

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Held in the Nicholls Hall
Tuesday 19th February 2008

014-2008 Present:

Ms L Ellicott (Chairman): Mrs K Boyd: Mrs L Cole: Mrs S Holland: Ms C Moriarty: Mrs A Martin (Clerk)

Parishoners and others in attendance: Cllr A Hosking, Cllr I McPhie, CSO Dave Chapple, Ms C Maddern and Mr A Colston from the National Trust and one Parishoner were in attendance.

15-2008 Apologies for Absence: Ms J Gannon (away): Mr I Hammerton (unwell)

16-2008 Declaration of Interests None

17-2008 Parishoners and Visitors Time:

17.1 CSO Chapple reported that no crimes had been reported in Lydford in the last month. Minor incidents included some lost property, horses on the road, flares at Willsworthy and concern for welfare.

Mrs Holland entered the meeting, having been delayed by driving a Parishoner to a distant hospital appointment.

Mrs Holland had been contacted by a Parishoner who was worried by young people skateboarding in Hawthorn Park. Residents of Hawthorn Park present at the meeting reported that they had seen the skateboarders, but had not observed any unreasonable behaviour. CSO Chapple was requested to continue to monitor the situation, which he has been doing already.

17.2 Mr Adrian Colston, of the National Trust, gave an informative briefing on the work of the National Trust at Lydford Gorge and other local NT properties in trying to reduce carbon footprints. A Bill currently going through Parliament will require carbon emissions to be cut by 60 to 80% in the future, and in any case the National Trust regards itself as an environmentally aware organisation and seeks a vanguard position in the fight against Climate Change.

At Castle Drogo the existing boiler is both expensive and polluting, and there are plans to change it for a wood fired system using home produced wood from the property's own land. The Trust is also looking at the possibility of installing a wood fired boiler at the Gorge using the 14 acres of land which came with the Manor Farm Tea Room as a sustainable source of wood.

An investigation is under way regarding the reinstatement of Hydro-Electric Power generation in the Teign Valley, and also the old water wheels at Finch Foundry.

The catering facilities at the various Trust properties generate waste for which recycling is more difficult than at a domestic property due to commercial constraints and restrictions. A "Rocket" has been installed at Cotehele which turns food waste into compost in a relatively short time, and there are plans to install a similar device at the Gorge. There are also plans to plant an orchard at the main entrance.

An Illustrated Talk will be given at the Waterfall entrance on 18th March, and Mr Coulston also offered to run a session in the village with information for householders about the calculation of their individual carbon footprint, and advice in taking steps to reduce it.

CSO Chapple, MS Maddern and Mr Coulston left the meeting at the end of Visitors time.

18-2008 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15th January 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

19-2008 Matters arising:

19.1 Bus services update: An octogenarian Parishoner has complained to Mrs Holland that a bus driver had refused to allow her to alight at the Castle Inn and had insisted that the only place in Lydford where the bus would stop is at the War Memorial. Other drivers are extremely kind and helpful, and it was hoped that this was an isolated incident. The Clerk will contact Customer Services at First Bus to clarify the situation as the Council has always understood that on rural routes the arrangement is that the bus will stop on request at places other than designated stops, and that in any case the Castle Inn is a designated stop. Members expressed disquiet that this vulnerable passenger had received such treatment for no apparent reason.

19.2 Highways, Parking and Traffic Issues Update: The Chairman had visited Mrs Wells, Headteacher, at the School on 8th February. They discussed the safety of the children walking from the War Memorial to the School, and agreed that it would be desirable for the grass bank adjacent to the Devon Bank along this section to be removed and the space used for the construction of a pavement. The Clerk will make enquiries of the Highways Authority. Mrs Wells reported that the School is operating at full capacity, and that approximately half the pupils arrive by car from homes outside the central area of the village. The Chairman reported how impressed she had been by her tour of the school.

The lengthsman has completed his recent visit to the village. The Clerk has supplied the address of the highways manager to one Parishoner who wanted to send a letter of appreciation for the work done in proximity to her house. It was noted that the gully had been cleared alongside Lake Cottage. There is a soakaway near the War Memorial which may need unblocking on the lengthsman's next visit.

19.3 Parish Plan Update – The Chairman, in the absence of Ms Gannon, reported that the Parish Plan Steering Committee are still in negotiation with the Devon County Council Statisticians to resolve issues around the wording of the questions. The professional county Statisticians have an expertise in ensuring that the way the questions are worded avoids the introduction of bias, and this is an important part of the preparation of the main questionnaire.

19.4 Post Office – Councillors had received briefing notes regarding the Survey on Rural Post Offices being conducted by West Devon Borough Council, and the Parish council will now make a submission in support of our rural Post Offices. It had been noted that the Post Office website is set to promote the provision of financial services including the provision of insurance and mortgages, but that little or no mention is made of the rural post offices that provide such an essential service in outlying areas.

19.5 Captain Hunter's Dedication – The invitations sent out so far have received a good response, and an invitation to all Parishoners and friends of the Parish will be included in the March edition of the Parish Magazine. Col Clarke has been in touch with the Royal Engineers and we are expecting representatives from both serving and retired Royal Engineers, including a Standard Bearer. The Clerk has also been in recent communication with representatives from the Royal British Legion. Permission has been obtained from the Duchy of Cornwall for a Land Rover to traverse the moor in order to transport those for whom the walk from the car park to the plaque site would be too difficult, and our Dartmoor Ranger Paul Glanville will provide this service using the DNPA Land Rover. The Rev Ian Sykes will assist with the service, and we are still trying to get a military padre as well. The clerk reported that she has been unable so far to find a bugler. We are hoping that representatives from the Scouting movement will be able to attend, this being made more difficult by the fact that it is a working day for Devon schools. A Press Release will be sent out shortly to a variety of local media organisations.

19.6 Ancient Spring Update: The Clerk reported that she had recently been in touch with Mr John Pettit RIBA, the Project Manager. A detailed site meeting had recently taken place with the Devon Wildlife Trust regarding the proposed planting of the site, and he is awaiting their written report which may affect the requirements for the preparation of the site by contractors. Mesdames Cole and Martyn have visited the solicitor with information about the Parish Council's historic activity at the site, and are expecting to have to make a return visit when papers for signature have been prepared.

20-2008 Receive Reports from Councillors on respective outside bodies:

20.1 DNPA Consultative Forum - No meeting this month

20.2 Police Authority – No meeting this month.

20.3 Southern Parishes Link Committee – No meeting this month

20.4 Nicholls Hall Committee – Mrs Boyd reported that the Hall Committee has some new members. The Clerk's surgeries have started on Tuesday mornings. The last Bistro Nite raised £346 and the next date is 7th March. The new chairs have now been ordered.

20.5 West Devon Borough Council: Councillor McPhie reported that the Area Review Team from the Royal Mail have visited, but that Post Office closures are going to happen, with 20th May being the date on which the announcements of which offices will be affected will be made. The WDBC increase in Council Tax will be 4.5%, which equates to a rise of approximately 15p per week for each household. Mrs Holland pointed out that for OAP's this will use up the entirety of their pension increase, but there was general understanding that central Government is steadily reducing local Government funding in real terms, and West Devon suffers from the geographical spread of its population relative to the actual number of contributing households. Cllr McPhie reported that representatives of the OAP's had been sympathetic in their appreciation of the situation.

21-2008 Receive the financial report:

21.1 The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, presented members with the financial statement and a supplementary written report detailing the following points:

i). We have now received a cheque for £70 from Lloyds TSB

ii) The information pack from the CAF Bank had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

The Bank's wording of the proposal to appoint it as the Parish Council's bankers was read out by the Clerk and it was unanimously RESOLVED that this be accepted. The Clerk will now continue the process of changing to the CAF bank. We are awaiting from HMRC the confirmation that the Parish Council as a corporate body is not liable for income tax, and this has been frustratingly difficult to obtain due to confusion within HMRC as to which section of the organisation might supply it.

iii) The Clerk had requested the council's Insurance Company to increase the insured value of Captain Hunter's Plaque to £2500.00 as advised by the foundry. This has been done without further charge for the current year, but will incur a price increase of £27.50 on the premium when the policy comes up for renewal.

iv) The Clerk reported that some stationery items are so much cheaper from the supermarket that it more than outweighs the fact that we can not reclaim the VAT. Printer inks are already sourced from an internet supplier on this basis. We will shop around on an item by item basis for the best value.

v) We have received notification that the cost of the CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) registration will rise sharply in April, when an existing subsidy is removed. The Clerk sought, and received, authorisation to apply for CiLCA registration and to attend the forthcoming CiLCA course being organized by the NALC (National Association of Local Councils), for which a bursary of £200 has been promised. The CiLCA registration fee is currently £70, rising to £150 in April. The course fee is £250.

21.2 The following balances were reported:

Current account – £591.51

Deposit account - £4772.93

Parish Plan - £1331.38

Ancient Spring - £9812.80

The following cheques were authorised from the general budget: Clerk salary & expenses £303.93: HMRC (via Post Office Ltd) £30.75: Mainly Stationery £11.06: SLCC (for CiLCA Registration £70, SACLCA (for CiLCA course) 250.00. A further transfer of £2000 from the Deposit Account to the Current Account was authorised, there will then be sufficient to open the CAF account with the minimum deposit of £1000 ready in our Current Account.

Provisions held as shown on the sheet circulated to members and attached to the master set of minutes.

22-2007 Correspondence:

1. A letter from Geoffrey Cox MP regarding Bus Services and the operation of the new free passes.
2. A letter of reply from the Chief Constable to our letter regarding Community Policing expressing our appreciation of the work done by our Community Constable, supported by our Community Support Officer
3. A letter from St Petroc's Church regarding their proposed Christmas Tree Festival next year. It was decided to support this event and a reply will be sent to the effect that the Parish Council will decorate a tree.
4. From Devon County Council – notification of new entries for the Common Land register
5. Information from the Council for the Protection of Rural England about the work of their organisation.
6. A letter from The Worshipful Mayor of West Devon inviting nominations for an organisation and a young person for this year's Mayoral Awards
7. South West Lifelong Learning Network – a research programme has recently been embarked on which will require all councillors and clerks to complete a short questionnaire. The Clerk suggested that Councillors might want to instruct her to try to negotiate some free training in return for their time and energy in supporting this research, and this was felt to be a good idea.
8. DCC – re consultation on New Procedures in Development Management. There was no instruction to respond to this consultation.
9. St Petroc's Church PCC – we received a copy of the letter sent by the PCC to Cllr McPhie regarding WDBC toilet closure, which was considered in conjunction with Item 15, a letter received by the Council from Cathy Aubertin (WDBC manager) giving reasons why the offer by the Castle Inn to open and clean the toilets for free over the winter months was not viable. Cllr McPhie was requested to ascertain why, when the system of key opening of the public toilets by local businesses is in place in Cornwall it is out of the question in Devon, and also why at Hatherleigh, which is in the Borough of West Devon, the toilets appear not to be subject to the same regime as in Lydford. It seemed to fly in the face of common sense that if the toilets were to be opened at all they must be kept open throughout the 24 hour period, with the lights burning unnecessary electricity right through the night, when demand for their use occurred during the day and evening with a higher demand at weekends. This policy made a stark contrast with the carbon footprint awareness engendered by the earlier briefing by the National Trust. Cllr McPhie reported that next winter there might be a possibility of the toilets being opened at weekends only, and that the policy was under review. It would be too late for the current winter, and the toilets will remain closed, but will reopen before the Easter weekend in March.

Regarding the remainder of this winter, Mesdames Cole and Moriarty have received verbal notification from the landlord of the Castle Inn that he intends to erect a notice on the public toilets inviting members of the public to use the Castle Inn's toilets from 8.30 am until Closing Time. The Council members were delighted to receive such a generous and public-spirited offer, and a letter of thanks will be sent. An item on the morning's edition of the BBC's Breakfast News Programme had drawn attention to a similar scheme being run elsewhere in the country.

10. A letter from WDBC informing us of proposed Training for Parish Councils, which they anticipate will be open to the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman. No more details are available as yet. The letter also informed us that changes to the way complaints that a councillor has broken the Code of Conduct are made are expected to come into force later in the spring, again with more information to follow.

11. Devon Communities in Action – information about free workshops to be held at various venues in Devon. The Chairman is intending to attend the one in Tavistock on 21st February.

12. Community Council of Devon – Survey of Rural Retailers and information from “Store is the Core” regarding the setting up of community shops. The Clerk reported that she had returned the CCD questionnaire reporting that there was now no retail shop at all in Lydford. She had also returned the pro-forma from “Store is the Core” expressing an interest in receiving further details as the deadline for this was on 15th February, soon after the receipt of the information.

13. DAPC meetings and training event dates for 2008.

14. A letter from Col Clark regarding the Plaque ceremony.

15. Letter from Cathy Aubertin (WDBC services manager) re toilet closure (see under item 10)

16. Devon County Council information on communication access. The emergency numbers are:

Social Services 0845 600 0388

Highways 01392 383329

Animal welfare, petrol and explosives 01392 499499.

All non-emergency numbers are 0845 numbers which currently cost 5p per minute during office hours on a BT phone. The Clerk can supply these numbers on request.

17. West Devon Local Development Framework Core Strategy further consultation report, comments by 14th March. This does not affect Lydford directly, but does have outlines of development plans in Tavistock and Okehampton, including the reopening of the Tavistock-Plymouth rail link.

18. A request under the Freedom of Information Act for the following information:

The budget forecast for 08/09

The budget v actual expenditure to date for 07/08

The budget v actual expenditure for 06/07.

The clerk reported that this information would be provided within the 20 working days allowed.

19. A letter with an update on the Unitary Authority proposed by Exeter City Council. The Boundary Committee will be asked by the central Government to conduct a review of local government arrangements across Devon.

20. A letter from the National Training Strategy for Town and Parish Councils detailing the increase in CiLCA fees from 1st April

21. The report on the Ethical Governance in West Devon Parishes compiled by Dr Roger Meyrick, Chairman of the Standards Committee of the West Devon Borough Council. The report’s conclusions included the following;

That Annual changes of Chairmen should be avoided, with three to four years being the most desirable time for the Chairman to remain in post.

That Clerks should not feel that they have to accept responsibility for the Council decisions.

That there is a need for targeted training at both induction and continuing development for the role of Parish Councillor. Parish Clerks should attend induction training soon after appointment and continue their professional development throughout their time in post. Councillors taking the Chair should receive specific training.

That the Parish council is not primarily an administrative authority, but its main functions lie with its contact with the electorate, to carry those views forward to the governance above.

That Ethical Governance is being observed in the great majority of Parishes in West Devon.

22. News from WDBC about the proposed re-opening of the railway line from Tavistock and also with news of the new NHS dentist in Tavistock.

23. A letter from the Lydford House Hotel regarding the “missing link” in the cycle track, and asking for support in pressing for the proposal to acquire the land and complete the track to be carried out. The Council were happy to give support for this as it was felt that at the moment cyclists are taking a grave

risk by using the A386 along the missing section, and that the longer this situation continues the more likely it is that a serious accident will occur as a result. A letter will be sent to Graham Cornish at DCC. 24. Some members had each been sent a letter from a Parishoner to which the Chairman sought authorisation to respond personally. This was granted.

24-2008 Planning Notifications and Applications

24.1 Planning permission has been **granted** by DNPA for the demolition of existing garage and workshop and construction of new garage and workshop: construction of bedroom and shower room in the existing roof space; removal of existing dormer window and rooflight; insertion of new rooflights at Trehaven, Lydford.

24.2 . Planning permission has been **granted** by DNPA for the conversion of adjoining outbuildings into extra living space in the form of an additional reception room and office/studio/library over a store at Cross Cottage, Lydford

24.3 **Consent** has been given to fell a tree at Bridge House Lodge

24.4 An **amended plan** has been received for the Builder's Office in which changes to the glazing and fences are detailed. The members did not feel that the amendments warranted any changes to their original comments.

24.5 An **application** has been received from DNPA to: Remove existing entrance porch and construct covered porch and stone-faced retaining wall, including hand railing to parking area, with access steps at Bridge House Lodge, Lydford

The application had only just been received on the day of the meeting. Members looked at the plans and could see no reason not to support the proposal. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The council SUPPORTS this proposal, which it believes will improve the existing structure.

25-2008 Items raised at the previous meeting for inclusion on this agenda:

25.1 An Emergency Plan for Lydford – This was postponed until Mr Hammerton is recovered.

25.2 Planning procedures update: The Clerk had supplied some briefing notes to Members regarding the legality of planning procedures. Recently we have requested two different extensions to the consultation period to enable plans to go through the full council meeting, but DNPA guidelines are that this should be done only in extreme circumstances. To remain within the legal framework it would be necessary either to appoint a planning sub-committee to meet regularly at dates between full council meetings, and this is done in larger Parishes like Buckland Monachorum, where there is a constant stream of applications to consider. The alternative is to give the Clerk delegated powers. With these she is empowered to circulate plans around the councillors between meetings, to gain a consensus of opinion and to proceed accordingly. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should be given these delegated powers.

25.3 The caravan alongside the A386 had been removed the day after the previous meeting.

26-2008 Items raised for inclusion on the next Agenda

No items were raised.

27-2008 To agree the date of the next meeting:

The date of **Tuesday 18th March 2008** was agreed commencing at 7.00 pm. It was also agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should take place on Tuesday 8th April commencing at 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 8.35 pm.

Annie Martin

Clerk to the Parish Council

20th February 2008

Signed as a true and accurate record..... (Chairman) Date.....