

LOXHORE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

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Minutes

Date: Thursday 5th September 2019

Venue: Loxhore Village Hall

Present: Chris Bryars {Chair}
Mike Young {Vice Chair and Clerk}
Carole Delve {Councillor}
Trevor Batson {Councillor}
Malcolm Prowse {North Devon District Councillor}
Michael Batson {Parishioner}
Ray Comer {Parishioner}

Minutes taken by: Mike Young {Clerk}

The Chair opened the meeting at 18:00.

1. Apologies: Received from Jane Vanstone.
2. Chair welcomed Trevor Batson to the Parish Council as the newly co-opted Parish Councillor.
3. Declarations of interest: The chair, who is a director of the community interest company, Loxhore Village Broadband CIC, needs to express an interest in any discussions of the request for funds for the project.
4. All councillors present agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th July 2019 were a true and accurate record of that spoken and the Chair signed accordingly.

5.0	<u>Action points from previous meeting dated 5th July 2019</u>	
5.1	<p>Broadband (see also 16th November 2017 §6.0, 4th January 2018 §4.5, 16th March §4.3, 25th May §4.3, 5th July §4.2, 6th September §4.2 1st November §4.1, 3rd January §4.1, 7th March §6.1 and 9th May §4.1 and §7.1)</p> <p>Council voted to allocate up to £1,000 to the scheme if required. This to be paid only when required. MB was informed and RFO reserved the funds.</p> <p>The project is close to being fully funded but Openreach the contractors/installers have to have a contract with an entity and the Parish Council have been approached to sign the contract (This is apparently common according to Openreach). The chair has sought advice from NDDC legal department who advise that the Council should not enter such an agreement where potentially there are financial penalties. Chair will advise Mike Bowden accordingly. Assuming that Parish funds are expended then Council would like to receive back a proportion of any surplus funds from the private Community Interest Company that will be set up to run the contract. The PC had previously allocated up to £1,000 to meet any shortfall in the contract cost with Openreach with Lineal Software</p>	

	<p>pledging a further £3,000. The costs have in fact been reduced. The company has paid Openreach £736 and has costs for insurance for 2 years (to cover any public liability issues and to insure the directors against any shortfall should any of the vouchers holders do not take a contract for superfast broadband once the cabling has been completed) of £500 and company operating costs (fees to Companies House) of £40. The total costs for the company should be £1,276.</p> <p>Lineal Software have paid the company £1,000 and the community interest company has requested a contribution from the PC of £250. Any shortfall will be met by the directors and in the unlikely event of a surplus being left once the company is wound up this will be paid to the Village Hall. The Council approved payment of £250 to the Broadband initiative. RFO to write the cheque.</p>	Closed
5.2	<p>Highway Community Enhancement Fund. (7th March §5.4, 9th May and 5 July §4.2)</p> <p>Drains have been cleaned on 3 July by Chris and Jim. Potholes will be done soon. MY has given CD's contacts to Darren (07768 736232) who can clean verges as he is still busy farming. AD advised that it is preferable not to contact Martin at Highways direct but to use website or general phone numbers, she also said that road signs will not be cleaned as that is something the Parish should do. CD reported that large potholes have been done by Highways and the small ones will be done soon by the Parish team. Devon Highways visited Halsey Lake junction and have written to say they will not install signs or markings as there have been no reported accidents. As BT has applied to NDDC to remove 20 phone boxes from North Devon including the one at Halsey lake. Council will wait on decision and potential removal of the box before final decision on potential signage at the junction. Still no progress on verges. CD will chase Darren.</p>	CD
5.3	<p>(5th July §4.3) CD to speak again about the large and potentially dangerous potholes at Lancey Brook. More work is needed. 2 x Emails received from AD. 'My highway officer has put in a bid for the work to be done, this isn't something that goes to any committee, the decision is taken by officers who are controlling the budget and have knowledge of all the schemes required around Devon. I hope that this scheme does get through of course. I've copied my highway officer into this email so he can see your comments and the defect report, however as far as his role is concerned, he has done all the necessary preparation to send off the scheme to the team in County Hall.' And "This is on the list for the next round of drainage funds ,this will need to be worked up and programmed and the screen made so will not be until sometime in the Summer unfortunately the stone will block the drainage in the meantime we will just have to accept that, other than causing some potholes which we will fix when we do the drainage or weather dries up it does not cause any flooding to property or make the road impassable. Unfortunately, there are many of these areas over the County, I know you are anxious to see this resolved, fortunately it will be actioned this financial year. I am sorry I cannot give any firm dates however." CD reported that the Devon Council have built a wall and made significant improvements which should solve the problem. Thank you to our Devon Councillor Andrea for helping move this to completion.</p>	Closed
5.4	<p>National Trust Accommodation Opportunity (7th March §5.2 (b))</p> <p>JM reported that she has contacted the National Trust with the suggestion that old stone barns in a poor state of repair, such as those close to the Church, could possibly be sold leasehold to Loxhore people in need of affordable housing. They could then convert them into dwellings. However, she has had no positive response from NT so far. Ray Comer said the NT uses the barns by the Church for storage. MP said that about 25 years ago he also investigated possible conversions of old buildings but the NT made it very difficult so he did not pursue the idea. The NT's policy is apparently to leave buildings as they are, even though numerous NT holiday homes and some NT hotels exist. However, MP thought that if Loxhore had a Parish Plan that showed that there are local housing needs, this could support the conversion idea. He pointed out however that converting old stone buildings into viable homes is very expensive compared with building from scratch,</p>	

	<p>because of modern building regulations.</p> <p>JM has received an email from Kelly Bezer of NT stating that they will consider this and are aware of local needs. However, they cannot do anything until Autumn 2019 when they hope to be in a position to confirm or otherwise.</p> <p>Clerk to send copy of Rural Alliance Parishes Housing Needs survey 2019 when it is finalised as it highlights the need for affordable housing in the area.</p>	On Hold Clerk
5.5	<p>Parish Paths (7th March §5.4)</p> <p>CB has been checking the parish paths in preparation for completing the annual report in February. He has had trouble contacting Simon Houghton to get the invoice for the work carried out last spring. There are two on-going issues at the moment. The first is path 31 (Red Lane) past the Seggons. While there does not seem to be effluent running onto the path any more, there is still a drain running onto it which will obviously cause erosion over time. CB has asked Simon Houghton for advice on this. The other issue is path 9 between Corner Cottage and Hammonds in Lower Loxhore, which needs a new gate and bridge. Funding is tight and the cost of reinstatement could be disproportionate to the amount of use the path gets. CB will also enquire about installing dog gates in some stiles</p> <p>7th March 2019</p> <p>The annual survey of Parish paths has been submitted. Apart from the continuing problem with the path from Corner Cottage in Lower Loxhore to Hammonds, CB reported no problems.</p> <p>He is still having trouble contacting Simon Houghton at DCC who is responsible for our area. CB mentioned this to Ros Davies when submitting the report and she said she would get Simon to contact him but, as yet, he has not heard from him. Ros could not see any reason why we shouldn't install dog gates, subject to contacting the landowners first. CB will continue to chase Simon about the water being piped onto path 31 – Red Lane. CB has asked Simon for advice regarding this and about the dog gates. CB also want to get the invoice for work done in the spring on our paths and would like to get this before the end of our accounting year so that we can reclaim the VAT. 9 May 2019 Still no response or invoice received. 4 July no change. 5 September no progress.</p>	JV
5.6	<p>(7th March §9.2) JM raised the observation about possible unplanned development at Blackpool farm and in the field up the Bridleway at the side of Barton Court. Council agreed that Chair should send an email to NDDC Planning Enforcement raising the issue. This has been done and two incident numbers allocated. Reminder sent to planning as their 8-week response promise had passed. No update received. MP offered to investigate with planning. MY chased and reply received 24 June “At this stage the owners of the land have not been written out to, but we aim to complete that action before your council meeting on the 4th July. For your information if you can advise the councillors that the enforcement team are working below capacity at the moment and therefore progress may be slowed down in the near future.” Nothing has been further received. MY spoke with Senior Enforcement Officer 4 Sept. He confirmed that NDDC enforcement have been instructed to seek to remedy the planning breaches at both sites and are negotiating with the owners of the land to secure compliance.</p>	Clerk
6.0	<u>Matters arising from meeting dated 5th July 2019</u>	
6.1	County Council News. As Councillor Davis was not present there was no news.	Closed
6.2	<p>District Council News. MP reported his pleasure and enjoyment in being appointed as Deputy Leader of NDDC. He also said how well committees were working on the revised system of PR members which leads to open and transparent discussion and decisions. He said he was chair of Barnstaple Regeneration scheme planning and that they were looking at innovative ways to encourage stores and shoppers to use the town. MP and TB then briefed on the Rural alliance meeting 20 August. Mostly the draft results of the Housing Needs survey carried out in April. Only 20% response overall but it did identify the need for low cost housing in particular for first time buyers who wish to stay</p>	

	Transparency Code Funding	438.36	
	Parish maintenance fund	509.00	
	Highway maintenance fund	3,389.93	
		<u>5,413.00</u>	
	Non-Ring-fenced Funds	<u>1,984.00</u>	
	Per Bank Account	7,397.00	
	Plus VAT to be reclaimed	<u>85.51</u>	
		<u>7,482.51</u>	Closed
8.0	<u>Chair's Business</u>		
8.1	The next North Devon Parish Forum is on the evening of Thursday 19 th September 2019 (at 6.30pm) at Brynsworthy TB will attend on behalf of the Parish Council		TB
8.2	MY reported that he has met with Devon Air Ambulance Trust and Western Power with a view to the use of the village hall field for emergency landings. Depending on cost to move overhead wires underground and the connection of power to the required light stand there will be a cost to the Parish. This item was only minuted in order to receive confirmation, which was given, that MP and AD have discretionary funds that could be applied for. All decisions on the matter will be made by the Village Hall committee once they have been briefed by DAAT if the project is feasible.		MY
8.3	MB asked about possible unauthorised dwellings in Smythapark wood. He reported that possibly one person had a wood burner fire. CD offered to investigate with help to ascertain whether this might be the case and if it is in our Parish. MB also asked about hedge cutting. This will be done now 1 September has passed and will be done by landowners and farmers.		CD
9.0	<u>Planning Application 70409</u>		
9.1	Planning application for the removal of two trees at Hill. Application 70409. All councillors had reviewed the application and unanimously approved. Clerk asked to inform NDDC planning department accordingly.		Closed
10.0	<u>Next meeting</u> The Chair closed the meeting at 19:10, thanking everyone for attending. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7 th November 2019 at 18:00 in the Village Hall.		Closed

Minutes approved by Chair..... Date