

LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT LITTLEHAM
VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 30th APRIL 2009

Present: Cllrs Atkinson, Mrs Galvin (Chairman), Hamilton, Hassall (Vice-Chairman), Heard, Ms Lamb, Poole, G. Smith, M. Smith, Stevens and Torridge District Cllr Pennington

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Beer and Devon County Cllr Barton

Members of the public and Parish Councillors wishing to address the meeting 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 general public were present,

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

826 Minutes 803– 815 of 5th March and 816 - 824 of 2nd April 2009:

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr M Smith, seconded by Cllr Heard that, subject to the date of the Annual Parish Council Meeting being altered from 7th May to 14th May 2009 at Minute 815, Minutes 803 – 815 of 5th March and 816 - 824 of 2nd April are approved and signed as a correct record.

827 Matters arising from Minutes 803 – 824 above and Min 795a(i) of 15 January 2009:

(a) **(Min 805a) Landcross Parish Councillor Co-option Vacancy:**

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Ms Lamb, seconded by Cllr Hassall, that subject to further local consultation, Mr Ian Hopkins of Four Winds, Littleham is invited to consider being co-opted as a Landcross Parish Councillor.

(b) **(Min 805b) Unitary Council for Devon:**

Receipt of further correspondence from the Boundary Committee, Devon C.C. and TDC Cllr Pennington was noted. Cllr Pennington was thanked for presenting documents to the meeting and Members noted that the recommendations of the Boundary Committee will not be known until after 15th July 2009.

(c) **(Min811a) TDC Dog Control Orders:**

The Parish Council's comments will be reported to TDC's next Community & Development Committee.

(d) **(Min811d) Royal Garden Party 2009:** The Parish Council's nominee was not selected in the DAPC draw.

(e) **(Min 811m) Allotments:**

Mrs K Behnke has advised the Chairman of the Parish Council that she has received enough interest from residents to justify petitioning the Parish Council and TDC. Interested residents are seeking the advice of Martin Moore, the mentor for the Allotment Regeneration Initiative. Mr Moore will advise Mrs Behnke on how to proceed. The Chairman reported that she has recommended Mrs Behnke to consider establishing a Garden Sharing Scheme in Littleham. The position was noted.

(f) **(Min 813) Jubilee Tree:**

Former Parish Council Chairman Mr John Bromhead advises that the Jubilee Tree is on the land of No. 2 Boundstone Cottages, but the property deeds prohibit the owner from interfering with the tree in any way. In the past, Western Power & Distribution (formerly SWEB) pruned the tree when power lines were at risk. Otherwise, former Cllr Lionel Badcock, in a private capacity as good neighbour, had trimmed the tree when necessary. Mr Bromhead believes the tree to be a "community asset" derived from the work of the now defunct Littleham Silver Jubilee Committee. Unless another "good neighbour" volunteers to prune the tree, there is only the Parish Council who could take responsibility.

Members noted that the owner of 3 Boundstone Cottage would prefer the tree to be felled.

RESOLVED, that Western Power & Distribution are requested to prune the tree to the extent required to make safe the power lines and that Cllr Poole seeks advice from a tree surgeon and reports to the next meeting on future strategies relating to the Jubilee Tree.

Minute 827 continued: -

(g) **(Min 795a(i):)DCC Parish Biodiversity Audits for Littleham and Landcross:**

The Chairman read extracts from the Draft Biodiversity Audit Reports for each parish and from a DCC letter requesting local input so that the Draft Reports can be improved by inclusion of additional information gathered from local sources. DCC request that any additional comments are submitted to Craig Dixon, DCC Biodiversity Officer, County Hall, Exeter, by June 29th 2009.

Copies of the Draft Audit Report were circulated amongst Members. The Clerk was instructed to provide Littleham Parochial Church Council with a copy and invite responses in time for the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 14 May 2009. Cllr Hassall was to make similar arrangements with Mrs Saltmarsh of Landcross P.C.C. Mr D Hogan is to be requested to make copies of the

Draft Biodiversity Audit Report available on the Littleham & Landcross Community Website. The Clerk was also instructed to thank Ann Harvey (DCC's consultant) for preparing the draft report.

828 Planning Matters:

(a) Planning Matters Arising (Min 806g): Complaint regarding TDC Questionnaires:

Cllr Hassall reported that this matter had been briefly discussed at the last TDC Torrington Area Advisory Group Meeting and that Parish Councillors would have an opportunity to speak to planning officials at TDC planning seminar events in May.

(b) Planning Notifications:

Planning Application 1/0036/2009/FUL; Parking Area at Heale Lodge, Littleham has been approved.

Cllr Stevens declared a prejudicial interest and

left the meeting after exercising his right to speak as a member of the public

(c) Resubmitted Planning Application 1/0356/2009/AGR: Edge Mills Nursery:

The resubmitted application places Agricultural Building "A" further from the highway.

Before leaving the meeting, Mr Stevens exercised his right to speak as a member of the public. He expressed concern over the increased risk to road users that is likely to arise if this development is approved. The Clerk reported that the DCC N Devon Road Safety Officer and the Police have been asked to support the Parish Council's recommendations, because of the likely increased risk to road users.

Cllr Hassall advised the meeting that he had been told that TDC has already made a decision and dispatched the appropriate notice.

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Atkinson, seconded by Cllr M Smith, that the Parish Council still RECOMMENDS REFUSAL, because all of the areas of concern raised in the Parish Council's letter of 7th April 2009 in respect of the initial Planning Application 1/0208/2009/AGR are still relevant, except for Item 4, which had referred to Agricultural Building "A" when the proposed location was less than 25 metres from the highway boundary and also...

RESOLVED that the Parish Council protests most strongly to Torridge District Council over being ignored by the District Council after the Parish Council had been formally invited by T. D.C. to comment within 28 days of 8th April 2009. The Clerk was instructed to ask TDC to respond to this complaint before the next Parish Council Meeting on 14 May 2009.

Cllr Stevens was invited to return to the meeting

(d) TDC Parish Consultation Events:

Parish Councillors have been invited to attend consultation events at either Merton (19 May), Caddsdow Bideford (21 May) or Holsworthy (28 May) to become effectively involved in the development of planning policy through the District's L.D.F. Booking Forms must be returned to TDC by 8th May 2009.

The Parish Council Chairman will be attending the Bideford event.

829 Highways and Footpaths:

(a) Matters arising (Min 807c) Footpath Working Group:

Cllr Atkinson advised that the Working Party had met Mr Alan Withecombe to discuss possible public use of Apps Track as a Public Footpath. Cllr Atkinson reported that, "*Mr Withecombe gave the history of Apps Track and forcefully replied that he would not give permission. The main objections were in respect of dogs, dog faeces, gates left open and reduction of value of pastures. Mr Withecombe thought villagers had plenty of access to footpaths elsewhere.*"

The Working Group has decided to publish a description of existing footpaths from Scratchyface Lane to Jennets Reservoir and across the River Yeo to Saltrens and the Tarka Trail, on the Littleham & Landcross Web Site.

Cllrs Stevens and Heard referred to the difficulties facing efficient modern farming and industrial businesses when public footpaths cross business premises.

(b) Littleham Bus Shelter: DCC has advised that TDC owns the Bus Shelter and that it is probable that the local community is expected to attend to, maintain and clean the shelter, as occurs in a vast majority of Devon parishes.

(c) Parking at Mount Pleasant, Littleham:

A Littleham resident has stressed the need for safer parking facilities in the Mount Pleasant area after damage to a vehicle. The Parish Council are requested to find a solution to this lack of safe parking. Members believe that, when land was conveyed for the development of Boundstone Cottages, part of the frontage land was considered to be earmarked for additional public parking, but neither TDC, nor DCC

have plans for such work. Members also commented that if parking is difficult near your home, it is advisable to park further away, on or off the highway, where it is safer to do so.

RESOLVED, that TDC is requested to check Land Registers to ascertain what conditions exist regarding frontage land at Boundstone Cottages, which is thought to be designated as a possible site for public parking; that TDC is requested to make provision in the LDF to ensure that adequate public parking in villages becomes a condition linked to any future development in villages and that the Littleham resident is advised to park further away from home on a safer part of the highway, or to make arrangements with neighbours.

(d) DCC Parish Lengthsman Service:

A list of 2009/10 programmed dates for the Lengthsman to visit Littleham and Landcross and information about the new service contract for this work was received and noted. Lengthsmen will be in our parishes on 10 Aug. 2009 and 22 Feb. 2010. Cllr Heard remains the contact with Mr Elsworthy.

(e) Letter from Leader of Devon C.C: Highway Maintenance 2009/10:

DCC Cllr Greenslade advises that the DCC budget for 2009/10 includes a 6% increase for highway maintenance spending. This includes an addition £1 million for improving highway drainage capacity. Weather over the past winter has caused significant highway damage and a further £2 million has been allocated to ensure that this damage is made safe. This will then increase highway maintenance spending by just over 9.5%.

The Parish Council noted receipt of this welcome information.

(f) 30 mph Speed Limit Petition; Yeo Valley Road:

Mr Danny Prouse of "Homelet", Whitehall and Edge Mills residents are petitioning for a 30mph speed limit to be introduced from Orleigh Mill Crossroads to Landcross on the Class III Yeo Valley road. There have been several accidents, including one recently involving minor injury and damage. The Parish Council has campaigned for similar restrictions in the past and the provision of "Please Drive Slowly" signs at Whitehall resulted from years of campaigning by the Parish Council, even though Whitehall is not part of Littleham or Landcross parishes.

Minute 829(f) continued: -

RESOLVED that:

- The Parish Council supports the petition to introduce a 30mph on this section of the Yeo Valley road
- Mr Prouse is advised to ask Bideford Town Council to also consider supporting residents in Whitehall and the lower Yeo Valley in campaigning for a 30mph limit.
- The Parish Council writes to DCC to request further traffic calming on the Yeo Valley road.

(g) Mobile Fish & Chip Van:

RESOLVED, that the Parish Council has no objection to a mobile fish & chip van trading in Littleham for 2 to 3 hours one evening each week.

The operators (Simply S&S of Fremington) advise that they have the required licences and approval from DCC and TDC. They also intend to tidy up before leaving their pitch.

830 Standing Orders: A copy of current Standing Orders had been issued to all Members.

RESOLVED, that the current Standing Orders shall continue to apply.

831 Emergency Self Help Plans:

A copy of the Landcross Self Help Emergency Plan and the Littleham Self Help Emergency Plan had been previously issued to Members.

RESOLVED, that the Current Self-Help Emergency Plans for Littleham and Landcross (with mobile telephone numbers added) shall continue to apply.

832 Review of Risk Analysis Statement:

A statement had been circulated to Members and it was agreed that no amendments are required.

RESOLVED, that the Parish Council's 2009/10 Risk Analysis Statement is approved.

833 Appointment of a Trustee of Littleham Village Hall & Range Field Charity:

RESOLVED, that Cllr Hamilton is re-appointed a Trustee to Littleham Village Hall & Rifle Field Charity for 2009/10 and that Cllr Hamilton is thanked for his work as the Parish Council's Trustee on the Charity.

834 Littleham Village Hall & Playing Field: DPFA Membership 2009/10:

RESOLVED, that the Parish Council continues to subscribe to 2009/10 membership of DPFA, on behalf of the Littleham Village Hall & Range Field Charity.

835 Parish Plan:

- (a) **The Community Website:** The Download now includes all Parish Council Minutes back to March 2008.
- (b) **Great Torrington & District Local Community Partnership:**
The Clerk circulated papers issued at the 20th February LCP meeting that he had attended.

836 Finance & Insurance:

- (a) **2008/09 Final Accounts:**

The Clerk presented, previously circulated, Final Accounts for 2008/09.

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr M.Smith, seconded by Cllr Atkinson and duly approved that the Final Accounts for 2008/09 be accepted and signed by the Chairman.

- (b) **Notice of Audit & Completion of Annual Return Sections 1 and 2:**

Notice advising that the 2008/09 Audit would be held on 22 June 2009 has been received and the Clerk will be displaying public notices on 8th May 2009, advising that interested persons may inspect the accounts. Notices will be displayed at least 14 days before the inspection period.

RECOMMENDED, that the Final Accounts for 2008/09, as set out in Section 1 of the Annual Return and Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Return are approved and that the Chairman is authorised to complete the Statutory Statement at Sections 1 and 2.

Minute 836 continued: -

- (c) **2008/09 Final Accounts; Independent Internal Auditor's Report:**

The Independent Internal Auditor has completed a satisfactory internal audit and Section 4 of the Annual Return Statement has been duly signed.

RESOLVED, that Mr Baglow is thanked for his report and invited to continue as Independent Internal Auditor, on the same terms, for 2009/10.

- (d) **Insurance Renewal:**

The Clerk advised that, in accordance with Minute 810b, he had obtained a quotation from Came & Company of Odiham, specialist agents for Norwich Union. They quoted a premium of £262.50.

RESOLVED, that the 2008/09 Community First Insurance premium of £207.38 is accepted.

- (e) **Final 2008/09 Salary Award for Local Council Clerks:**

The award, at Increment Point 22, retrospectively increases the Clerk's salary by 3p per hour.

RESOLVED that the Final 2008/09 Salary Award is applied with effect from 1st April 2008.

- (f) **Authorisation of Payments and Report on Bank Balance.**

RESOLVED, that the following payments are approved: Community First £207.38 (Insurance 2009/10), D A Baglow £30.00 (Internal Audit Fee) and DPFA £15.00 (Membership 2009/10).

A cleared Bank Balance at 31 March 2009 of £1,808.00 and £1,793.00 at 20th April 2009 was noted and the Bank Statement was endorsed by the Chairman.

837 Correspondence requiring attention:

- (a) **T. D.C: The Power of the Community (Sustainable Communities Act):**

TDC is encouraging local communities to submit proposals to promote sustainability in their local area. Proposals can cover anything that would improve the economic, social, or environmental local well-being or promote participation in civic or political activity. The proposals must need some form of action from Central Government. Further details are held in the Download section of the Littleham & Landcross Community Website. Parish Councillors have received copies of correspondence from TDC and a Response Form. TDC expects most proposals to come from community or voluntary groups, local branches of national organisations, parish councils, neighbourhood forums or residents and tenants associations. Cllrs Hamilton and Hassall submitted the following proposals to the meeting: -

- **Littleham Village Hall** is at present restricted to between 10 and 12 Temporary Licences per annum to cover events subject to licensing. This is excessively restrictive and a higher annual ceiling for Temporary Licences is required. Changes in national legislation are recommended.
- **Amendments to planning legislation** would allow more effective public consultation on agricultural development. The present system of Agricultural Notification severely limits the ability of local authorities and the public to influence or control agricultural developments. In particular, permitted development rights allow agricultural buildings to be erected without being subjected to a full planning application procedure through the local authority, including consideration by the Parish Council, objections on highway access and traffic generation

grounds. (This would be in accordance with item (h) in the schedule of “matters” to which local authorities must have regard).

- **Government action to empower or require local authorities to negotiate with landowners for the provision of off-road footpaths and bridleways to enable walkers, cyclists and horse riders to complete circular routes** between settlements, with minimal use of roads carrying vehicular traffic. **Also, to provide incentives to farmers to make and use field tracks** to enable large agricultural vehicles, making frequent journeys between holdings, to avoid passing through residential and other sensitive areas. (This would be in accordance with item (g) in the schedule of “matters” to which local authorities must have regard).
- **Government action to facilitate the setting up of small local collection centres in larger villages or rural areas** where mail order delivery companies could deposit goods for collection by customers and customers could deposit parcels etc for forwarding on. This would reduce the considerable amount of traffic on rural roads by large delivery vans searching for remote

Minute 837(a) continued: -

properties and frequently failing to find anyone to accept delivery. The collection centres could also sell goods, stationery, licences etc. and accept mail. The service could be provided by an existing utility, such as Royal Mail and centres could be given a catchy name, such as “Village Post Office”.

(This would be in accordance with items (a), (e),(g), (i) and (j) in the schedule of “matters” to which local authorities must have regard).

The deadline for proposals to TDC is 29 May 2009.

RESOLVED that all proposals are sent to the Clerk for further consideration by the Parish Council at the 14th May Annual Parish Council Meeting.

(b) TDC: Working with Wildlife:

TDC has established a Working Group to identify initiatives to benefit wildlife and they are seeking opportunities to work with Parish Councils to enhance wildlife management. The Parish Council are asked to feed back ideas for potential projects on which Littleham & Landcross and TDC could look to work together. The Chairman advised that she had advised Mr David Hogan of this initiative and encouraged him to contact Mr Malcolm Harris at TDC.

RESOLVED that TDC is requested to further develop the popular Littleham Nesting Blue Tits Webcam Project and to identify future funding for joint initiatives with TDC on projects linked to the DCC Littleham and Landcross Biodiversity Audit Reports.

(c) TDC: Torrington Area Advisory Group Meeting of 21 April 2009:

Cllr Hassall reported on matters relating to Torridge Community Transport Action (telephone 01237-425522), a Fire & Rescue Service presentation, Devon Towns Forum, a report on the Sustainable Communities Act by Maria Bailey of TDC and concerns over the complexities of TDC consultations and questionnaires (see Min 828a). Cllr Hassall’s was thanked for his report.

(d) Torrington Town Council: Minor Injuries Unit: The matter has now been resolved.

(e) Equality & Human Rights Commission: Public Sector Duties:

A summary of proposals within the forthcoming Equality Bill was noted.

(f) Police Liaison Meeting, Torrington; 28 April: Notices had been displayed on public Notice Boards.

(f) DCC Money Matters booklet: Booklets had been distributed to Parish Councillors.

(g) TDC & BPAG Survey of Rough Sleeping in Torridge:

The S West Peninsula Housing Consultancy is carrying out a survey on behalf of Barnstaple Poverty Action Group and TDC to identify rough sleepers in the parish. A similar survey was carried out by TDC in 2008. The Parish Council is requested to complete a questionnaire for each rough sleeper identified.

RESOLVED, that any relevant information is forwarded to the Clerk, who will then notify TDC’s consultants.

(h) Senior Council for Devon and local public transport:

The Bideford & District Branch of the Senior Council for Devon request the Parish Council to support calls for reinstatement of the No. 372 Saturday bus service. The Branch requests use of village publicity procedures to create awareness and for the Parish Council to designate a Parish Councillor as a point of contact.

RESOLVED, that the Parish Council confirms its support for reinstatement of the Saturday bus service; that Cllr Mrs Galvin (Chairman) shall be the contact for Littleham & Landcross and that access to public notice boards in Littleham & Landcross is allowed, whenever space permits

(i) Devon Community Recycling & Community Composting Network:

The Parish Council receives “Junk Mail”, a periodical magazine from the Network who invites the Parish Council to update the parish details on Network files, and to attend a conference in CREDITON.

Receipt of the correspondence was noted, without further action being authorised.

- (j) **DAPC:** The Torridge vacancy on DAPC has been filled by Cllr R Clark of Shebbear.

Minute 837 continued: -

- (k) **TDC: Notices of European and DCC Elections, 4th June 2009:**
Five notices have been displayed at public places within Littleham and Landcross.

838 Thefts from Gardens, Littleham:

Cllr M Smith reported that six cloches had been stolen from his garden and Parish Councillors were urged to encourage vigilance in Littleham & Landcross whilst such risks prevail. Cllr Hassall reported that Landcross residents have recently been warned of bogus callers, travelling in a white van, who enquire about tree and garden maintenance work. Landcross has the security of a registered Neighbourhood Watch scheme being in operation, but there is no registered Neighbourhood Watch facility in Littleham, despite previous efforts to promote a scheme. Cllr M Smith agreed that the Clerk should make P.C. Tony Ellis aware of the theft of cloches.

839 Date of Next Meeting: Annual Parish Council Meeting 14th May 2009, commencing at 7.00 pm.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.30pm.