

Local authorities (county, district and parish/town) have always had to provide services to meet the needs of local people and communities, against a backdrop of changing central government policy. There is no doubt that reducing the national deficit will diminish local authorities' capacity and resources, but it does not have to be a reason to delay the development / re-launch of the LCP. In many ways, it strengthens the case: communities will need to become more resilient and do even more for themselves and help local authorities (and health, police etc) to target their resources where they are most needed. That can best be done through a forum like the LCP.

Community Engagement can identify ways to get best use from local resources. It can encourage service providers to share expertise, reduce bureaucracy, respond faster, increase efficiency and reduce costs. It enables local communities to influence the County Council, District Council and other public services providers. It is a grass roots (bottom-up) partnership to identify local problems and weaknesses and influence decision-making at District and County level.

There can be many forms of Community Engagement and the twenty seven Torrington parishes need a forum where ideas can be discussed, where like minded parishes can develop ideas together, where progress can be monitored and where there is meaningful discussion with council and other public service representatives.

Parish Plans and Parish Action Plans must proceed in a timely manner. Deadlines need to be set and we should be prepared to think laterally at times to find solutions. Even so, where partnership with DCC, TDC or other public service providers is being considered, it should not result in costs being “shunted” from the County or District to the Parish.

Solutions should be fair and bring advantages to all parties involved.

Gt. Torrington & District LCP can be that forum, but we must all play our part in the re-launch.

Footnotes: -

“Big Society” programme is set out at: - www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/100518-news-big-society-ch.aspx

: <http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/communities-and-local-government/> for details of the Government's specific commitments and an interesting range of comments.

APPENDIX C TO LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF JUNE 26TH 2010.

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS BIODIVERSITY GROUP:

NOTES OF A MEETING HELD AT JENNETT’S COTTAGE AT 10.30 a.m. ON MONDAY, 7th JUNE 2010

Present: Anne Davies, Mari Galvin (Chairman), Anna Philpott(Host), Morris Poole, Rob. Reed and Jill Turner.

Apologies: Chris Hassall; David Hogan; Greg Smith; Janice Whittington; Prue Phillips; Jacqui Poole; Cathy Reed.

Pre-Meeting Discussions:

List of Group Members: The Minute Secretary (Neville Jackson) will compile a Members Directory.

Oxeye Daisies: The Group discussed difficulties encountered when preventing Oxeye Daisies from spreading.

Church Lane, Littleham and Littleham Churchyard: Anne Davies advised that wild orchids have yet to bloom in parts of the verges of Church Lane. The Group appreciates that whilst wild flowers need time to seed, churchyard grass-cutting also has to meet the expectations of mourners. Churchwarden Andrew Tregoning had recently stopped verge trimming work after representations from Group Members.

Moorhead Cross to Littleham Court: Jill Turner (Robin Hill) is concerned because uncut verges and overgrown hedges are a hazard. Anna Philpott advised that Mr Michael Oke, 61 Bowden Green, Bideford owns the field at Moorhead Cross junction. The Parish Council has previously asked DCC to arrange for the owner cut back hedges and verges here, but they could not identify the land-owner. There is also concern that Himalayan Balsam is spreading in this area.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) has a vast amount of biodiversity data on British wildlife, including the distribution of native and non-native species across the UK. This information is available to the public through www.nbn.org.uk.

Spanish Bluebells: Mari Galvin deplored the corruption of native bluebell species by Spanish Bluebells. She called for Spanish Bluebells to be eradicated, except in isolated controlled areas. She advised that it was only possible to identify non-native species when pollen is visible. Mari Galvin and Anne Davies had contacted The National Trust to urge them to take steps to protect native bluebells. N.T. owned Coombe Cottage, Peppercoombe is rampant with Spanish Bluebells and most churchyard bluebells are now mainly hybrid varieties.

Managing Grass: Anna Philpott circulated an extract from www.rsbbp.org.uk titled Managing Grass. This article refers to wild grass areas.

Group Meeting of 7th June 2010:

Members: The Chairman thanked Anna Philpott for hosting the meeting and welcomed new member Jill Turner. Anna Philpott had arranged for a walk through her land and adjacent Robin Hill land after lunch. Mike Glover would also join the meeting after lunch to take Group members onto his land. Mike Glover was the previous owner of Jennett’s Cottage. He owns and manages a nature reserve between the Jennett’s Cottage and Jennett’s Reservoir.

Minutes Secretary: It was agreed that the Neville Jackson would prepare formal notes and e-mail them to on-line members of the Group. Members who are not on-line will receive hard copy notes from the Chairman. Mr Jackson advised that his remit was only to prepare formal notes for the Group. He would not be able to deal with correspondence on behalf of the Group.

Littleham Village Pond Site:

The pond area is now overgrown with brambles, nettles and cow parsley. This growth will now smother any wild flower planting. Some of the distributed seeds have grown and are now in pots for planting.

Common Land: It was suggested that ARK? Community Volunteers should be recruited to clear the pond area, but the first step must be to identify who owns the land. Morris Poole believes that the site is Common Land. He recalled Mike Stevens advising that he thought that the pond area had never belonged to anyone. Neville Jackson advised that the official DCC Register of Common Land had been revised about three years ago and at present, there is no Common Land in Littleham or Landcross. Mari Galvin confirmed that the Parish Council accepted that there is no Common Land in the two civil parishes. The Parish Council had, in the past, been concerned about public liability risk if the pond is re-established.

The Group agreed that DCC Coast & Countryside Officers should be consulted (i.e. Andy Bell or Tom Hynes).

Littleham Playing Field: Anne Davies advised that the Littleham Village Hall and Rifle Field Charity (i.e. Village Hall Committee) had given permission for a one metre strip along the field boundary east of the gate to be planted / sown and maintained as a wild flower area. The Group agreed to encourage local children to help with the planting, so that they identify with the project. Morris Poole offered Anne Davies use of a dibber. It was agreed that planting would be arranged for the Weekend of 10-11 July 2010, after the Village Fete. Anne Davies will publish an article in Crosslet. Tom Hynes was to be asked to advise on a planting strategy (Tom Hynes recommends planting as nature intended, whereas at his Jennett's Nature Reserve Mike Glover plants to a strategy to encourage specific rare butterflies etc.)

Wild Flower and Plant Lists: Rob Reed and Anne Davies have both carried out further research and added several pages to their lists of flora etc. Mari Galvin is preparing a Biodiversity Audit Database for Littleham & Landcross. It was agreed that Mari Galvin would collate this welcome additional information and input the work into the Group's database. Anna Philpott advised that there is a 1988 List for Jennett's in Family Order. The DCC database lists plants in alphabetical order. Rob & Cathy Reed have a database for their Riverside and Lower Wood land. It was agreed that David Hogan should be consulted about placing a Littleham & Landcross Flora Database on the Community Website.

Suitable Sites for Biodiversity Research: Anna Philpott has arranged access with several local farmers and other landowners, including Adjavin Farm, where part of the land extends into Littleham Parish, as does Jennett's Cottage land. Discussions with other land owners are on-going. Neville Jackson asked whether the Biodiversity Audit is to extend beyond the Littleham & Landcross parish boundaries. Mari Galvin advised that the audit would only apply to land within Littleham and Landcross.

Trees Audit: In the absence of Chris Hassall no up-date was available. The Parishes need to encourage land- owners to clear Himalayan Balsam and also any Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Next Meeting: Monday, 13 September 2010 at South Heale Cottage, by kind permission of Rob & Cathy Reed. Anne Davies will present her Biodiversity Research Summary to the meeting.

The Business Meeting closed at Noon, but the Group planned to walk up towards Robin Hill before lunch and down over the fields adjoining the parish boundary. After lunch Mike Glover would escort the group down through the Jennett's Reserve and explain his plans for the area when he had owned the land before selling to Anna.