

CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th September 2024 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Miss E Jones, Mrs J Zebedee, Dr C Bass, C Kay, T Platel, Sarah Leppard, Mrs J Saunders and MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw. Also in attendance were five members of the public to speak within the Democratic Period. James Bartlett arrived part way through the democratic period in respect of co-option, being co-opted at item 2.

- 114.** Democratic Period: (i) Two members of the public raised concerns in relation to planning application 24/00934/FULL; Construction and operation of a micro energy storage facility. Land at NGR 310218 114073 Hunters Way, Culmstock. Concerns include safety - Lithium-ion battery fire risk, radiation together with noise visual impact and loss of open space. (ii) One member of the public was present as a homeowner having received notification of Tree Preservation Order - 24/00007/TPO (The Paddocks, Blackwater Road, Culmstock) with various queries. MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw will endeavour to assist. (iii) Two members of the public were present, one as having contacted the Parish Council regarding the possibility of a community orchard. The parishioner agreed to gather interest from parishioners for submission to DCC as the landowner.
- 115.** Co-option of a Parish Councillor: Mr Bartlett was proposed by Cllr. Miss Jones and seconded by Cllr. Mrs Zebedee; councillors were unanimous in their decision to co-opt Mr Bartlett. Cllr. Bartlett signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. *It was noted that the co-option policy had been relaxed following communication between the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman, due to Cllr. Bartlett having attended meetings up until May 2023 as an MDDC District Councillor. This was also the case with Cllr. Platel at minute 70 having resigned as a Parish Councillor for six months in the period 2023/24.*
- 116.** Apologies: MDDC Cllr. Simon Clist & DCC Cllr. Ray Radford.
- 117.** Declarations of Interest: A DPI was declared as the applicants - Cllrs. Dr C Bass reference application 24/00923/LBC & MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw reference application 24/00923/LBC.
- 118.** The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 07/08/24 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.
- 119.** Matters Arising: None.
- 120. Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**
- 120.1** Applications considered:
- 24/00934/FULL Construction and operation of a micro energy storage facility. Land at NGR [310218 114073](#) Hunters Way, Culmstock. Cllr. Dr Bass and MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw reported following an online meeting held with the Planning Officer where they were given the opportunity to raise queries. It was unanimously agreed to object to the application for a number of reasons public health, safety, access, visual impact, noise, proximity to residential properties, wildlife issues which were also issues of concern as raised by members of the public at the last two Parish Council meetings. The Upper Culm MDDC Ward Councillors will be asked to call the application in for determination by the Planning Committee should the Officer be minded to approve the application. *An objection was not submitted by the Parish Council as the application was withdrawn the day following the meeting.*
- 24/00923/LBC Listed Building Consent for the erection of porch. Woodgate Farm, Culmstock, Devon. EX15 3HW. No objection. See declarations.
- 24/01155/HOUSE Erection of two-storey extension and link and siting of an air source heat pump following removal of single storey lean-to and conservatory. Whitting House, Nicholashayne. TA21 9QY. No objection.
- 24/00898/LBC Listed Building Consent for re-rendering exterior elevations with lime render. Cadbury House, Fore Street, Culmstock. EX15 3JD. No objections. *See declarations - Cllr. Dr Bass left the room for this item and took no part in the discussion.*
- 24/01141/CAT Notification of intention to thin the crown of 1 Walnut tree and remove 1 Sweet Chestnut tree within the Conservation Area. The Old Bakery, Town Hill, Culmstock. EX15 3JQ. No objection.
- 120.2** Tree Preservation Order - 24/00007/TPO (The Paddocks, Blackwater Road, Culmstock). The Parish Council support the TPO being put in place.
- 120.3** Results from Mid Devon District Council.
- 24/00649/FULL Notification of revised and additional plans re: Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 13/00104/FULL to allow revised plans. Reservoir at NGR 310867 114866 Road South of Blackdown Common, Culmstock. Permitted with conditions to discharge.

Planning continued:

24/01035/FULL Erection of dwelling following partial demolition of an agricultural building, utilising the Class Q fallback position. Land & Buildings at NGR 310187 115182 Old Drove Farm Culmstock. Permitted with conditions to discharge.

24/01057/CAT Notification of intention to remove of 6 self-seeded Sycamore, 1 River Alder, multi stemmed Holly Trees and multi stem Leylandii within the Conservation Area. Land at NGR 310090 113537 at The Shieling, Silver Street, Culmstock. No objection.

120.4 Any other Planning Matters: Cllr. Dr Bass raised the subject of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish which it was considered could be of great benefit. The Clerk will make enquiries with various organisations for discussion at a future meeting.

121. Reports.

121.1 The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.

121.2 The Clerk: None. The Clerk will make enquires about gov.uk domains following attendance at a recent session. The Clerk's laptop will be serviced.

121.3 P3/Footpaths and/or Access: Apologies from the P3 Team, report as follows - strimming has been carried out on the footpath (1a) to the beacon, and footpath (23) Lane End towards Red Ball. Drainage and strimming and has also been carried out on FP9. A fallen branch has been removed from between the gates at the end of FP2 & Hemyock FP18. Located and patched broken drain between the gates on the footpath Silver Street to the river (12a) also tightened retaining bolts for the handrails on the footbridge. Pared the vegetation beside path on the rail track.

121.4 Highways. (i) Speeding and Speedwatch - MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw. Deferred to a future meeting. Dr. Cllr. Bass will look into a quotation for signs "20 is Plenty". (ii) Any other matters - there is to be a change in the Neighbourhood Highways Officer for the area; details of the new NHO will be given shortly.

121.5 Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors: (i) MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw - Homes England has awarded £3 million towards the Cullompton Relief Road subject to final landowner negotiations. The government is consulting on the NPPF with a very short timeline. With the increase in the housing target for the district now at 571 annually for five years, MDDC has to prove supply. A national award has been achieved with the Zed Pod homes in Cullompton. Recycling rates remain high. (ii) A report was provided from DCC Cllr. Radford - Road repairs have accelerated with the help of £10 million extra funding invested in the roads budget this year.

More than 18,000 square metres of road have been patched in over 350 locations across the county since April. Most DCC service areas are performing well, but it is the usual areas of concern that continue to cause concern i.e. children's and adult services. Recycling rates are increasing. In the last year the Waste Team, through various contracts, has been working and engaged with various groups, householders and organisations to reduce, reuse and recycle. The UK wide Big Fix coordinated by DCC brought 163 repair cafes. The government has announced widespread reform to the planning system and the re-introduction of mandatory housing targets as part of its pledge to build 1.5 million new homes over the next five years. The government has introduced the New Homes Accelerator programme to address delays in the construction of new homes across England. The initiative, announced by the Deputy Prime Minister, is designed to speed up the delivery of large-scale housing projects that have been stalled in the planning process, with an aim to help deliver up to 300,000 new homes on 200 identified sites.

The government has cancelled the A303 Stonehenge tunnel and ended the Restoring Your Railways programme. Individual Restoring Your Railway projects will now be reconsidered in a new transport review. DCC will support MDDC in lobbying for the funding for Cullompton Station which is key to unlocking housing development. At year end the total Locality Budget underspend for 2023/24 was £147,069. It has been confirmed that this amount has been carried forward into 2024-25. There will be no roll over of unspent Locality Budget funding into the 25/26 financial year due to Local County Council elections, therefore all available funds must be used by March 2025.

122. MDDC - Public Space Protection Order (for information only): Details circulated to all; no planned changes, dogs to be excluded from the play area and to be on leads in the cemetery. No response is necessary if the Parish Council is not opposing the Order. The Mid Devon (Public Spaces Protection) (Dog Control) Order 2021 will renew for 3 years starting 07/10/24.

123. Finance.

123.1 Finance report: A report was given. The bank balance was reported as £44,352.24 as at 31/08/24.

Direct Debits taken: Nest 104.03 on 23/08, Pennon Water Services £19.71 on 08/08.

123.2 Payments were resolved:

-Chq 1972 £ 805.29 Clerk - salary & expenses.

-Chq 1973 £ 198.77 Parish warden - salary & expenses.

-Chq 1974 £ 21.94 SMA Services. Payroll provider.

-Chq 1975 £ 858.43 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Maintenance contract.

-Chq 1976 £ 212.52 Eagle Plant. Portable Toilet hire. *Note: Typing error on the agenda where it was noted as £221.52.*

-Chq 1977 £ 36.00 Culmstock Village Hall. Room hire.

-Chq 1978 £ 252.00 PKF Littlejohn LLP. External audit fee.

123.3 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance (i) Replacement of three Parish Benches - an updated quotation of £2758 was agreed. Permission will be required from DCC for a seat to be placed on the village green - Clerk to enquire. (ii) A quotation for an additional orchard cut for £168 was agreed.

123.4 Funding for a Youth Club: Deferred to a future meeting.

123.5 Publications available from the Open Spaces Society it was agreed to purchase "Our Common Land".

123.6 Re-allocation of \$106 funds; it was agreed that following the decision not to pursue the Collier's Bridge project that funds should go towards improvements at the playing field and if possible a pump track which would cater for all age groups. There is interest in improving the site especially for teenagers as there is a gap in equipment for this age group. The village has expanded in recent years with the development at Great Meadow and Earland Rise and there is now a greater need for improving the site. The Clerk will liaise with the district council who will respond with a decision.

123.7 External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/24: External Auditor's Report and Notification of Conclusion of Audit received: No matters of concern - the relevant information will be publicised as required. Dates for the notification of public rights & notification of the unaudited AGAR were noted as 28/06/24 to 08/08/24.

123.8 Any other financial matters: Stock of aqua sacs was confirmed as sufficient. Following a report from the handyman a quotation will be sourced for maintenance to the Bier House. The second quarter of income and expenditure will be circulated shortly.

124. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.

124.1 Improvements to the site and general site maintenance: One quotation for wooden monkey bars had been received - it was agreed to request an alternative quotation for metal; other quotations will be required. The possibility of a compost toilet was discussed.

124.2 Any Other Matters: Some general maintenance is required on site such as works to the wooden picnic benches and it was agreed to ask M Delamain to look into this and proceed ASAP.

125. Hillmoor Common: Cllr. Dr Bass has made a start on registration; Cllr. Platel will now assist.

126. Village Green.

126.1 Communication received from a parishioner regarding the possibility of a community orchard - following a discussion in the democratic period it was agreed to look into the possibility of a community orchard and the Clerk will make enquiries with DCC as the landowner. **126.2** Any other matters: None.

127. Devon Communities Together – Devon Community Resilience Forum: The Clerk will endeavour to attend together with an event in November.

128. Devon Association of Local Councils - AGM & Conference & training and events: The Clerk to attend the DALC AGM & Conference (*Kentisbeare PC will fund the event fee - time and travel to be split*) together with two webinars in coming months at £35 per session.

129. Correspondence & Any Consultations.

Correspondence: Clerks and Councils Direct. Email from Blackdowns Early Music Projects (*informing the Parish Council that the group will not be requesting financial assistance this year and thanks for assistance provided previously*). Various generic emails.

130. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates. Next Meeting - 09/10/24 with apologies from Cllr. Dr Bass.