

NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council which took place at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford at 7.15pm on Monday, 30th September 2024.

Present: Cllrs. Carpenter, Compton, Dalton, Lipczynski, Malawana, Tillotson, Tribble (Chair) and Walker
Jacqui Baldwin, Clerk & RFO
County Cllr. Jess Bailey
District Cllr. Chris Burhop
Footpath Warden, Ted Swan
7 members of the public
Kirstie Ellis, Kendal Archer & Beth Humphries from Clinton Devon Estates

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair of the meeting outlined Fire Regulations and Evacuation Procedure

Public Forum

a) “Heaths to Sea” Landscape Recovery of the Lower Otter Valley – Project Update from Kirstie Ellis, Heaths to Sea Project Manager.

Kirstie brought attendees up to date with plans for stakeholder engagement and public engagement during the 2-year development phase of this project. The aim is to future proof the Otter valley against the effects of climate change. The first stakeholder engagement meeting will take place on 15th October. Final plans must be submitted to DEFRA by 31st December 2025. A member of the public asked whether other local landowners will be working with Clinton Devon Estates. Kirstie replied that no landowner will be compelled to get involved – the project will focus on land owned by Clinton Devon Estates. Copies of the presentation slides and narrative are attached to these Minutes.

b) County Councillor report: Cllr. Jessica Bailey

Cllr Bailey confirmed that work on repairs to “Woodleys” Bridge had commenced and will take approximately 3 evenings to complete. In the meantime, Cllr Bailey has been trying to find out what happened to the streetlight which was removed when the telegraph pole was recently replaced. It appears that National Grid will be replacing the light but probably not until December as the work has to be scheduled. Cllr. Bailey will write to National Grid to try and expedite this. It was agreed that the Parish Council would write to Devon County Highways to request that they do more to protect this local heritage asset. **Clerk to note and action.**

The Venn Ottery Flood alleviation scheme is progressing well despite having to be revised due to location of underground services. Clerk noted that she had received notification that the road between Newton Poppleford and Venn Ottery will re-open on 4th October but it was felt that this was “ambitious”.

The Children’s Scrutiny Committee will discuss the issue of Tipton School on 11th November. EDDC has allocated a site for a school in the village in its Strategic Plan although this is no guarantee that DCC will approve it.

Dotton Bridge – DCC and the EA are liaising on this matter. It seems that extensive works will be required and plans and costings are currently being drawn up.

Cllr Lipczynski asked whether it would be possible to have the “wig wag” signs at the east end of the village re-located to the bottom of Four Elms Hill. Harpford residents are concerned about the safety of schoolchildren using the bus stops adjacent to Lower Way. Cllr. Bailey said that she would be happy to arrange this on receipt of a request from the Parish Council.

c) District Councillor report: Cllr. Chris Burhop

Cllr Burhop spoke about the ongoing work of the Strategic Planning Committee to have a draft Local Plan in place by November. Further Site Allocation meetings have taken place with all

Parish and Town Councils. There are currently no plans for any development in this parish but this may change.

Cllr. Burhop confirmed that he would be at the 'Heaths to the Sea' Stakeholder meeting on 15th October. He agreed with an earlier comment by Cllr. Lipczynski that public access and enhancing the natural environment do not necessarily go hand in hand. People and nature often do not mix.

Cllr Burhop mentioned the massive amounts of money that EDDC need to spend to upgrade housing stock and meet statutory requirements relating to damp and mould resilience and fire protection. The bill is likely to be in the tens of millions of pounds. With regard to finance, Cllr Burhop advised that EDDC's accounts have not been audited for two years (along with many other local authorities). It is likely that the Government will pass legislation in October to "draw a line" under this and allow Council's to publish accounts with a disclaimer. Cllr. Lipzynski asked whether the Council's move from Sidmouth to premises in Honiton had saved the amount of money suggested at the time. Cllr. Burhop said this was a question worthy of scrutiny.

d) Report from Ted Swan, Parish Footpath Warden:

Mr Swan confirmed that Footpath 40 is now an officially designated Right of Way. Emma Hellier has advised that the replacement of the handrail on Footpath 1 will take place during the winter months. Poor weather on Sunday 29th October has resulted in a massive deterioration of Footpaths 16 & 19 near to the Red Bridge. Cllr. Malawana confirmed that the footpath has significantly disintegrated in three places in the last 12 hours.

As Chris Drake, the contractor tasked with carrying out bank reinforcement at the Red Bridge, was present he kindly gave an update. The rock bags were delivered on Friday but, unfortunately, the adverse weather made it impossible to carry out the work. A request has been sent to the Environment Agency for a two-week extension to the current permit to work on site. Hopefully this will be granted and the work can go ahead. Cllr. Burhop suggested that it was too little too late. Mr Drake advised that this work would only be a temporary solution intended to reinforce the riverbank and protect the footpaths pending a longer-term solution.

e) Report from the Climate Change Group:

Cllr. Walker advised that the CCG did not meet in September and there was, therefore, nothing to report

f) Questions and representations from residents/parishioners:

As there were no further questions or comments the Public Forum closed at 8.10pm

To consider the following business:

		Action:
24/027	To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted: Chair proposed that apologies received from Cllrs. Harrison and Hughes be accepted and approved. Seconded by Cllr. Tillotson and resolved unanimously.	
24/028	Declarations of interest from members / Dispensations afforded: All members present are, by definition, members of the NPPFF Trustee Board and declare a personal interest in that capacity. Cllr. Tillotson was afforded a dispensation to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to Parish allotments at the Annual Meeting of Council held on 22 nd May 2023. This dispensation applies until May 2027 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of her personal and disclosable pecuniary interests as an allotment tenant.	
24/029	To consider any matters listed on this Agenda that Councillors consider should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960: Chair noted that agenda item 24/042 would be discussed in committee.	
24/030	To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29th July 2024 as previously circulated to members: Chair proposed that the Minutes be approved as drafted. Seconded by Cllr. Lipczynski and resolved with 5 votes in favour and 3 abstentions.	

	<p>To consider any matters arising from those Minutes not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda:</p> <p>a) Parish Grounds Maintenance Chair advised that the grounds maintenance contractors were given 30 days notice on 1st August and their contract terminated on 30th August. The previous contractor has taken over the contract for the balance of this year and the Clerk will be publishing Tender documents in November.</p> <p>b) De-silting works Back Brook Chair reported that works had been carried out week commencing 23rd Sept. However, the EA did not clear under the road bridge as this is Highways responsibility which has left a mini dam under the bridge. Work to transfer the gravel from Webbers Meadow to the river was halted because the EA found evidence of “beaver activity” and someone from a different department had to come out and carry out a survey. By the time that had been done the gravel had been out of the water for too long and had become designated “contaminated waste” and could not be placed in the river. The waste is to be transported by lorry to an appropriate site on Wednesday 2nd October. Chair has made an appointment with a contractor to discuss digging out under the bridge. Cllr. Malawana asked that the bridge under the road adjacent to Lower Way be included in this discussion.</p>	
24/031	<p>To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 23rd August 2024 as previously circulated to members: Chair proposed that the Minutes be approved as drafted. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved with 5 votes in favour and 3 abstentions.</p>	
24/032	<p>To review the Minutes of the Council’s Finance Committee meeting held on 23rd September 2024 as previously circulated to members and, if thought fit, ratify recommendations made therein:</p> <p>a) To approve new Financial Regulations as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils. Cllr. Walker proposed that the revised Financial Regulations be adopted as drafted. Seconded by Cllr. Lipczynski and resolved with 6 votes in favour and 2 abstentions. Clerk to note and update Council’s website.</p>	Clerk
24/033	<p>To co-opt a new member of Council to fill a casual vacancy created by the resignation of Cllr. Bisseker: Three residents had expressed an interest in the vacancy and had submitted personal statements in support of their applications which had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. Chair thanked all three applicants for their interest and hoped that the unsuccessful candidates would consider standing again in the future. Members were asked to vote for one candidate only and Mr Jon Milner-Matthews, with 4 votes, was duly elected as a member of the Parish Council for Newton Poppleford Ward. Mr Milner-Matthews signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p>	
24/034	Correspondence received (not previously circulated): None received	
24/035	Planning Matters:	
	<p>a) To consider planning applications received: 24/1816/FUL - Homefield Farm, Newton Poppleford A site visit took place on 27th September which was attended by Cllrs. Carpenter and Walker together with Ward Cllr. Burhop. Cllr. Carpenter said that although there were elements of this application that contravened the Neighbourhood Plan, on balance, he felt that the proposal was acceptable. Cllr. Walker agreed on the basis that if</p>	

	<p>the building was no longer required for the agricultural business it should be re-purposed. Cllr. Dalton pointed out that the proposed development is outside the Built-Up Area Boundary in contravention of the Neighbourhood Plan and should not, therefore, be supported. Before asking members to vote, Chair reminded them that to support this application could set a precedent for future applications.</p> <p>Members then voted in support of this application with 4 votes in favour, 3 against and one abstention.</p> <p>Clerk to note and upload Council's decision to the Planning Portal</p> <p>24/1857/FUL - 57 Burrow Lane, Newton Poppleford</p> <p>Members agreed that, although flat roofs are not generally acceptable, in this particular case an alternative would not be in keeping with the existing building. Members voted in support of this application with 6 votes in favour, one against and one abstention.</p> <p>Clerk to note and upload Council's comments to the Planning Portal.</p>	Clerk
	<p>b) Planning determinations/decisions advised: 24/0449/FUL - Peshurst, High Street, NP approved with conditions 24/1548/FUL - Little Meadow, High Street, NP approved with conditions</p>	Clerk
	<p>c) Trees: Notification of Tree Preservation Order 24/0036 – Minors, Venn Ottery</p>	
	<p>d) To consider Council's Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report: Update circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.</p>	
	<p>e) Update on EDDC Local Plan and review of site allocations: A copy of a letter from Cllr. Todd Olive sent on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee giving an update on the development of the new Local Plan had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Chair reported that she had attended a meeting to discuss Site Allocations and, as mentioned previously by Cllr. Burhop, there were currently no approved sites for development in the parish.</p>	
24/036	<p>Financial Matters:</p> <p>a) To consider and review Financial Reports to the end of August 2024 as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line.</p> <p>b) To consider and, if thought fit, approve payments for August and September as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line.</p> <p>Cllr. Walker proposed that invoices scheduled for payment through August and September be approved. Seconded by Cllr. Lipczynski and approved with 6 votes in favour and two abstentions.</p> <p>c) Questions to RFO from members of Council relating to the financial reports: None raised.</p> <p>d) To note receipt of the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for the financial year 2023/24: A copy of the External Auditor's Report had been circulated prior to the meeting and had been published on Council's website.</p> <p>e) To consider the recommendation of the Finance Committee regarding a Grant Application from Newton Poppleford Community Larder: Cllr. Walker proposed that, as the Community Larder had now raised all the start-up funds required, they be advised to re-</p>	

		apply for funding next year when they may be more in need of funds. Seconded by the Chair and resolved unanimously. Clerk to note and liaise with the applicants.	Clerk
24/037		To receive an update on matters pertaining to Public Rights of Way and Footpaths: a) Red Bridge – dealt with during the Public Forum.	
24/038		BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED:	
	A	To discuss the recommendations of the Finance Committee regarding the Public WC Refurbishment Project: The two Tenders received had been circulated to members prior to this meeting. Tender A quoted a total sum of £18,274 (ex VAT) and Tender B a total sum of £16,179 (ex VAT). Cllr. Walker said that, as both these sums are significantly in excess of the available budget, the suggestion from the Finance Committee was to carry out the refurbishment of the disabled WC and exterior decoration only and leave the re-purposing of the ladies and gents for the next financial year. Cllr Compton pointed out that both quotations are in excess of the quotes received to refurbish the whole block which could have been done within the budget available and therefore do not constitute value for money. Cllr. Walker proposed that Contractor A and Contractor B be asked to submit a revised price to carry out the refurbishment of the disabled toilet and exterior decoration as discussed. Seconded by Cllr. Tillotson and resolved with 7 votes in favour and one abstention. Clerk to note and action.	Clerk
	B	To receive an update on the MUGA Floodlights Project: i) Planning Application Chair advised that Planning Permission is required and a Planning Application will be submitted as soon as possible. In the meantime, the Sidmouth Town Junior Vikings will loan their portable floodlights. ii) Funding Chair reported that a very successful Fun Day was held on 21 st September raising money for both the floodlights fund and the NPPFF. Details of the financial outcome will be circulated shortly.	Chair
	C	To receive a report on the progress of the Venn Ottery flood alleviation works: Dealt with during the Public Forum. Any further updates received will be circulated to members.	
	D	To consider matters pertaining to Highways and Highway safety: i) Pedestrian Demand Survey: Members discussed the proposed survey sites put forward by DCC Highways. It was agreed that the location in Station Road should be moved to the East to include the Millmoor Lane junction. The Tolle House location to be expanded to include the Exmouth Road bus stops. Clerk to note and respond to Highways accordingly. ii) “Woodleys” Bridge: Dealt with during the Public Forum.	Clerk
	E	To note the launch of the new Parish Council website: Chair reported that the total cost of this project was £1,428 – well within the £2,500 budget allocated. All essential content has been uploaded and the Clerk will continue to add content as time allows. Chair apologised for the hiccup with emails. The problem has been resolved and all members should now be able to send/receive emails via .gov.uk domain.	
24/039		To consider matters viewed as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only:	

	<p>Chair requested that members make themselves available for an Extraordinary meeting to discuss planning application ref: 24/1308/OUT as this will require a response prior to the October meeting. It was agreed that an EOM will take place on Monday, 14th October at 8pm following the NPPFF AGM.</p> <p>Clerk to note and action.</p>	Clerk
24/040	<p>Date of next Ordinary Meeting: Monday, 28th October 2024 at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford at 7.15pm. At 9.05pm the Chair closed the public meeting. Cllr. Compton left the meeting at this point and took no part in the following discussion and subsequent vote.</p>	
24/041	<p>Chair proposed that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1972, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved unanimously.</p>	
24/042	<p>To receive an update on Council's application to the Lands Chamber for modification of the restrictive covenant on the former surgery building: A letter received from the Lands Chamber and email correspondence received from Gatehouse Chambers was circulated to members for information. It was unanimously agreed that the recommendations of the Lands Chamber should be acted upon and Gatehouse Chambers instructed accordingly.</p> <p>Clerk to note and action.</p>	Clerk

With no further business to consider, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm.