

# LOXHORE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

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## Minutes

Date: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Venue: Loxhore Village Hall

Present: Jane Vanstone {Chair}  
Mike Young {Vice Chair and Clerk}  
Carole Delve {Councillor}  
Suzanne Smith {Councillor}  
Andrea Davis {County Councillor}  
Malcolm Prowse {District Councillor}  
Jane Platten {Parishioner}  
Oliver Hassall {Parishioner}  
Lynn Challacombe {Parishioner}  
Paul Challacombe {Parishioner}  
Sue Southcott {Parishioner}  
Ray Comer {Parishioner}

Minutes taken by: Mike Young {Clerk}

The Chair opened the meeting at 18:35 following the AGM

1. Apologies: Apologies received from Chris Bryars.
2. Declarations of interest: None
3. All councillors agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 were a true and accurate record of that spoken and written. The Chair signed accordingly.

4.0	To consider planning application 75177 for extension at Myrtle Cottage, Lower Loxhore	
4.1	All Councillors had reviewed the application documents on the NDDC planning portal. The applicants were in attendance to answer any questions. Council had no concerns regarding this application and instructed the clerk to submit accordingly on the NDDC planning portal giving our full support.	Closed
5.0	To consider planning application 75184 of barn conversion at Land adjacent to Horseshoe Barn	
5.1	All Councillors had reviewed the application documents on the NDDC planning portal. The applicants were in attendance to answer any questions. Council had no concerns regarding this application and instructed the clerk to submit accordingly on the NDDC planning portal giving our full support.	Closed
6.0	<b><u>Action points from previous meeting dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 2022</u></b>	

6.1	<p>JV mentioned that she has been made aware of a possible old footpath near the church that might be resurrected. She is waiting for the old maps to be presented and will report back to council. She has also been informed of discourteous bike behaviour on one bridleway where it crosses a farm yard. This will be monitored. (July 2021) DCC have not yet held the meeting above, JV will chase them again re meeting and extra signpost facias as not enough were sent. CB has yet to contact Mike Matthews but will do so. JV has had nothing further on old footpath nor the bikers. (2 Sept 2021) JV keeps trying to contact P3 at DCC but never gets a response. She will keep trying. CB contacted Mike Matthews who will look to installing a hedge as suggested. (Oct 2021) JV met with Ros Davis (P3 coordinator) and Simon Houghton last Thursday and walked several rights of way (byways 32, 31, bottom end of 33, footpath 8 from 31 to Hill Lane &amp; 9) and discussed their ongoing maintenance / management.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Byway (31) between Lower Loxhore and four cross way, this is suffering with gullying in the middle section due to runoff from fields during high rainfall events. It appears these are more common during winter than has previously been the case, the plan is to reduce the speed of the water so that it can carry less load. It is proposed that concrete sleepers will be set into the surface of the lane every 30m or so, the material should build up behind the sleepers and not progress down the lane making big piles of material at the bottom. We can also get some grading work done by a special agitating and compacting machine known colloquially as the Angry Minion. Simon will get quotes from a contractor and we can apply for the funding from P3 for a grant, work to be done next summer 2022.</li> <li>2. Footpath 9, this path has been unpassable for some years (at least 6), it needs a new signpost at the top end, and at the bottom, a replacement gate, and a sleeper bridge to ford the stream. The idea of moving the bottom end of the path to the area near the dam was immediately dismissed as it would require a legal diversion of the footpath which is more expensive and time consuming than the bridge building. Simon will get quotes from a contractor and we can apply for the funding from P3 for a grant, work to be done next summer 2022.</li> <li>3. footpath 8 I have been asked by several parishioners about dog gates on this route, these would benefit pedestrians as well as dogs as the styles are quite challenging through the fields. This reduces the paths usability and reduces access to the route. P3 will cover the cost of the gates but we would need funding for a contractor and possibly a couple of simple steps. This is on the wish list for the following year 2023. (Jan 2022) JV has walked about half of the footpaths for the annual survey. (March 2022) JV meeting County P3 next Friday to walk path #8.</li> </ol> <p>(May 2022) JV reported that byway 31(item 1 above) will now hopefully be scheduled in 2023. Footpath 9 (item 2 above) The contractor coming late summer 2022. Footpath 8 (Item 3 above) JV applying for P3 funding next FY.</p>	JV
6.2 a	<p>Mar 2022 6.1. CB, speaking as RFO, wanted to make council aware and to think about the value to the community that we bring relative to the precept and funds we control. He highlighted that the bulk of the precept goes on Annual Insurance, Parish Clerk's expense and membership of three organisations.</p> <p>MY contacted the clerks of six local parishes to compare their precepts, expenses and value to their communities. In all cases the largest percentage of the precept was paid out on clerk's wages and expenses, hiring or maintenance of the village hall and annual insurance. A very small percentage, like ours, would appear as a direct funding for the local parishioner's benefit.</p>	

	<p>It was clearly stated that the Government wants and supports Parish Councils as the first layer of Local Government and thus the expenses of the clerk, insurance etc are a necessary amount that is of benefit to the parish. As we rely on a voluntary clerk and do not own the hall our precept is very low (a direct benefit to council tax payers in the parish). Our other expenses are well in line with other parishes. It has been suggested that we do not renew our membership of CPRE and cease future support to Citizen's advice.</p> <p>If we ever reached the point where we could not find a minimum of three councillors (quorate) or that it was felt the council was not of value then MY has been told that Loxhore's interests would be served directly by NDDC (possibly devolved to another parish, which would increase the precept and council tax bills for all parishioners). Thus, we would have no local input at all on matters affecting our Parish. Councillors discussed and agreed that this item be closed.</p>	Closed																					
6.2 b	<p>Mar 2022 6.1. Mr Matthews was invited to speak and he asked about the grant that had ceased to the church burial ground that was sorely missed. He wondered if it could be reinstated as the church needed funds as not a lot come from the church above. He stated that the church is an open church for the benefit of the whole parish. MY stated that Council had regretted stopping the grant but it had been clearly mandated by NALC and the House of Commons' Library paper dated 21 September 2021 that it would be a breach of law if we did donate. Clerk will investigate the current state of affairs. Post meeting the clerk wrote to NALC and DALC for their latest opinions on the matter. MY also spoke at length with three other local area parish clerks.</p> <p>The official ruling that money cannot be donated to a church or its grounds has not changed. There are two laws that countermand and the older one, which precludes the giving, takes precedence. However, it is also clear that an open burial ground, as is the case in Loxhore can be supported. As the graveyard is open to all parishioners, we can reinstate our grant. The grant has to be paid to the administrator of the grounds (Bev Gould) and not the PCC which would be the church. (May 2022) MY proposed that we immediately reinstate the £200 annual grant towards upkeep of the parish open graveyard. Additionally, MY proposed that we also pay the £200 that was suspended in 2021. Councillors voted by a majority to pay this year's £200 and too also pay the amount that was stopped last year. RFO to draw a cheque for £400 to Mr Bev Gould for the Open Burial Ground Maintenance.</p>	Closed																					
7.0	<b><u>Matters arising from meeting dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022</u></b>																						
7.1	<p>County Council News. AD briefed on severe lack of staff across Council This reflects the nationwide shortage in all sectors plus the fact that private business offers higher wages than local government. The North Devon link road upgrade work restarted on 1 May as the dormouse hibernation period had finished! All CC contractors have switched their vehicles to HOV instead of diesel resulting in a 90% reduction in emissions.</p>	Closed																					
7.2	<p>District Council News. MP stated that the recruitment problem was the same in NDDC. Lack of planning staff which is holding up applications. No applications for some posts!</p>	Closed																					
8.0	<b><u>Finance</u></b>																						
8.1	<p>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;">2022</th> <th style="text-align: right;">2021</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Balance at 1st April</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7,139.09</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6,833.52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>INCOME</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>N.D.C. Precept</td> <td style="text-align: right;">850.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">850.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VAT refund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">50.66</td> <td style="text-align: right;">124.61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Devon C.C. - P3 scheme</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">240.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Devon C.C. - Grant for Insurance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">177.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2022	2021	Balance at 1st April	7,139.09	6,833.52	INCOME			N.D.C. Precept	850.00	850.00	VAT refund	50.66	124.61	Devon C.C. - P3 scheme	0.00	240.00	Devon C.C. - Grant for Insurance	0.00	177.00	
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	N. D. C. Community Support Group	0.00	495.00	
		<u>900.66</u>	<u>1,886.61</u>	
		8,039.75	8,720.13	
	EXPENDITURE			
	DALC subscription	49.00	52.00	
	Clerk's expenses	372.84	300.56	
	Insurance	173.39	172.41	
	Village Hall - Maintenance grant	0.00	104.00	
	P.C.C. - Burial ground grant	0.00	200.00	
	Loxhore Village Broadband CIC	0.00	250.00	
	Barnstaple Records Office	50.00	50.00	
	Citizens Advice	50.00	50.00	
	Devon CPRE	60.00	0.00	
	Highway Maintenance Fund	25.83	0.00	
	P3 Footpath Maintenance	500.00	200.00	
	Community Support Group	0.00	132.40	
	Sundry Expenses	15.98	21.98	
	Vat Paid	<u>112.16</u>	<u>47.69</u>	
		<u>1,409.20</u>	<u>1,581.04</u>	
	Bank balance at 31st March.			
	Lloyds cheque account	<u>6630.55</u>	<u>7139.09</u>	
	Allocated:			
	P3 money	575.71	1,075.71	
	Transparency Code Funding	438.36	438.36	
	Parish maintenance fund	509.00	509.00	
	Highway maintenance fund	2,812.38	2,812.38	
	Loxhore Community Support Group	362.60	362.60	
	Loxhore Broadband CIC	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
		4,698.05	5,198.05	
	Non Ring-fenced Funds	<u>1,932.50</u>	<u>1,941.04</u>	
	Parish Council Funds	<u>6,630.55</u>	<u>7,139.09</u>	
	Bank Reconciliation			
	Balance per Bank Account	6,711.05		
	Less: Outstanding cheque	<u>80.50</u>		
		<u>6,630.55</u>		
				Closed
8.2	Chair proposed the adoption of the annual accounts. Seconded by SS. Council unanimously approved the annual accounts for 2020 – 2021.			Closed
8.2	RFO Report for 1 April 2022 to 5 May 2022			
		Year to Date	Year to 31 Mar 2022	
	Bank balance 01.04.21	6,630.55	7,139.09	
	INCOME			

	N.D.D.C. - Precept	425.00	850.00	
	HMRC - VAT refund	0.00	50.66	
	Devon C.C. - P3 Partnership	0.00	0.00	
	Devon C.C. - Grant for insurance	0.00	0.00	
	N.D.D.C. - Community Support Group	0.00	0.00	
		<u>425.00</u>	<u>900.66</u>	
		7,055.55	8,039.75	
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
	DALC subscription	49.99	49.00	
	Clerk's expenses	0.00	372.84	
	Insurance	0.00	173.39	
	Village Hall - Maintenance grant	0.00	0.00	
	Open Burial ground grant	0.00	0.00	
	Devon CPRE	0.00	60.00	
	Barnstaple Records Office	0.00	50.00	
	Citizens Advice	0.00	50.00	
	Highway Maintenance Fund	0.00	25.83	
	P3 Footpath maintenance	0.00	500.00	
	Community Support Group	0.00	0.00	
	Sundry Expenses	0.00	15.98	
	Vat Paid	7.13	112.16	
		<u>57.12</u>	<u>1,409.20</u>	
		<u>6,998.43</u>	<u>6,630.55</u>	
	Allocated:			
	P3 money	575.71	575.71	
	Transparency Code Funding	438.36	438.36	
	Parish maintenance fund	509.00	509.00	
	Highway maintenance fund	2,786.55	2,812.38	
	Loxhore Community Support Group	362.60	382.60	
	Loxhore Broadband CIC	0.00	0.00	
		<u>4,672.22</u>	<u>4,718.05</u>	
	Non Ring-fenced Funds	<u>2,326.21</u>	<u>1,912.50</u>	
		<u>6,998.43</u>	<u>6,630.55</u>	
	Balance per Bank Account	<u>£6,998.43</u>	<u>£6,630.55</u>	
	VAT recoverable - year to 31 March 23	£ <u>7.13</u>		
9.0	<b><u>Chair's Business</u></b>			
9.1	NDDC have adopted the new Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 document and recommend that Parish Councils do the same. Councillors had reviewed the document and agreed to adopt the code for Loxhore. Councillors Vanstone and Young participated in on line training on the code on 26 April 2022. This was given by Simon Fuller the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer of NDDC. Our other three councillors will have to undergo this training at a later date.			Closed

10.0	<b><u>Next meeting</u></b> The Chair closed the meeting at 19:40, thanking everyone for attending. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7th July 2022.	Closed
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Minutes approved by Chair...signed by Cllr Vanstone... Date ...1 July 2022.....