

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING Minutes May 13th 2024

Minutes of the meeting of Bridford Parish Council Annual Council Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024, 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present – Cllr. Purser (Vice Chairman); Cllr. Gallagher; Cllr. Topley; Cllr. Marriott, Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce; 4 members of the public; Tamsin Mowat (Clerk).

Cllr. Purser (Vice Chairman) presided over the beginning of the meeting as Jennifer Padgham has resigned as Chairman and Councillor. Cllr. Purser thanked her for her years of service and she thanked all the Councillors for their hard work and commented that the Parish Council is in good shape.

1) Election of Chairman and thanks to outgoing Chairman

a) Invite nominations and elect a Chairman for the year – Cllr. Marriott nominated Cllr. Topley and she accepted. Cllr. Purser seconded the nomination and all voted in agreement.

b) Receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chairman – signed in the presence of the Clerk.

Cllr. Topley took over Chairing the meeting as the new Chairman.

2) Election of Vice Chairman and thanks to outgoing Vice Chairman – Cllr. Purser intending to stand down from the role of Vice Chairman so Cllr. Topley asked for nominations for another Councillor to step up to the role of Vice Chairman. Councillor Purser agreed to continue for a further year in the absence of anyone else to take up the role. Cllr. Marriott nominated and all voted in agreement.

3) Confirm appointment of signatories for authorisation of internet banking payments – Jennifer Padgham to be removed – Cllr. Purser, Cllr. Gallagher and Cllr. Marriott to continue as signatories. All in agreement.

4) Appointment/Confirmation of Committees – proposed no committees needed as decisions will continue to be made as a full council. Cllr. Gallagher seconded and all agreed.

5) Appointment to Groups: Footpath Warden – Dan Tidball, Snow Warden – Anne Mayes, Wildlife warden – Lucy Smeardon, allotments – Francis Leversedge and Clerk, Book exchange – Cllr. Topley, clothing bank – Karen Gervers, Consultation – Cllr. Marriott, Cllr. Gallagher and Cllr. Topley, notice boards – village noticeboard and bus stop – Cllr. Marriott to take over, play park – Cllr. Ashenden- Pearce and Cllr. Topley (Cllr. Topley to step down in time), village garden – Cllr. Topley, website - Clerk, wildlife warden liaison – Cllr. Marriott, VH observer – Cllr. Topley for now but Cllr. Marriott will take over in time. Planning is on agenda every month and all Councillors involved so no group needed for that. All reviewed and agreed.

6) Apologies For Absence: None

7) Declarations Of Interest: In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. Members are also reminded that any change to their Declaration of Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer at District Council within 28 days of the change. None declared.

8) PUBLIC DISCUSSION

An opportunity for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business on the agenda, or any matter of interest to the parish. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed 30 minutes. (Standing Orders 3e and 3f).

Reminder that members of the public are not allowed to raise issues when Council is in committee.

Trudy Cronin and Cllr. Marriott to liaise with Ines Pfister at Highways about the Twinning sign in village. Footpath Warden raised issue of two trees down – Westcott Wood – Woodland Trust can't do anything due to presence of a rare bird apparently. Footpath Warden to let DNPA know. Helton Farm and road up to Westcott – tree down – not sure who it belongs to – maybe Seven Acres? Cllr. Topley to message local parishioner to find out who the tree belongs to.

Map of Bridford received from parishioner in the village – ask Ray Spurr, Chair of VH committee, about map and whether we can frame it and display in Village Hall. Clerk to ask as already liaising over the King's portrait received by the Parish Council and to be displayed in the Village Hall. Cllr. Gallagher asked if we could contact Ordnance Survey to see if we can obtain a copy of the digital version for queries – Clerk to try contacting Devon County Council first as map came from the council originally and if not then Ordnance Survey.

District Cllr. Andy Swain arrived at 7.29pm

9) Minutes – to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th April 2024 and agree amendment to March minutes. All agreed and Chairman signed.

10) Insurance renewal – third and final year of fixed term contract with Gallagher due 1st June – renewal price £973.44 to be agreed – all agreed.

11) Asset register – to be reviewed and actions agreed for updating – need to update the cost of the printer and change the number of benches – one additional in village garden. Cllr. Gallagher suggested that we need to check what the asset register is representing – current value or how much they cost when purchased? All agreed.

County Cllr. Jerry Brook arrived at 7.45pm

12) Standing orders (revised 2023) - to be reviewed and actions agreed for updating or to be approved - reviewed and all in agreement for them to remain as they stand.

13) PLANNING

Planning Applications - Dartmoor National Park has asked for observations from the Parish Council on the following planning applications:

Appeals: Robertsacre – C/22/3311609 and C/22/3311610 - The Old Parlour and C/22/3311959 and C/22/3311960 - The Sheep Shed

The Parish Council are invited to speak at the virtual DNPA Appeals hearing on 14th May 2024 at 10am – need to decide if we wish to do this and who the representative shall be – historically, Parish Council have not attended appeals – DNPA have all the information so Parish Council are agreed not to add anything further at this point. DNPA to refer to policy. All in agreement.

Planning Decisions

None this month

14) FINANCE

Expenditure

SLCC membership £113 BACS

Rospa – play park inspection – £127.20 BACS (retrospective approval)

Clerk's salary – £325.92 Standing Order BACS

Clerk's additional hours for AGAR preparation 3 hours extra @ £20.37 per hour - £61.11 BACS

Clerk £6 homeworking expenses for first week of April by BACS (retrospective approval)

Vision ICT £24 rather than £20 as includes VAT (retrospective approval) BACS

Solicitors and Land Registry fee for Village Hall registration - £1327.80 (approved at April meeting and paid) BACS

Insurance renewal (to include office equipment) - £973.44 BACS

DALC VAT for annual fees needed £28.65 BACS (TDC paid fees from Precept but DALC made mistake so no VAT taken on fees)

Bank Reconciliation and Statement

Council to resolve to accept the accounts – all in agreement

15) Village Hall storage details and budget to be agreed and approved – Clerk – Cllr. Topley has spoken to Village Hall committee – room in the office upstairs for storage. Once we know how much space we need we can arrange storage – litter pickers from Cllr. Marriott to be put in storage and likewise items from Jennifer Padgham. Clerk and Cllr. Topley to liaise over how much space is needed and Cllr. Topley to liaise with Village Hall committee.

16) Village Hall registration update – Cllr. Purser and Clerk – Cllr. Purser updated that the process is with the solicitors and Land Registry for completion. Clerk added that Jennifer Padgham is happy to liaise with solicitors if needed. All original deeds are with solicitors. Jennifer Padgham to email Cllr. Topley and Clerk once heard from solicitors regarding completion of registration. Cllr. Topley to liaise with Village Hall Chair as necessary.

17) Parish Council Stall at Village Fete – Cllr. Topley – July 13th – Cllr. Marriott and Cllr. Topley to liaise and do a stall to advertise the Parish Council with support from Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce

18) Play park repairs – Cllrs. Topley and Ashenden-Pearce to report back on ROSPA's recommendation from inspection and action plan – items discussed and agreed upon:

Algae treatment on BMX track – keep watching brief

Basketball court – keep watching brief

Large net swing – components – need taking apart and inspected

Bottoms of the equipment – caught by strimmer but asked not to strim so close – no additional damage occurred so keep on watching brief.

Litter bin – Cllr. Purser to request a new one again from Teignbridge District Council (TDC)

Wooden bench – Clerk to check to see if we have enough to purchase a new bench

Boundary fence to right of park as you go in – Chairman to contact TDC regarding fence replacement. Cllr.

Ashenden- Pearce to look into growing a hedge – to contact Woodland Trust. Cllr. Marriott to liaise with

Lucy Smeardon over planting hedge. Cllr. Gallagher to liaise with parishioners who own horses that are

kept on the land in the field next to the play park. Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce raised issue over no goal posts in play park – need to be looked at to see if possible to position so neighbouring houses not affected.

All in agreement.

19) Community WhatsApp and Free Chat groups – Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce has prepared a Bulletin group from his phone as a test (will eventually be from Clerk's phone once purchased and set up) to receive three top news items from each Parish Council meeting. Village conversation group – numbers to be shared and more of a chat and social group. Third potential group could be a Parish Councillors WhatsApp group to support communication by email. The test versions were checked by Councillors and parishioners on their phones and all working ok. Continue to share documents and key information by email. Consider gov.uk email system at a later date – funding available. Clerk to look into at later date. All in agreement.

20) Annual Parish Meeting – 10th June 6.30pm – details to be finalised – set up and refreshments – Cllr. Marriott and Cllr. Topley to do refreshments – Clerk to contact Anne Cronin – check hall booked from 6pm

21) Three parish meeting – Bridford to host in the summer and date to be arranged – venue and plans for catering etc. Dunsford have now offered to host again this year if we'd like them to: dates suggested Tuesday 9th or Tuesday 16th July – Cllrs. Marriott and Purser could make 16th – Clerk to check time with Lynne, Clerk at Dunsford.

22) Councillor training - Being a Good Councillor one training module each for new councillors and new Chair training for our new chair – Councillors to let Clerk know who wants to take part and how many modules. Chairman would like to attend training on September 16th – Clerk to book

Code of conduct training – Lynne, Clerk at Dunsford asked if we would be interested in sharing the training and cost between the two councils – details sent via email

Cllr. Purser has already received training via Teignbridge

– details sent via email - Dunsford have since decided to do a private training session catered to them but we could look into this ourselves either in person or online. Clerk to look into cost and minimum numbers – carry over to June meeting.

23) Safety on Pound Lane – Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce – following recent accident on Pound Lane – need to flag up where passing places are and Neadon Lane – need a sign to say unsuitable for large vehicles. Clerk to continue to contact Ines Pfizer at Devon Highways for a meeting and to pursue regarding Swannaford Road and Neadon Lane. Cllr. Gallagher suggested using Parish WhatsApp to re-send messages regarding reporting potholes etc. Hedges on Pound Lane – need reminder to trim for visibility on roads. In addition, Twenty is Plenty signs need changing round for sign blindness. Cllr. Gallagher remarked that a parishioner had commented to her on speed at which agricultural traffic goes up Oxengate and beyond – speed awareness signs with flashing lights could be considered. Cllr. Topley to look into cost of signs – consider speed limit as well. Three more 20 is plenty signs to go up – Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce to consider lighting over signs to make them more visible. Carry over to June/July agenda and share thoughts in the meantime.

24) Fencing – Cllr. Marriott – previous issue with fencing on footpath that DNPA are responsible for – 100m further along - Wellcombe boundary fence has also collapsed. Clerk to contact Pete Rich Ranger to look at the fence to acknowledge if DNPA are responsible.

25) District and County Councillor Reports – Cllr. Andy Swain and Cllr. Jerry Brook attended the meeting. A summary of their reports is below, full reports are available on the website:

<https://bridfordvillage.co.uk/category/parish-council/agendas-minutes/>

Cllr. Topley requested for us to move Councillor reports up the agenda (after minutes item) for June as District and County Councillors often visiting several meetings the same evening so may need to leave after their update

Cllr. Swain's report:

Update on Planning

There has been a backlog but things are getting back on track

DNPA process followed for Planning

Request for Planning training to be made available to Parish Councils

Cllr. Jerry Brook's report:

Most Planning applications come with a recommendation before they come to the Planning Committee

Cllr. Brook chairs Planning for Devon County Council

Importance of transparency in process – what is in the public interest?

Important for Councillors to call in any issue

Locality budget funding available to Parish Councils – give it some thought as County have indicated that money should go to organisations that work within the community and give benefit to as many people as possible – Clerk to contact Acorn to see if relevant – application could be put through Parish Council as VAT could be reclaimed

Cllr. Brook to send a report to Clerk with regards other Council updates

26) Chairman's Report (for information only) – no report this month due to new Chairman taking up role at this meeting

27) Clerk's report (for information only)

Internal audit is currently taking place ahead of the annual external audit of accounts – Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Clerk has worked additional hours to prepare for this. Clerk is also keeping a note of all additional hours worked now as having settled into the role after three months, the number of hours worked each month is far exceeding that for which she is contracted and paid. Cllr. Topley asked the Clerk to report back on this at the July meeting.

Update on other work by Clerk: new accounting spreadsheets have been set up for the new financial year, Annual Parish Council arrangements and invitations have been sent out, news page on the website has now been created and is being updated regularly, King's portrait has arrived and is ready to be hung in the Village Hall once agreed with VH committee, all renewals for membership of professional bodies and insurance completed, closure of old Santander bank account nearly complete – letter signed by all Councillors to be sent to bank. Clerk is liaising with parishioner interested in becoming a Councillor. No interest received in the Road Warden Scheme as advertised in Unity magazine in May – carry over to June meeting to discuss and make a decision about next steps.

28) Councillor's reports and External Meetings attended (for information only)

District Councillor Andy Swain's report – for information only:

TDC has made very good progress making changes to ensure the planning backlog does not happen again. Funding has also been secured to outsource the backlog of applications made before 6th December 2023, and it is being cleared as quickly as possible. It does seem as though planning is back on track and keeping up with the load but we will of course continue to monitor it, in fact monitoring processes have also been tightened up.

I recently brought a motion to TDC for some other improvements. The details can be seen at <https://democracy.teignbridge.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=11259> Under Motion 2.

I am asking to restore the ability to call in an application “both ways” which is important when a member of the planning committee must not appear to be predetermined over an application, and it asks that arguments based on public interest should be admissible as a reason for call in as well as planning policy.

I feel quite strongly that Parish councils work hard to feedback on planning with little training or support, and while I believe their views are considered by officers, I am aware that they often feel ignored, so I am also asking TDC to consider offering the planning training (which is already provided to committee members) to Parish and town councils. I am also asking that when a recommendation goes against the parish council view, this should be acknowledged and explained.

The motion will be considered by the procedures committee. It is already attracting good support from councillors and has started a helpful dialog with officers. I would be keen to have feedback from parish councils about these issues.

Meeting closed at 20.58pm

Items for Information - The next council meeting will be on Monday 10th June 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held beforehand from 6.30pm – all are welcome and refreshments will be served.

Information by email

Statutory review of polling districts and places (sent 23/04/24)

DALC bulletin #15 (sent 23/04/24)

NALC newsletter (sent 23/04/24)

D Day celebrations info from RBL (sent 23/04/24)

Planning appeal (sent 30/04/24)

DALC bulletin #17 (sent 7/5/24)

Asset register (sent 7/5/24)

Current groups/responsibilities (sent 7/5/24)

Standing orders (sent 7/5/24)

Play park annual plan (re-sent 7/5/24)

DALC training courses (sent 7/5/24)

Signed by Chairman:

Date: