

CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on 7th August 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. S Clist (part of meeting). Also in attendance were the P3 Footpath Co-ordinator and nine members of the public who remained present for various agenda items. *Due to apologies received from the Clerk, Cllr. Dr Bass took notes for the minutes.*

100. Democratic Period. (i) The applicant in respect of planning application 24/0069/FULL gave details of further excavation works that are required for drainage and sustainability works around the reservoir walls which will be filled in on completion. The applicant offered to supply explanatory public notices on the gate describing the necessary works. (ii) A member of the public raised concern regarding planning application 24/00848/FULL describing the application as virtually unchanged from the one dismissed at Appeal. The parishioner reported of 12 new privately owned traveller sites being made available nearby. (iii) A member of the public was present in respect of planning application 24/01057/CAT where most of the discussion was related to the neighbourhood dispute surrounding the application which is not a council issue and should be settled in court if necessary. (iv) Two members of the public were present to raise concerns regarding excavation of an area of scrub land within the Parish & possible untreated infestation of Japanese Knotweed - *as noted under correspondence*. (v) Four 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 - for which the Parish Council had only just received details & was not on the current agenda. The parishioners concerns include ownership, noise, size of the unit, Lithium-ion battery fire risk, appearance, planning creep, wildlife disturbance and loss of amenity for children.

101. Apologies: Cllrs. Mrs R Balchin, DCC Cllr. Ray Radford and MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw.

102. Declarations of Interest: None.

103. The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 12/06/24 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

104. Matters Arising: None.

105. Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.

105.1 Applications considered:

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. No objections.

24/00848/FULL Change of use of agricultural land to allow the siting of 1 mobile home and associated works for the use of gypsy and traveller family (Revised Scheme). South Fork, Culmstock, EX15 3HW. It was unanimously agreed to object to the application as it is virtually unchanged from what was dismissed at Appeal. The document submitted to the Appeal Inspector will be resubmitted noting that this application document contains more inaccuracies, principally describing the site as a 'Gypsy and Traveller site with equestrian stables' which it is not. MDDC Cllr. Clist will "call the application in" to be considered by the Planning Committee if the Planning Officer is minded to approve the application.

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. Following seven councillors being present to consider the application; there were two objections and five abstentions.

24/00913/HOUSE Erection of summerhouse. Oakridge 1A, Earland Rise, Culmstock, EX15 3FY. No objections.

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. No objections - the Parish Council considers the plans to be an overall improvement to the existing, with two provisos; that the North East elevation windows be revised in such a way as to prevent overlooking, using louvres/obscured glass and that any material removed from the site is properly identified and disposed of.

Planning continued:

24/00879/FULL Erection of a dwelling with associated outbuilding, parking and landscaping works following demolition of existing outbuildings. Land & Buildings at Montpelier Millmoor, Culmstock, EX15 3HA. There were no objections; approve with due care for a finish sympathetic with the conservation area.

105.2 Results from Mid Devon District Council.

-24/00778/FULL Replace window on side of property and one window and one door at rear of property. Mypremcoach, Old Wesleyan Chapel, Millmoor, Culmstock. EX15 3HA. Approved.

-24/00755/HOUSE Erection of first floor extension above existing ground floor extension. Tuckaway Cottage, Burlescombe. EX16 7JZ. Approved.

24/00763/NMA - Oakridge, 1A Earland Rise, Culmstock. Non material amendment for 23/00363/House to allow amendments to porch. Approved.

-24/00621/HOUSE Erection of a garden gym and reorientation of existing greenhouse. Cheritons, Blackwater Road, Culmstock. EX15 3JW. Approved.

-24/00712/CAT Notification of intention to remove 1 Goat Willow tree (T5) in 2 stages (Stage 1 pollard at main crown union, Stage 2 dismantle to ground level) within a Conservation Area. Vennwoods, Millmoor, Culmstock. EX15 3HA. Approved.

-24/00644/FULL Change of use of holiday let known as the annexe to ancillary accommodation. Walders Court, Culmstock. EX15 3HW. Approved.

105.3 Any other Planning Matters. (i) Cllr. Dr C Bass will submit details to MDDC Enforcement following concerns raised reference details as noted under agenda item 15 - *email received from a member of the public regarding excavation of an area of scrub land within the Parish & possible untreated infestation of Japanese Knotweed*. (ii) Planning Application - 24/00934/FULL The Clerk will liaise with the Planning Officer and will request an extension on the time for response so that the application can be included on the next agenda.

106. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.

106.1 Petanque - a report was given on a recent informal site meeting regarding the possibility of constructing a pitch for Petanque at the Parish playing field. It was agreed to proceed and Cllr. Mrs Zebedee will assist in seeking three quotations.

106.2 Improvements to the site- possible table tennis table: Cllr. Sarah Leppard has agreement from Table Tennis England for a 50% subsidy on supply of an outdoor Table Tennis table. Bats and balls will be provided - these will need to be kept accessibly but offsite. It was agreed to purchase one table - installation cost extra; tbc. Surfacing to be identified.

106.3 Any Other Matters: None.

107. Reports.

107.1 The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.

107.2 P3/Footpaths and/or Access: A report had been circulated to all - FP12, the damaged gate has been repaired and refitted, and the self-closing spring reset on the road gate. FP3, a small fallen tree has been removed from the path. FP4, assisted contractor in replacing broken wooden gate post with a new metal post set in concrete. FP3, Bowhayes Farm - changed catch on the top metal gate into yard. Reminded owner that path must be kept useable if people still wish to use it. Reminded a user that the gates should not be vaulted. FP12, met with the contractor at Hunkin Wood, and obtained permission to park inside the gate, to enable maintenance of FP 11 &12, without obstructing the field gateways. FP 1, a replacement shutter board has been installed to replace the one that had been removed in the dog hatch in the stile below Pitt Farm. Drainage and strimming has been carried out on footpaths as required. A meeting at Old Hall with the landowners and the DCC Public Rights of Way warden resulted in a plan to remove the sludge and debris from FP11 (Stoggy Lane) again and improve the drainage, hopefully this will prevent as much sludge build up. Future clearance will be required. Himalayan Balsam continues to be a problem in Hunkin Wood. It was reported that a handrail will be needed beside the steps on FP1 behind the Cleeve down to the river, as the owner has replaced post and rail fence with livestock wire topped with barbed wire.

107.3 Highways: The Neighbourhood Highways Officer has enquired about the recent car fire at the cemetery gate as he received no report from Fire services.

107.4 Report on possible Youth/Family Club following feedback from the Annual Parish Meeting: Cllr. Sarah Leppard proposed an informal family day which could take place at Hillmoor Common. The possibility of a youth club and funding will be placed on a future agenda.

Reports continued:

107.5 Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors: (i) MDDC Cllr. S Clist reported - The budget for next year is looking good, with no reduction in staffing or services. The new government grant level is not yet clear. The Corporate Plan is available online. Modular developments in Cullompton are up and running, with 7 more awaiting utility connections.

A revised National Planning Policy Framework is expected within 100 days of the general election and will probably be with little consultation. Housing targets for Mid Devon have been set with an increase from 364 pa to 571. Funding for the Cullompton relief road is not forthcoming, nor is funding for the previously approved rail stations in Cullompton & Wellington. This impacts on the potential go ahead for the Culm Garden Village and will place pressure on all parishes for additional development.

(ii) DCC Cllr. R Radford had supplied a report which was circulated to all - previously called the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the new name for the organisation is now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The long-term efforts to reduce carbon emissions are continuing to pay off after the latest figures in the [carbon footprint](#) report shows that emissions continue to decline, and that we are ahead of schedule in our goal of a 70 per cent reduction by 2030. The total level of emissions we produced in 2022/23 was 19,400 tonnes (of carbon dioxide equivalent), a 56 per cent fall when compared to the 43,826 tonnes in our baseline year of 2012/13. The figures take into account emissions created in areas such as our vehicle fleet, school transport and buildings. *The Mobile Boost scheme has relaunched with a £430,000 investment through the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership's (HotSWLEP) Growth Deal. The scheme offers vouchers of up to £1,300 towards technology to help improve indoor mobile coverage and connectivity. The scheme is available to businesses and homes in Somerset, Devon, Torbay and Plymouth. The news release in the link below includes a video featuring Peter Samwell, who lives near the Blackdown Hills, describing the benefits of the scheme. Mobile Boost scheme re-opens [Mobile Boost scheme re-opens - Connecting Devon and Somerset For Information](#) – Healthwatch Phase 2 has been released, a report on the impact of providing unpaid care at home in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay. It contains a valuable insight into the impact that caring for someone for more than 20 hours a week can have on Carers' lives. A brief summary of the key findings and recommendations is available online.*

108. Replacement of three Parish Benches - a quotation had been received from Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd., as Chapter 8 contractors, for supply and installation of 3 benches. Two options and prices were supplied and samples provided. It was agreed for three light grey benches. Exact cost to be confirmed due to the quotation being supplied in early May - the Clerk has been awaiting samples. Cost expected to be in £2500-£3000.

109. Finance.

109.1 Finance report: To note the bank balance as at 31/07/24 - £51,740.10. Credits: £107 re: cemetery fees on 22/07. Direct Debits: Nest 98.63 taken on both 31/07 & 03/07.

109.2 To note payments resolved under the scheme of delegation - details circulated to all:

- Chq 1950 £ 30.37 M Barrow. P3 works.
- Chq 1951 £ 771.84 Parish Clerk. Salary and expenses - June.
- Chq 1952 £ 152.57 Parish Warden. Salary and expenses - June.
- Chqs 1953 & 1954 - Spoilt
- Chq 1955 £ 22.00 VisionICT Ltd. Email hosting - 1 account.
- Chq 1956 £ 36.00 DALC. Attendance of Clerk at webinar.
- Chq 1957 £ 230.00 N Page. P3 works.
- Chq 1958 £ 201.60 MDDC. Play area inspections.
- Chq 1959 £ 21.94 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
- Chq 1960 £ 220.03 MDC Exports Ltd. Dog bags.
- Chq 1961 £ 415.38 Eagle Plant Ltd. Portable toilet hire.
- Chq 1962 £ 566.20 HMRC. Quarterly PAYE.
- Chq 1963 £ 787.44 Parish Clerk. Salary and expenses - July.
- Chq 1964 £ 152.37 Parish Warden. Salary and expenses - July.
- Chq 1965 £ 2204.88 Arthur J Gallagher. Parish Council Insurance Renewal.
- Chq 1966 £ 21.94 SMA Services. Payroll provider.

Finance - payments continued:

- Chq 1967 Spoilt cheque
- Chq 1968 £ 22.50 Computerlink (Leicester) Ltd. Printer cartridge.
- Chq 1969 £ 1868.06 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract 2 months & additional cemetery work.
- Chq 1970 £ 48.00 Visionlct Ltd. Email hosting - 2 accounts.
- Chq 1971 £ 156.00 MDDC. Bin emptying - Culmstock bridge 6 months.

109.3 Any other financial matters: None.

110. Blackdown Hills National Landscape Boundary: Cllr. Dr C Bass will visit the Devon Heritage Centre to find evidence showing the original boundary for the AONB as presented to the Parish Council in 1989/1990, in which the village was intended to be included in the boundary.

111. Hillmoor Common: The maintenance contractor will be asked to complete an extra cut early to mid-September; cost to be confirmed.

112. Correspondence & Any Consultations.

Correspondence: Clerks and Councils Direct. Campaign re: Safety of Lithium ion Batteries and e-bikes and scooters. Various generic emails.

Email received from a member of the public regarding excavation of an area of scrub land within the Parish & possible untreated infestation of Japanese Knotweed - *Access Advisory Group to report (see 105.3).*

Consultations were noted. MDDC: The Grand Western Canal – Conservation Area & Management Plan. Licensing Act 2003 - Statement of licensing policy. Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of principles.

113. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates. Re-allocation of S106 funds. Grant for Blackdown Hills Early Music Project. Funding for a Youth Group.