

Membury Parish Council

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Minutes of the Council Meeting held at the Membury Village Hall on Thursday 26th November 2015

Present: Cllrs D Burrough (Chairman), R Barrell (Vice Chair), M Bell, M Burrough, B Foster, R Foster, S Foster and L Warren.

In attendance: Parish Clerk and Cllr Andrew Moulding (DCC).

Apologies: Cllr P Pearse, Cllr Paul Diviani (EDDC). PCSO's A Trott & H Widger, Alex Tasker and Jeremy Wallace.

Declarations of Interest: No Declarations were made at this stage of the meeting.

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October, 2015 were adopted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.
2. **Matters Arising:** With reference to the Blackdown Hills Natural Futures (Minute No. 12) Cllr D Burrough reported that she had contacted the Blackdown Hills Natural Futures to request further details relating to this project.

County and District Reports: Apologies were received from Cllr Diviani, who said he would forward a report shortly. Cllr Moulding had discussed improving communications better between the Highways Intelligence Group and local councils with Meg Booth, Highways Intelligence Group Manager, and it was suggested a link to the main DCC website might list all work being carried out by Devon Highways, as well as informing the Clerk to the Council of future road issues. On 4th November Cllr Moulding met with Nick Allen, Neighbourhood Highways Officer, and made a highways tour of the parish along with Cllrs B Foster and S Foster. He also held a meeting to consider submissions for the Parishes Together Funding. As Chairman of the Place Scrutiny Committee at Devon County Council, Cllr Moulding reported that as the contract with Southwest Highways was coming to an end, new arrangements needed to be in place by March 2017. Sharing a contract with other local councils would be more competitive. Cllr Moulding spoke about the Electoral Review of Devon County Council. A further consultation had taken place on the draft recommendations for North Devon. Cllr Moulding felt that this indicated that the Local Government Boundary Commission would not be suggesting any different division patterns from those already proposed for the rest of Devon. Therefore, Devon County Council would be going with the recommendation of 11 councillors for East Devon. Membury would be in the Whimple and Newbridges Division comprising 21 parish councils with one County Councillor. The Boundary Commission had recently announced that they would be looking at East Devon District Council in a future electoral review programme.

3. **Police Report:** Membury had no reported crimes for October and none so far for November 2015.
4. **Correspondence:** Leaflets had been received from the Blackdown Hills Parish Network. It was suggested that they could be put in the Post Office so residents could take one if they wished. Cllr M Bell offered to be the Parish Council's representative at future meetings of the Blackdown Hills Parish Network.

Cllr M Bell and Cllr R Foster along with the Clerk had offered to attend a meeting for Parish/Town Councils at East Devon District Council on Tuesday 1st December, 2015.

Cllr D Burrough had received a letter from resident Mr Scott Wills regarding unfinished work at the entrance to New House Farm. Kevin Pearse said that he would attend to this, however Cllr S Foster said that he should wait and let County Highways deal with this which they planned to do in January. Cllr Moulding also said that County Highways should be allowed to do the work. If the entrance to New House Farm was the only work completed this would not solve the problems further down the lane. Cllr S Foster said he would visit both Mr Wills and Mr Pearse to discuss the situation.

5. **Neighbourhood Plan:** Cllr D Burrough offered the Parish Councils' congratulations to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on securing a grant of £3,100 from the Community Rights Programme which is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. She particularly thanked Nick Yool for all the work he had done to successfully secure this grant. Concern was again raised regarding the sustainability of the village. Councillors asked why Chardstock was considered to be a sustainable village, even though it had no public transport that served the village, but Membury was not. Cllr Diviani and Cllr Moulding had previously stated that the issue of the sustainability of villages needed to be looked at again and Neighbourhood Plans should be determined on their own merits. Cllr Moulding felt that the Local Plan Inspector would say that Officers at the District Council need to resolve these issues. The Neighbourhood Plan was not expected to be completed until after the Local Plan had been adopted. The District Council was expecting the Planning Inspectors report and decision on the Local Plan early in the new year. Cllr S Foster said he could see no reason why the Neighbourhood Plan could not be completed before the Local Plan was endorsed. Cllr Moulding stressed that the Neighbourhood Plan could not be at variance with the Local Plan. Cllr Mike Bell reported to the meeting on behalf of Alex Tasker that the Neighbourhood Plan was almost complete and stressed the need that the Neighbourhood Plan needed to be finalised before considering the setting up of a Community Land Trust.
6. **East Devon District Council Consultations:** There were currently two documents out for public consultation from East Devon District Council.
Local Plan consultation on changes since the July hearing sessions: Cllr Bell said that 84% of the parish were in favour of a small amount of development and villages should be allowed to determine their own destiny. Cllr Bell had written to Neil Parish MP concerning the sustainability issues in the village. Mr Parish had written to the District Council asking for their views on how future sustainable development would be allowed in Membury. Ed Freeman, Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management, had replied saying that Membury was not the only village which was considered as unsustainable by the District Council. The Council was committed to supporting and encouraging Neighbourhood Plan making. The Local Plan had identified villages that were sustainable and those that were not. The District Council's approach was to allocate development in the most suitable and sustainable locations. That was not to say that no development should take place within the smaller villages, but currently there was no need to make any allocations to them. The smaller villages that had a good range of services and facilities would have a built-up area boundary where development would be acceptable. Beyond these settlements the approach was that development should only come forward through Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr Bell said that Membury was a vibrant community with Membury Primary School growing in numbers. It was agreed that Cllr Bell would work with Cllr R Foster and the Clerk to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council. Letters and observations from Alex Tasker, Neil Parish and residents would be added to the response. Cllr Bell, Cllr R Foster and Alex Tasker were thanked for all the work they had done on both the response to the consultation and the Neighbourhood Plan.
Local Plan consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation – development plan document: It was agreed by the Council and supported by Cllr Moulding that the Parish Council would not respond to this consultation as Membury was not a sustainable location for Gypsy and Travellers sites.

7. Finance:

MEMBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Bank Reconciliation as at 25th November 2015

October 1st 2015	Opening Balance	16263.89
	PLUS INCOME	
9/10/15 – 9/11/15	Interest	0.55
11/11/15	Community Rights Programme Grant (ref NP)	3,100.00
	TOTAL	19,364.44
	LESS EXPENDITURE	
20/10/15	CHQ 834 - J Wallace – Grass Cutting	312.00
20/10/15	CHQ 835 - Membury Village Hall	5.00
29/10/15	CHQ 836 – EDDC – Election Charges	698.96
29/10/15	CHQ 837 – DALC – Subscription	10.00
23/11/15	CHQ 838 – S Jones – Wages/Stationery/Travel	719.17
25/11/15	CHQ 839 – R Martin – Grass Cutting	70.00
25/11/15	CHQ 840 – DALC – Training Course	60.00
	TOTAL	1,875.13
	CLOSING BALANCE	17,489.31
	November 25th Bank Balances – Treasurers Account	10,343.48
	Business Bank Instant	8,000.00
		18,343.48
	Less Not Cleared Cheques - 833	5.00
	838	719.17
	839	70.00
	840	60.00
		17,489.31

The Clerk had received three subscription renewals from Devon Communities Together, Blackdown Hills Parish Network and the Society for Local Council Clerks. It was resolved to renew the subscriptions to Devon Communities Together, Blackdown Hills Parish Network but not the Society for Local Council Clerks.

The Parish Paths Partnership Finance Forms had been received from Devon County Council. It was agreed that Cllr B Foster, Footpath Warden, liaise with Nick Yool and the Clerk to complete these forms which needed to be returned to Devon County Council by Monday 15th February, 2016.

8. **Budget for 2016/17:** Cllr Barrell circulated a draft copy of the proposed budget for 2016/17. Several expense codes had been increased due to new councillors and the new clerk having to go on several training courses during the year. The increase also made provision for services which possibly were going to be handed down to the Parish Council from County/District Councils. The total increase in the budget for 2016/17 compared to 2015/16 was just over £2,000 meaning that a Band D property rating would go up by approximately £10 per year for the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax. It was proposed by Cllr M Bell and seconded by Cllr M Burrough and carried unanimously to increase the budget as above with it coming back to the January meeting for final amendments. Cllr S Foster was

concerned about the increase in the precept and said that the Council needed to be transparent and open in all of its processes. Being a smaller council Membury would have to comply with the Transparency Code in 2016.

9. **Planning:**

Planning applications validated by East Devon District Council for October 2015:

Roof over existing yard area - **Challenger Farm Membury Axminster.**

Construction of porches, reconstruction of two storey extension and replacement roof coverings – **Bridge Meadow, Yarcombe, Honiton.**

T1, Hornbeam: Reduce or remove selected branches to lift and clean the crown – **Little Haddons, Membury, Axminster.**

Construction of an agricultural workers dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved) – **New House Farm, Membury, Axminster.**

Planning applications validated by East Devon District Council from 1st – 25th November 2015:

Construction of trailer port and replacement workshop – **Rock Mill, Membury, Axminster.**

Extensions and alterations to dwelling house and erection of outbuilding – **Littlemore, Membury, Axminster.**

Planning applications decided by East Devon District Council for October 2015:

Construction of agricultural dwelling - **Challenger Farm Membury Axminster. APPROVED**

Barn conversion into swimming pool for domestic use with replacement of timber frame with new green oak frame structure (revisions to planning consent 13/2358/FUL) - **Luggs Farm Membury Axminster. APPROVED**

Barn conversion into a swimming pool for domestic use and replacement of timber frame with new green oak frame structure - **Luggs Farm Membury Axminster. APPROVED**

Roof over existing yard area - **Challenger Farm Membury Axminster. APPROVED**

Planning applications decided by East Devon District Council from 1st – 25th November 2015:

Construction of an agricultural workers dwelling (outline application with all matters reserved) – **New House Farm, Membury, Axminster.**

10. **Update on Parishes Together Funding:** Cllr S Foster gave the meeting an update on the Parishes Together Fund after attending a meeting with Cllr Moulding. The Council had £220 left to spend this financial year which could not be carried forward to next year. The Parish Clerk at Musbury held some monies from the Parishes Together Fund for Membury which was to be used for highways and ground maintenance work. Cllr John Hart, Leader of Devon County Council, had announced that next year parishes would not have to work together on projects and could use their Parishes Together Funding to pay towards highways maintenance. It was resolved to use the remainder of this year's funding to buy equipment to carry out maintenance work and use next years' funding for highway maintenance. Chapter 8 training, which Road Wardens need to complete, was provided 'free of charge'. Once completed volunteers then needed to have further training on how to repair potholes and other highway issues. The Parish Council are looking for people who would be interested in becoming a Road Warden. It was agreed to contact Hilary Kirkcaldie, Town Clerk at Axminster, who is Chapter 8 trained and Jane Bishop, Clerk to Musbury Parish Council, to get further information and advice.
11. **Blackdown Hills Parish Network Response to Questionnaire:** It was agreed that all Councillors would have a look at this questionnaire and respond accordingly. Responses needed to be received by 1st February, 2016.
12. **Highways:** Sandra Little and Jason Hawkes had cleared drains and ditches in the village, some of them as an emergency. It was agreed that the Council needed to purchase a set of drain rods which could be used across the parish. Going forward the Council should have a policy on how it wished to deal with the clearing of ditches and drains. If work was being carried out on a live carriageway then for every two people working, one should have had the chapter 8 training. Cllr S Foster said that the Council needed to check that people who were carrying out highway maintenance work for the Council had received this training. If a person volunteered to do any work, then they did so at their

own risk and were not covered by the County Councils' public liability insurance. The Council will need to comply with the terms of the Road Warden Scheme. It was suggested that Sandra Little and Jason Hawkes were asked whether they would be interested in becoming Road Wardens and completing the chapter 8 training course. Cllr Barrell offered to contact Sandra and Jason to see if they were interested. Pot holes were reported on the road from Selah to Chard with several being in the same area. Cllr B Foster said he would report these online to Devon County Council. On the Furley Cross to Yarty road there were also some bad potholes.

Cllrs B Foster and S Foster had accompanied Cllr Moulding and Nick Allen, Neighbourhood Highways Officer, on a highways tour of the parish. Issues relating to potholes and highway maintenance had been raised with Nick Allen which he said he would be looking in to. Nick Allen holds a surgery every Thursday in Axminster between 10.00am to 12 noon above the Arts Café.

A discussion took place regarding road signs It was suggested that a Councillor could go round the parish and make a list of the key places where the Council felt road signs were needed. Cllr Moulding was asked if he could get further information as to how these signs could be obtained from the County Council once a list had been compiled.

13. **Footpaths:** One invoice had been received from Alan Hawkes for strimming, re-hanging two gates and trimming back overgrowth on Footpath 31. As he had no tools of his own it was suggested that the Council made provision in the budget to purchase some equipment. Alan Hawkes had completed a training course and was insured to undertake work on behalf of the Council. Footpath 42 required one new wooden gate.
14. **Items for the next agenda:** Budget and Precept for 2016/17, Neighbourhood Plan, Highways and Chapter 8 training and the Transparency Code.
15. **Dates of future meetings:** Monday 11th January 2016, Tuesday 1st March 2016, Tuesday 12th April 2016 (Annual Parish Meeting), Tuesday 24th May 2016 (AGM), Tuesday 5th July 2016, Tuesday 16th August 2016, Tuesday 11th October 2016 and Tuesday 29th November 2016 all at 7.30pm.

Public Forum: No questions were raised by members of the public

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Chairman

