

East Down Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the East Down Parish Council held in the Village Hall on
Monday 18th March 2024 at 7:30 pm**

Attendance: Cllrs M. Wright (Chairman), Mrs J Kift, Mr R Crossman, Mr R Crocker

- 1. Apologies for absence – County Cllr A Davis, Cllr D Fry,**
- 2. Declarations of interest/Dispensations: There were none**
- 3. Public participation: There was one member of the public present**

Part ‘A’

4. County Councillor’s Report (highlights)

Devon County Council, Budget

Council tax will increase by 4.99% for 2024/2025 with increases in expenditure on adult and children’s services as well as climate change, environment and transport.

There will also be a £1.5m boost to regular road drainage since the target budget was set to tackle the increase in potholes caused by the heavy rains this winter.

Devon Retrofit Guide

Devon County Council have published a free guide giving Devon homeowners, tradespeople and architects detailed advice about adding energy efficiency measures to the house types most commonly found in Devon.

The link to the guide is free to download

here: https://www.energysavingdevon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2024/02/231121_2067_Devon-Retrofit_LR.pdf

Highways Update

There been a reduction in gritting treatments, which has been below the 5-year average for November, December and January. The Asset Management and the Network Response teams collaborated closely together to prepare for the winter season learning from the previous winter season. As a result of this and the milder winter, the service has recorded 5,500 safety defect potholes in January.

The significant reduction in the gritting operations has freed up resources to continue the planned patching operations to reduce safety defect potholes across the county.

Gully cleaning operations have slipped behind programme due to the high number of extreme weather events responded to this year and a series of unexpected equipment breakdowns. Milestone (the contractor) are confident that all programmed gullies will have been attended by the end of March.

A lot of work has been put into addressing drainage referrals raised by the cleaning gangs. Over 14,000 gully issues have been resolved this financial year, however, the backlog remains high with new issues identified as quickly as the old ones are being tackled.

The joint trial with Devon's Flood team to place gully sensors in selected streets in Devon is now live. The data recorded will provide insight into whether technology can be used to inform policy or reaction for cyclical gully cleaning. The trial intends to run for an 18-month period.

Highway defects

Changes have been made to the front end of the 'report a problem' website. The additional information will help provide data to inform future enhancements and hopes to highlight that members of the public can add themselves to existing reports rather than enter duplicate reports.

Report a pothole - <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>

5. Minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED to ACCEPT and sign the minutes.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

7. Planning Applications

There are no planning applications to discuss

8. Financial statement of accounts for the year and to agree payments

Bank balances January 2024 were:

Parish Council A/C: £6,094.89

Parish Paths A/C: £1,060.83

Cheques signed for Clerk's salary (£125)

9. Chairman's Items

- **Foul water issue (update)** – no progress to report.
- **Fitting of Council notice board** – will be fitted as soon as weather improves.
- **Potential unauthorised access at Ashelford Farm (update)** – the Clerk reported that case reference 13817 is still pending. No response received from request for assistance to District Councillor.
- **Administration of bank accounts and payment authorisation** - progress has been made with signatories access but still some access outstanding.

- **Co-Option of Councillors** – NDDC notification received that no election is required so co-option of councillors can proceed. Following discussion and the completion of Consent to Co-option forms by the two parishioners that had expressed an interest, it was proposed and seconded that Keith Philips and Erica McClenaghan be co-opted to the council. Their Declaration of Acceptance forms will be signed and witnessed at the next council meeting.
- **Potholes** – given the increasing deterioration of the roads in East Down and the danger from larger potholes, the Clerk was requested to email Andrea Davis about the Council’s concerns over the lack of repair work or notification about planned work.
- **Parish Council Strimmer** – it was discussed that the Council’s strimmer has not been used for some time. It was proposed and seconded that the strimmer be donated to the East Down church to be used for the church’s maintenance. It can remain stored at the Parish Hall.

10. Correspondence

- Email about insurance renewal
- Email from Trainline enquiring about advertising on parish website
- DALC Bulletin

11. Date for next meeting – 15th April 2024 at 7:30pm

Part ‘B’ (Confidential Restricted information)

There were no items under Part “B”

The meeting closed at 20:25