

CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on 10th April 2024 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Mrs J Zebedee, Dr C Bass, Mrs R Balchin, C Kay, MDDC Cllr. S Clist, DCC Cllr. R Radford and the Clerk. One member of the public was present for the first part of the meeting. *In the absence of the Chairman Cllr. Miss Jones, the Vice-Chairman Cllr. Mrs Zebedee took the meeting.*

47. Democratic Period: The applicant in respect of planning application 24/00243/FULL was present to give details of the application.
48. Apologies: Cllrs. Miss L Jones, Mrs J Saunders, Sarah Leppard and MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw.
49. Declarations of Interest: None.
50. The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 13/03/24 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.
51. Matters Arising: Cllr. Dr Bass enquired regarding the conditions relating to Appeal Reference APP/Y1138/W/23/3328724 - the Clerk reported that MDDC Cllr. Clist had confirmed that the matter was ongoing which was confirmed by MDDC Cllr. Clist at 52 (4).
52. **Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**
- 52.1 Applications considered:
-24/00243/FULL Erection of a dwelling utilising the Class Q fallback position 22/00383/PNCOU. Farm Building at NGR 309750 112984 (North East of Pilemoor) Uffculme Road, Culmstock. No objections.
- 52.2 Results from Mid Devon District Council. *MDDC Cllr. Clist arrived.*
-24/00236/CLP Certificate of lawfulness for a proposed rear dormer. Fir Cone, Culmstock. EX15 3JX. *The member of the public left the meeting.*
- 52.3 Viewing of Planning Applications at monthly meetings: Enquiries will be made regarding an overhead projector in the meeting room.
- 52.4 Any other Planning Matters: (i) MDDC Cllr. Clist will enquire with the district council as to whether the location maps supplied within the details of planning applications can show more detail. (ii) The Clerk will speak to the relevant officer at MDDC regarding the allocation of S106 funds.
53. **Reports.**
- 53.1 The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.
- 53.2 The Clerk: After looking into details of a government funded voluntary scheme, to allow public authorities to apply for a free framed portrait of His Majesty the King to celebrate his new reign, an application has been made.
- 53.3 P3/Footpaths and/or Access: The Clerk will speak with the landowner regarding a replacement combination padlock on the beacon. Apologies from the P3 Coordinator and Volunteer Footpath Warden, a report was circulated - maintenance work in the form of relaying gravel has taken place at Buddle Bridge path. Fallen branches have been cut up at Hillmoor Common. The noticeboards have been cleaned. FP12 - more posts have been collected and the broken ones will be replaced when weather conditions improve. More mesh panels have been ordered for the boardwalk on `FP 1a.
- 53.4 Highways: Cllr. Dr Bass reported that various roads were now due to be repaired. Traffic notices have been publicised as received.
- 53.5 Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors: MDDC Cllr. Clist - the 50th anniversary celebration was held recently at the MDDC offices. The State of the District Debate was well attended; thanks to Cllr. Sarah Leppard and the Clerk for their attendance. The first of the modular homes is now occupied; various modular applications have been approved. Let's Talk Survey results are now available. DCC Cllr. Radford - a report had been circulated to all, details include: At Month 10 (Jan) it is estimated that budgets will effectively break-even by year end. DCC has managed its finances very well, and taken necessary action when needed to. A 4.99% increase for its part of the council tax has been agreed for the coming financial year. It comprises 2.99% for general services with an extra 2% specifically for adult care - this means a £1.56 a week extra for the average Band D householder. An extra £1.5 million to boost regular road drainage since the target budget was set last month to tackle the increase in potholes caused by this winter's heavy rainfall was agreed. A 6-week public consultation was launched in February on the draft proposal to create a Combined County Authority (CCA) for Devon and Torbay to oversee new powers and funding transferred from government.

Reports continued:

The ground-breaking devolution deal announced by Levelling Up Minister Jacob Young last month, proposes to create the CCA, which would be a formal partnership of elected members drawn from the councils of Devon and Torbay, including district councils, together with representatives from business and education. People are being invited to have their say on how the CCA would work, the powers that it would have and the functions it would be responsible for. These include investment in local economic growth, delivering affordable housing, improving public transport, and meeting net zero ambitions. Further information about the joint consultation with Torbay Council and details of how to respond are available at www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk.

Devon has the largest road network in England with 8,953 miles of roads. In 2023, 57,000 public reports of potholes were assessed of which 12,000 were ultimately assessed as duplicates. 53,000+ potholes were repaired. Extra repair gangs have been employed to help increase the repairs. The Locality Budget has been restored for small donations to local organisations/clubs etc., applications need to be made via DCC with support of the local Devon County Councillor. *DCC Cllr. Radford left the meeting.*

54. Finance.

54.1 Finance report: A report was given, the bank balance was noted as 31/03/24 as £41,617.83. Credits received: £500 in respect of cemetery fees on 08/03 and £600 on 25/03. Direct Debits taken: Nest 110.15 on 05/03 & £100.08 on 28/03. ICO Subscription £35 on 11/03.

54.2 Payments were resolved:

- Chq 1913 £ 34.94 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
- Chq 1914 £ 820.80 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Maintenance contract.
- Chq 1915 £ 801.01 Clerk - salary & expenses.
- Chq 1916 £ 152.77 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
- Chq 1917 £ 72.00 Shiny Happy People Services. Annual Fire Risk Assessment Review.
- Chq 1918 £ 412.72 MDDC. Supply and installation of dog bin outside of play area.
- Chq 1919 £ 50.40 Eagle Plant. Fencing hire.
- Chq 1920 £ 624.06 HMRC. Quarterly payment.

54.3 Updated estimate from T K Play Ltd., for maintenance works at the play area following the annual inspection - A quotation for £4305 had been received to supply and install a replacement Spika, to include removal of the existing Spika; a further quotation will be sourced.

54.4 The invoice from the Devon Association of Local Councils was noted as £365.96; payment will be deducted from the precept by MDDC.

54.5 The bank interest for 2023-24 was noted as £94.16.

54.6 The Income and Expenditure and bank reconciliation as at 31/03/24 were approved prior to the internal audit.

54.7 Any other financial matters: None.

55. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.

55.1 Maintenance works: Following the recent quarterly inspection by MDDC and a report from the Parish Warden, it had been noted that a replacement cradle seat was required due to brittle nuts. Agreement had been made between the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman for a replacement seat and chains (total cost £192) when T K Play Ltd., were on site recently preparing quotations for works following the annual inspection. A quotation will follow for a replacement backboard for the basket-ball net and repair of the handle on the rocker. Further minor maintenance works are required as and when quotations can be sourced.

55.2 Fire Risk Assessment Report and Review of Fire Safety Policy & Procedure: Following the annual assessment, a recommendation for contact to be made with the local fire station to see if they could arrange a talk with the local youth population in an effort to stop the practice of setting fires - the Clerk will discuss this further with the Assessor as it was considered this may not be of benefit. The Policy and Procedure document was reviewed. There were no further issues requiring attention.

55.3 MDDC Public Space Protection Order: The Mid Devon (Public Spaces Protection) (Dog Control) Order 2021 is due to expire on 07/10/24 and the district council is considering whether the Order should be extended (beyond 2021) and if so, whether it should be varied. Councillors agreed that the Order should continue and that dogs should be excluded from the play area.

55.4 Any other matters: It is expected that Petanque will be promoted by those keen at the Annual Parish Meeting.

56. Culmstock Cemetery.

56.1 Public Space Protection Order: The Mid Devon (Public Spaces Protection) (Dog Control) Order 2021 is due to expire on 07/10/24 and the district council is considering whether the Order should be extended (beyond 2021) and if so, whether it should be varied. Councillors agreed that the Order should continue and that dogs should be on leads when in the cemetery.

56.2 Any Other Matters: The Rules and Regulations for Funeral Directors and Gravediggers together with general cemetery terms will be reviewed shortly.

57. Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd (CGM Ltd.).

57.1 Update following recent site meeting: The Clerk reported on a site meeting with the contracts manager where the Parish Warden and P3 Footpath Co-ordinator and Volunteer Footpath Warden were present - a visit was made to all areas that are attended to, in advance of the start of cutting. Some work that had been missed was reported and has since been attended to or works were due to be carried out ASAP. The maintenance contractor will flatten any mounds of earth at the park throughout the cutting season.

57.2 To confirm costs for Year 3 of Grass Maintenance Contract (2024/25): An increase of 4.6% was agreed.

57.3 Quotation to supply and install benches: As Highway Chapter 8 trained contractors, CGM Ltd., had been asked to supply a quotation for installation of 3 replacement benches - the Clerk will ask for a sample of the material that has been quoted and a further sample will be obtained from an alternative supplier for comparison; quotations will be reviewed at a future meeting.

58. Defibrillator located at Culmstock Village Hall: The First Responder will be asked for details (photo and location) to go into the Culmstock News magazine as a permanent item.

59. Annual Parish Meeting - Wednesday 8th May 2024: The meeting will start at 6.30pm and will be an opportunity for people to drop in and see the various groups/organisations which will be present to promote what they are doing in the village. Cllr. Mrs Zebedee will organise purchase of the refreshments. *MDDC Cllr. Clist left the meeting.*

60. Survey of Parish Noticeboards: A survey has been carried out of the noticeboards - a few are in need of renovation and a quotation will be sourced. It was agreed for a replacement noticeboard for outside of the village hall.

61. General maintenance of Collier's Meadow: Contact will be made with The Beacon of Lights Committee to see if the equipment (poles etc.) left on site following erection of the Christmas lights can be moved into storage. The Clerk has requested the maintenance contractor replace the tree that was damaged.

62. Correspondence & Any Consultations.

-Response from the Protected Landscapes Senior Advisor of the Landscape, Heritage & Geodiversity Team at Natural England reference letter regarding Culmstock and the Blackdown Hills National Landscape (BHNL): *It was noted that Natural England is unable to explore any more boundary reviews or new designations due to its current focus on the current programme of 4 landscape designations.*

-Letter from parishioner regarding building works following lawful development certificate.

63. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates. Next meeting - 15/05/24.
Annual Parish Meeting - 08/05/24 @ 6.30pm.