

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

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

Apologies: Cllrs G Smith and Stevens and Devon County Cllr Dr Robinson

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,

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

870 County Councillor's Report: A progress report from DCC Cllr Robinson had been copied to Members.

871 Minutes 856-868 of 18 June 2009:

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Mrs Beer, seconded by Cllr Heard that Minutes 856 - 868 of 18th June 2009 are approved and signed as a correct record.

872 Matters arising from Minutes 856-868 of 18 June 2009:

(a) (Min 859a) Allotments:

E-Messages had been received from Mrs Behnke and copied to Members. Northam Town Council is making allotments available on TDC land and Mr Rick Turner has leased land for allotments in Abbotsham, but local demand exceeds plots available, so prospective Littleham allotment holders are still seeking suitable land. Interested parishioners are prepared to set up a Littleham Allotments Association to manage and run a site with guidance from the Allotment Regeneration Initiative. Mrs Behnke advises that none of the plots would be run as commercial gardens. She also reports that the Chairman of the Parish Council had advised her of land owners who might make land available, but further enquiries came to nothing. The prospective Littleham allotment-holders would be grateful if the Parish Council could continue to assist them in their search for suitable allotment sites.

Members advised that either Mr James Corkery, or Mr Claude Nicholls, might consider realistic proposals to rent out land for allotments.

RESOLVED, that the Parish Council notes the position and passes information on other available sites to the prospective allotment-holders, when it becomes available.

(b) (Min 859c) Biodiversity Audit:

Cllr Mrs Galvin reported on correspondence with Mr Craig Dixon of DCC, who welcomes a suggestion that a Biodiversity Audit Working Group should be established for Littleham and Landcross. Cllr Mrs Galvin thought that a Working Group would create a focal point for ideas and action and enable a survey of "veteran trees" to be carried out and the current biodiversity reports updated.

RESOLVED, that a Public Meeting is called on in September to form a Littleham & Landcross Biodiversity Audit Working Group and that this meeting shall include Parish Councillors, Parish Plan Action Group members, members of the Littleham Village Hall and Rifle Field Charity, Littleham St Swithuns PCC, Holy Trinity Landcross PCC, Littleham Chapel and other local organisations. It is intended that, subject to the Main Hall being available, the Public Meeting should commence at 7.30pm in Littleham Village Hall.

(c) (Min 865e) Community Grants:

Details of DCC and TDC Community Grants Schemes have been received from County Councillor Robinson and from TDC. The information has been forwarded to Littleham Village Hall Committee to enable them to claim appropriate grants.

Cllr Mrs Beer advised that Littleham Village Hall Committee has already completed grant application forms

Minute 872(c) continued: -

And the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee has instructed the builders to start work in the autumn. The Village Hall Committee's earlier application to TDC and DCC for "Matching Grants" was unsuccessful and the Parish Council was asked to confirm that their £1,000 contribution would still be paid. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's 2009/10 Budget includes this amount.

(d) (Min 865b) Empowering Communities in Devon Conference 22 July: Cllr Mrs Galvin was unable to attend.

(e) Power of the Community (Sustainable Communities) Act:

Cllr Hassall asked when TDC would be responding to the four submissions agreed at *Minute 837a*, as authorised by the Parish Council at *Minute 846e of 14th May 2009*. TDC Cllr Pennington advised that TDC had agreed to submit only five proposals from the several received. The proposal relating to Village Hall Temporary Licences was thought to have been supported by TDC.

RESOLVED that TDC is asked to advise the Parish Council on the current position.

873 Planning Matters: Complaint 574: Proposed Edge Mills Nursery:

Cllr M Smith enquired whether the Parish Council was taking this complaint to a higher level, because Members remain disappointed with the outcome of the Edge Mills Nursery Agricultural Planning Application and the action of TDC at that time. TDC Cllr Pennington advises that the Parish Council could ask for the complaint to be taken to higher stages within TDC procedures. He also confirmed that there had been upheaval at TDC following this complaint and that changes were ongoing.

RESOLVED, that the Clerk reports back to Parish Councillors on the latest position.

874 Highways & Footpaths:

(a) Boundstone Cottages Parking :

Mrs Behnke had commented about Minute 848a of 18 June 2009, because TDC had, at that time, been incorrectly referring to the other Bounstone Cottages, not those opposite her property. TDC had already been made aware of this and further correspondence from the TDC Solicitor and TDC Principal Planning Officer has been copied to Members. TDC advises that the issue the Parish Council refers to relates to private land and that TDC only advises Parish Councils, as Monitoring Officer, on Code of Conduct issues. On this occasion, TDC would be able to obtain copies of the title of the properties in question at a cost of £6 per property title enquiry, but additional charges would arise for further enquiries or work.

The TDC planning official advises that there are no planning conditions or clauses relating to TDC on the land in question and he has therefore forwarded the Parish Council's letter to DCC, the highway authority.

The Chairman reported that Mr Withecombe's tractor had been unable to pass cars at Mt Pleasant Cottages and that Mrs Alvis, 1 Boundstone Cottages, and Mr Withecombe had been in dispute over traffic problems. The Chairman met Mrs Alvis, who has obtained documentation from the Land Registry to confirm that the grass verges belong to the owners of Boundstone Cottages. The owners of 1 - 3 Boundstone Cottages have placed a planter in the private entrance to their properties to prevent their drives being used as a turning area, because their tarmac is deteriorating.

An A.A. rescue-lorry also experienced difficulty and the driver complained about cars parked at Mt Pleasant on 18th June. Cllr Poole has reported a major problem when tractors could not get through at Mt Pleasant and that the driver of a parked car could not be located for some time. P.C. Ellis has visited Littleham and spoken to those on both sides of these various disputes.

RESOLVED: -

- (1) That local road users should note that they have a responsibility to comply with the Highway Code by parking and driving with due consideration and**
- (2) That Mrs Alvis is thanked for obtaining documentation from the Land Registry and**
- (3) That as TDC and DCC and the Police have several times been made aware of these persistent problems and as no available private land is thought to be available, even if TDC or DCC had resources to provide parking, no further action is taken by the Parish Council for the time being.**

Minute 874 continued:

(b) Landcross Bus Bay:

The Parish Council was advised that construction would commence in May, but no work has been carried out. Cllr Mrs Beer advised that she asked DCC Cllr Robinson to find out when the work would commence, but she had yet to be advised.

RESOLVED, that a letter is sent to DCC to find out when bus bay construction will commence, because Landcross urgently needs this facility.

(c) DCC: 20 mph Zones and Limits:

A letter from DCC had been distributed to Members before the meeting. The letter sets out a DCC / Police joint statement on the benefits and issues relating to 20 mph zones. Cllr Mrs Galvin commented that DCC had previously been resistant to requests for 20mph limits, but opinions appeared to be changing. Members also thought that policies regarding speed restriction signs, road markings and street-lighting would have to be considered when more information is available.

(d) Overgrown bushes on the highway verges:

Cllr Heard complained that overgrown bushes were covering the road sign near The Old Forge, Littleham and creating nuisance near Littleham Bus Shelter.

RESOLVED, that the Chairman asks the relevant landowners to cut back their hedges and bushes.

(e) Tractor Warning Signs:

Cllr Mrs Galvin advised that she has received favourable comments about the benefits derived from “Tractors at Work” signs being displayed. She pointed out that the signs are lowered to display position by Mr Withecombe whenever his agricultural vehicles are operate through Littleham and that it would be appropriate to thank him.

RESOLVED, that a letter of thanks is sent to Mr Charles Withecombe.

875 Littleham Village Hall & Playing Field: Hire of Village Hall:

The Village Hall Committee advises that the hire charge for Parish Council meetings has increased from £5 per meeting to £7 per meeting for 2009/10 and that it will be £8 per meeting for 2010/11. This increase is necessary because of the high cost of heating oil.

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr M Smith, seconded by Cllr Hopkins, that the new charges are accepted.

876 Parish Plan:

(a) CCD/ TDC Housing Needs Survey:

Cllr Mrs Galvin attended a Joint Meeting at Alwington on 24th June 2009 and DAPC minutes of that meeting had been distributed to members with their agendas. A “Rural Housing for Devon” letter and questionnaire on the Alwington & Littleham Housing Needs Survey 2009 was also received. The letter and questionnaire will be distributed to Littleham and Landcross residents by Parish Councillors. Parishioners are requested to complete the questionnaires by 30th September 2009.

(b) Withdrawal of DCC Mobile Library from Landcross:

Copies of E-Messages between Mrs Paula Mardo, DCC Librarian (North) and Mrs Pat Fishleigh and between Mrs Fishleigh and DCC Cllr Robinson and Geoffrey Cox MP had been circulated to Members with their agendas. DCC officers wish to withdraw the service because the library vehicle was damaged in narrow Wyltowyn Lane and because Landcross is a small community. Villagers have suggested that the Landcross Church Car Park could provide a safer alternative site, but DCC have yet to agree to this.

Cllr Mrs Beer advised that DCC are now temporarily recommending continuing the service to Landcross, starting Wednesday 5th August, pending a full Risk Assessment by the Buildings and Transport Officer.

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Hopkins, seconded by Cllr Mrs Beer, that: -

- (1) **DCC is advised that the Parish Council would be most concerned if Landcross lost the Mobile Library service and**

Minute 876(b) continued: -

- (2) **That the Parish Council welcomes DCC’s decision to temporarily recommend continuing the service to Landcross, starting Wednesday 5th August, pending a full Risk Assessment by the Buildings and Transport Officer.**
- (3) **That DCC is asked to provide the Parish Council with a copy of both the Quality Impact and the Risk Assessment relating to the proposed survey and**
- (4) **That Parish Councillors are invited to attend the site meeting when the Quality Impact and the Risk Assessment are carried out in Wyltowyn Lane and if necessary elsewhere in Landcross.**

(c) Gt. Torrington LCP:

Littleham & Landcross was not represented at the Gt. Torrington LCP AGM on 16th July 2009.

The Clerk attended a DCC / DAPC Town & Parish Working Group meeting on community engagement, service delegation and devolution in Exeter on 28th July.

877 Finance & Insurance:

(a) Authorisation of Payments, Bank Balance Report:

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Mrs Galvin, seconded by Cllr Ms Lamb, that payments to Audit Commission of £57.50 (Audit Fee + VAT), Littleham & Landcross Community Website Association £25.00 (Annual Sponsorship) and D.A.P.C. £9.00 (VAT on Annual Membership Fee) are approved.

(A £1,000 payment to Littleham Village Hall Committee was also approved later at Minute 882)

A cleared balance of £2,692.06 at 20 July 2009 was noted and the Chairman endorsed the Bank Statement.

(b) Completion of 2008/09 Audit:

Notice of satisfactory Completion of Audit has been received and displayed for the required period.

(c) Provisional Budget & Precept 2010-11:

DAPC recommends Parish Council’s to make contingency plans in case Swine Flu prevents meetings being held during the autumn when the Parish Precept is normally determined.

The meeting therefore considered a Provisional Budget for 2010/11 as a precautionary measure.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cllr M Smith, seconded by Cllr Mrs Beer, that a Provisional 2010/11 Budget (*attached as Appendix A*), with Receipts of £3,325, Payments of £3,185 and Closing Balance of £1,210 is approved and that the Parish Precept for 2010/11 shall be £3,150, unless the Parish Council amends this decision at their November 2009 Parish Council Meeting.

878 Correspondence & communications requiring attention:

(a) TDC & Dept of Communities & L Govt: Unitary Local Govt in Devon:

Correspondence was received from TDC and from the Department of Communities & Local Government. The Parish Council noted that recent judgements relating to proposals in Suffolk would have implications in Devon. The Secretary of State will set a new date for the Boundary Committee's advice to be specified, when the outcome of any appeal against the Court's judgement will be determined.

TDC Cllr Pennington advised that TDC and NDDC are co-operating and working together to make savings.

(b) TDC Gypsy Site, Derriton: correspondence noted.

(c) TDC Proposed Dog Control Measures: correspondence noted.

(d) TDC Empty Properties Survey: Questionnaires were distributed to Parish Councillors, requesting information on any known empty properties in Littleham and Landcross.

(e) DAPC Newsletter: Swine Flu etc: The newsletter had been copied to Members, because it included advice titled, "*Thinking ahead – how Town & Parish Councils help prepare for any possible flu pandemic.*" Advice included setting a 2010/11 Parish Precept before autumn when the pandemic is likely to be most serious. Minute 877c addresses this issue.

Responding to Planning Applications during a pandemic might require suspension of Standing Orders to enable Parish Council recommendations to be agreed between Members by telephone, or e-mail. Planning applications are already delivered to the Chairman for Littleham and Vice-Chairman for Landcross.

Minute 878(e) continued: -

If necessary the Clerk would be able to obtain back-up copies from TDC. Members could also access information on the TDC website,

RESOLVED on the motion of Cllr Mrs Galvin, seconded by Cllr Poole, that if the Parish Council is unable to meet during a pandemic to consider Planning Applications, then Standing Orders shall be suspended, to enable Parish Council recommendations to be agreed between Members by telephone, or e-mail.

(f) Devon Partnership NHS Trust:

An invitation to Members to become members of the Trust was copied to Parish Councillors.

(g) N Devon & Somerset Shoreline Management Plan: Cllr Hassall reported on the final meeting at Barnstaple on 16th July and advised that he has a copy of the final report and plan. The Clerk agreed to advise Mr Saltmarsh of Pillmouth to contact Cllr Hassall if he wishes to read the final report.

(h) Community Involvement in Renewable Energy: A questionnaire from Dan Hughes, a University of Manchester post-graduate student, was copied to Members who are invited to respond to his questions. Cllr Hassall responded to the questionnaire personally, but the Parish Council decided not to respond, other than to refer Mr Hughes to the "Climate Change" section of the Littleham & Landcross Parish Plan.

(i) NALC 2009 Awards for Local Councils: Noted.

(j) Go North Devon: Details of local Shopmobility and Ring & Ride services were received and noted. Information has been displayed on public notice boards in Littleham & Landcross.

(k) Vitalise: This request for grant was not accepted, because Vitalise is not a local organisation.

(l) Bideford People.co.uk website: Details of this new website were received and noted.

879 Other correspondence received since the last meeting:

DCC Highway Surface Dressing leaflet; Torridge D C magazine; DPFA The Playing Field magazine; Devon Talk magazine; Clerks & Councils Direct magazine; CCD Parish Planning course; promotional and other items; DCC In-Touch July 09 e-magazine; Safer North Devon "Rat on a Rat Campaign" and ASBO Information and an Able Community Care promotion, plus e-mails:- Second printing of John Devereux's book "In My Own Words"; DAPC and other E-Mails were made available to Members.

880 Mrs Jennifer Barker MBE: **RESOLVED**, that Mrs Barker is congratulated on being awarded an MBE.

881 Sea Locks Project: The Parish Council, at Minute 811 of 5th March 2009, had nominated the Rolle Canal Society for a Barnstaple & District Civic Society Conservation Award in respect of the Rolle Canal Sealocks Project. Cllr Hassall advised that the Rolle Canal Society had been successful and that the Society had received considerable press coverage in the North Devon Journal.
RESOLVED, that the Rolle Canal Society is congratulated on its award.

881 Payment of Parish Council contribution to Littleham Village Hall Improvements:

Cllr Mrs Beer pointed out the improvement works would commence before the next Parish Council meeting and enquired when the Parish Council would pay its £1,000 contribution.

RESOLVED, on the motion of Cllr Mrs Galvin, seconded by Cllr Heard and carried unanimously, that payment of £1,000 to Littleham Village Hall Committee is approved.

883 Next Meeting: Thursday 1st October 2009: 7.30 pm.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.12 pm.