

East Down Parish Council

Minutes of the annual meeting of the East Down Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 20th May 2024 at 7:45 pm

Attendance: Cllrs M. Wright (Chairman), Mr R Crossman, Mr R Crocker, Mrs D Fry and Mr K Phillips

The Annual Meeting of the Council and the ordinary meeting of the East Down Parish Council took place immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Parish Clerk was Chair for items 1 to 4.

- 1. Apologies for absence – County Cllr A Davis, District Cllr J Hunt, Cllrs Mrs J Kift and Mrs E McClenaghan**
- 2. Declarations of interest/Dispensations: There were none**
- 3. Election of Chairperson**

Martin Wright expressed his willingness to continue as Chair, was proposed, seconded and duly elected. Proxy votes were received from the absent councillors and duly cast by the Clerk.

- 4. Election of Vice Chairperson**

Rodney Crossman expressed his willingness to continue as Vice Chair, was proposed, seconded and duly elected. Proxy votes were received from the absent councillors and duly cast by the Clerk.

Martin Wright continued the meeting as Chair

- 5. Nomination of Councillors/Representatives to outside bodies including the Village Hall Committee and the Pine Charity**

Cllr Crossman was proposed, seconded and appointed as representative on the Village Hall Committee. Margaret Done, having expressed willingness to continue her representation was proposed, seconded and appointed to the Pine Charity.

- 6. Public participation: There were no members of the public present**

Part ‘A’

- 7. District Councillor’s Report (highlights)**

District Councillor

- As part of its plan to reduce carbon emissions NDDC is selectively replacing vehicles with electric alternatives and two have been approved so far. More EV charging points are also planned.**
- North Devon Council is undertaking a review of its Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Principles and alongside, seeking opinions on a proposed intention to implement a No Casino Resolution. As part of this, the council is looking for input from local organisations, businesses, traders, and individuals. The review is part**

of a statutory requirement for the council to revisit its gambling policies every three years, ensuring they remain aligned with evolving community needs and legislative standards. The public consultation, which began on Tuesday, 7 May, presents an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute their perspectives on the council's approach to gambling licensing. It is the first time that the council has provided notice of a proposal to bring in a No Casino Resolution, for which a wide range of opinions (including moral objections) may be considered. Alongside, the Statement of Principles, a foundational document guiding the council's decisions regarding licenses and enforcement of gambling legislation, has a number of revisions which are proposed. To participate in the consultation in respect of the No Casino Resolution proposed and the review of the Gambling Statement of Licensing Principles, interested individuals and organisations are encouraged to visit the [council's website](#).

- Barnstaple Bus Station is set to reopen this summer with a new café and toilets. Work on a new and improved layout for the station is under way, bringing the building up to date and providing a safer and more comfortable visitor experience. Toilets will be available for the public during the café's opening hours. Work is expected to take two months, and the building will reopen in July 2024.

County Councillor

- **Parish Roads and Beyond;** Several site visits made to the Parish with the local highway officer who will be chasing up why the safety defects and drainage issues have not been completed. Since February and the end of April there was barely a day without rain. The Met Office report that both March and April have seen double the average rainfall which came on the back of the 8th wettest winter on record. April also saw Storm Kathleen – the 11th named storm this season. All of this wet weather has highlighted the fragility of the highways assets and seen record numbers of potholes recorded across the County. The backlog of known safety defects was contained to a maximum of 2,200, previous years have seen figures closer to 3,000 and in 2018 reached 7,500. In April, Milestone repaired 8,477 potholes, which is the highest number since the contract commenced in April 2017. The impact of this focus on safety related works has been the suspension of 'serviceability' defects (potholes that don't meet intervention criteria). It is hoped that this work programme will recommence before the end of May. The Highways and Traffic Management Service has seen a very welcome injection of additional budget for this financial year.
- **EV Charging Points;** County Council has been awarded more than £7m of Government funding to support its delivery of thousands of new, publicly accessible, Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points across the county over the next few years.
- **Household Support Fund;** It is welcome news that we are able to confirm that DCC have been allocated a little over £5 million from the government to help households struggling to pay higher bills for energy, food, water, and other essential items. This will be the fifth round of Household Support Funding that we have received from the Department for Work and Pensions, to run between April and September 2024. It will take Devon's total level of Household Support Funding received so far to just over £30 million. The funding is to support households in most need, but specifically those that may not be eligible for other support that is already available from the government.

8. **Minutes of the previous meeting.**

It was proposed and seconded and RESOLVED to ACCEPT and sign the minutes.

9. **Matters arising from the minutes**

None.

10. **Planning Applications**

- There were no planning applications received.
- A potential planning issue at Cleave Farm was notified by a parishioner and will be looked at and reported back to the next meeting.
- As NDDC have made no progress on the potential planning issue at Ashelford Farm, an analysis of the planning applications that have possible relevance to the latest matter was undertaken and the Clerk reported back to the EDPC. It was AGREED this would be sent to the NDDC Head of Planning with a request to confirm whether they were going to investigate the matter raised in September 2023 or not.

11. **Potholes in the Parish**

- **Cllr Crossman is documenting** all significant potholes and trying to get them registered on the DCC website, but with some issues with the online application. Once complete it will be sent to Andrea Davis and discussed at a subsequent meeting.

12. **Report of Dumping of Contaminated Soil**

- A report of dumping of contaminated soil from Bowden Corner to Indicott Cross has been reported by a parishioner. It is clear that this is not gully waste that has been spread on verges in the past as there are visible signs of metal, general waste, wood and plant debris. The location of the soil and its spreading has reduced some of the passing spaces in size. Soil was also dumped last year which led to a profusion of invasive species (Giant Hogweed/Himalayan Balsam), which it is prohibited to move in this way, and non-invasive wild garlic. There have been cases before where the plant material that has been spread contained the invasive species Japanese Knotweed. The verges are then left to local farmers and residents to control the invasive weeds. The location of the dumped soil is close to water courses with the risk that contaminants may leach into the runoff and cause water quality issues. The EDPC is concerned about both matters and have asked the Clerk to raise the matter with Andrea Davis as she has also been made aware of the matter by the parishioner who made the original report. The Environment Agency have been made aware of the issue.

13. **Financial statement of accounts and to agree payments**

The year end accounts 31st March 2024 and bank reconciliations were presented by the Clerk and no issues were raised. It was proposed and seconded that the accounts be APPROVED and ACCEPTED as a true and fair representation. The AGAR forms were also presented and it was proposed and seconded to APPROVE and ACCEPT the forms for signature by the Chair and the Clerk. The

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS and PUBLICATION OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (EXEMPT AUTHORITY) was also APPROVED for publication on 1st June 2024.

Bank balances were:

Parish Council A/C: £6,756.05

Parish Paths A/C: £1,060.83

Bank accounts are now fully operational online and AUTHORITY was given for online bank transfers to be raised for Clerk's salary (£125) and EasySpace Website subscription (£30.68)

14. **Chairman's Items**

- **Register of Interests 2024-2025** - the majority of forms have been received and those remaining are in process.
- **Appointments to Sub-Committees** – deferred to next meeting
- **Foul water issue (update)** – EA have recommenced dye testing in stages but progress remains frustratingly slow. EA have been requested to complete work and resolve issue within the next 2 months.
- **Church Bench** – Cllr Crossman advised that the Millenium Bench in the churchyard needs to be repaired or replaced. A replacement would require Diocese approval but a repair does not. There are no funds available for repair and Cllr Crossman asked whether it would be appropriate for the EDPC to provide some money. Following discussion and a vote it was RESOLVED that it would not be an appropriate use of council funds.
- **Fitting of Council notice board** – now completed and in operation.

15. **Correspondence**

- Email about soil dumping
- Email – NDDC Playing Pitch Strategy
- Email NDDC Elections – Crime Commissioner
- Bev Triggs NDDC – Parish Forum meetings
- Complete Weed Control – offer of services

16. **Date for next meeting – 15th July 2024 at 7:30pm**

Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted information)

There were no items under Part "B"

The meeting closed at 20:45