



Chittlehamholt, Satterleigh and Warkleigh Parish Council

www.cswparish.org.uk

Chairman: Paul Blackwell

paul.blackwell@cswparish.org.uk

01769 540180

Parish Clerk: Linda Stapleton

clerk@cswparish.org.uk

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<https://cswparish.org.uk/the-council/how-we-make-decisions/council-meetings/19-past-meetings>.

Note: no video recording was taken of this meeting.

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 29th July 2019 in Chittlehamholt Village Hall

Meeting chaired by	Councillor Paul Blackwell
Meeting minuted by	Parish Clerk Linda Stapleton
Councillors present	Councillor Paul Blackwell Councillor David Ball Councillor Andrew Kitchen Councillor Steve Wilkinson
In attendance	Councillor Richard Edgell (DCC) Councillor Ray Jenkins (NDC)

5 members of the public were in attendance. The meeting opened at 7.30 pm.

1/07/19 **Apologies** – apologies were received from Cllrs Andrew Coupe and Paul Wingrove.

2/07/19 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** – no declarations were received.

3/07/19 **Reports**

a. **Police** – Cllr Wilkinson reported on current issues, from which the following was noted:

- Rural crime was under reported. Cllr Wilkinson would be meeting with Martin Beck, the Rural Crimes' Officer, in order to discuss what support could be offered to him by Cllr Wilkinson/the Parish Council.
- Senior local Police Officers hoped that the recent announcement of additional funding to the Police Service would result in extra officers to address current understaffing in rural areas.
- There had been one crime reported within the Parish.
- Reporting on new legislation related to domestic abuse/violence, Cllr Wilkinson explained that there was considerable under reporting of this in rural areas compared to towns and gave examples of how to identify domestic abuse.

- b. **District Councillor** – Cllr Jenkins reported that he had followed up issues discussed by the Council related to Highbullen and noted that the Clerk had received a response from North Devon Council about the issue.
- c. **County Councillor** – Cllr Richard Edgell explained that the holiday season was a quiet time for most councils and therefore he had nothing specific to bring to the Council’s attention. He welcomed the Prime Minister’s announcement of additional funds for adult social care making the point that in Devon the rising costs for this element of DCC’s spend was a major issue. He reiterated the rise in the number of children in care from 729 to 759 and therefore DCC’s spend on services for this sector.

4/07/19 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th June 2019**

With the correction of a typing error, namely the addition of Cllr Coupe to the attendance list and removal of Cllr Michael Pincombe, the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting which took place on 24th June 2019 were approved by the Council as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5/07/19 **Parishioners’ Open Session** – this session was held prior to the start of the meeting.

- **Possible increase to the Precept** – a parishioner asked whether his understanding was correct that a “serial complainer” may cause costs to the Council which would need to be recouped via an increase to the Precept. The parishioner was advised that the issue would be discussed at Agenda Item 13.

6/07/19 **Maintenance of roads, footpaths etc.**

a. **Highway maintenance/verge ploughing/bridleways & footpaths/progress with issues reported to Highways etc.** Points noted from Cllr Wilkinson’s report were:

- Cllr Wilkinson and Cllr Wingrove had met with Richard Sables (DCC Devon Highways) to discuss short and long-term objectives for work; a schedule of work had been agreed around the Council’s priorities. In this financial year work would include repairs to the section of road starting from Swingate Cross; work to Newlands Hill would be undertaken in the next financial year and the Portsmouth Arms road the following year.
- Highways had agreed to continually check where the water runs at the junction between Headpost and the B3226 to ensure this is unblocked when necessary because of the problems it causes in this location.
- A review of works planned for the repair of the pothole (reported to the Council about eight weeks ago) would be undertaken to assess its priority in relation to other works identified.
- There had been difficulties for DCC Legal Department pursuing the enforcement of work required in respect of overhanging trees. Enforcement required DCC Highways to give specific action/measurements to landowners when advising them of their responsibilities to cut back hedges/trim trees. The failure of specific requirements meant that it was not possible to follow through enforcement.
- There was a view that it may be preferable for the Council to directly commission contractors to carry out hedge cutting. It was noted that funding would need to be applied for in December if the Council wished to directly commission the work.

Next agenda

- b. **Broken noticeboard in the Village Hall car park** – following discussion about the possibility of funding a replacement board from Section 106 monies, it was generally agreed that a repair to bring the noticeboard into operation would be preferable at this point in time to its replacement. Cllr Kitchen agreed to discuss this option with the individual likely to undertake such repairs and report back.

Cllr Kitchen

- c. **Warkleigh War Memorial & surrounding area** – following discussion, points noted were:
- An explanation by Cllr Ball of what constituted the memorial; this was noted as the square plinth touching the base of the heather upwards.
 - Clearing the heather and repairing the wall could be undertaken without consent being sought.
 - The nature of the repairs required to the wall were explained by the Chairman.
 - That a parishioner had planted the heather and, if possible, should have the opportunity to comment on or be involved in any improvements being suggested by the Council. It was agreed that the Council's intention to improve the vegetation around the Memorial should be brought to parishioners' attention via the local news outlets.

Clerk

- d. **Satterleigh Church** – the Chairman reported that the gates to the church needed some repair. There was further discussion about responsibilities for maintenance to the grounds since it was not considered to be the responsibility of the church. Following discussion about possible grant funding the improvements required, Cllr Edgell commented that the Council may wish to consider setting up a 'community project' as other Parish Councils had done for similar activities. It was agreed to consider this option further, noting that the church was promoted to the wider public because of its historic value.

Next agenda

- e. **Posts for warning signs** – noting these were concrete posts for warning lights, it was confirmed payment was being made for the items as detailed at Agenda Item 10b.

7/07/19 **Projects**

- a. **Defibrillator – Warkleigh** – it was confirmed that the detailed discussions related to providing this equipment in Warkleigh would be taken forward by the Strategy Task and Finish Group.
- b. **Safeguarding the Village Pub** – the Clerk reported having acquired the appropriate form to start the process of registering the pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).

8/07/19 **Strategy Task & Finish Group**

- a. **Next meeting** – it was noted that a meeting was being arranged. In response to a question, Cllr Ball explained that it was premature to convene a meeting between the Village Hall, Village Shop and Council prior to confirmation of the Section 106 monies being released.
- b. **Community Priorities for Open Space** – NDC's response to the Council's enquiries confirmed that:
- the enquiry was of a general nature;
 - that should general priorities need to be updated, NDC should be notified and that there was no deadline for this information;

- that the enquiry did not relate to the priorities detailed by the Council for S106 monies related to Highbullen.

9/07/19 **Planning**

- a. **Mollands, Cockrams Lane, Chittlehamholt – application 66402** – the Decision Notice approving this application was noted.
- b. **Class Q applications** – NDC’s response was received. Following discussion, it was agreed that NDC be asked for the policy upon which the interpretation of the criteria was based. *Clerk*
- c. **Highbullen Hotel – application 66644** – NDC’s response was received, from which it was noted that NDC Planning Department had yet to review all of the previous conditions and whether they correlated to the information submitted for the first phase. The Clerk was asked to follow up the response by enquiring whether this review had been undertaken. *Clerk*
- d. **Road closures – UMBERLEIGH** – notices of road closures in UMBERLEIGH regarding works proposed by Openreach were received.
- e. **Barn – application 64939** – Cllr Kitchen reported that following further enquiries, he could confirm that there was no issue to pursue.

10/07/19 **Finances**

- a. **Current balance** – it was noted that, at the 15th July 2019, the balance was £9,416.88, which included the Community Enhancement Grant of £1,100 for the next phase of highway maintenance and £500 towards a second defibrillator.
- b. **Payments – the following were approved for payments:**
 - i. **Elite Precast Concrete Ltd - £146.00** (including £24.40 VAT) for posts to accommodate warning signs related to the Air Ambulance Night Landing site (ref Budget 2017/18). *Proposed by Cllr Kitchen; seconded by Cllr Ball and all agreed the payment be made.*
 - ii. **Linda Stapleton (Clerk) - £95.80** (including £15.96 VAT) for the repayment of two ink cartridges. *Proposed by Cllr Wilkinson; seconded by Cllr Kitchen and all agreed the payment be made.*
 - iii. **North Devon Council - £366.28** (including an administration of charge of £7.72 of which £1.29 was VAT) for the Clerk’s salary March to June 2019. The payment was noted.
 - iv. **Grant to North Devon Record Office** – the Clerk asked that this payment be deferred whilst she established the correct wording for the organisation to receive payment. *Clerk*
- c. **Internal Auditor’s recommendations** – the Clerk confirmed that the updated progress plan had been circulated; this tracked action taken following the Internal Auditor’s report. Information related to Section 137 grants had also been circulated as suggested by the Internal Auditor. Cllr Ball provided some background to this particular recommendation, the briefing document on Section 137 grants and the minor changes required to Council documentation to ensure there was clarity between disbursements made by the Council

and Section 137 grants. This clarity would be informed by the development of a 'grants policy' for the Council, which was included in the progress plan.

11/07/19 **Matters Raised by Councillors**

- a. **Deasons Farm** – acting on issues raised in the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2019, Cllr Wilkinson reported that the garage was not being used for residential purposes and in respect of the driveway, Cllr Wilkinson, having obtained the owner's permission, had contacted NDC. He had not been able to obtain the policy related to the decision making, but the Case Officer had confirmed that, in her opinion, an application was not required for the driveway. Cllr Ball pointed out that Policy Officers may be the appropriate staff to pursue issues related to policy in future, as opposed to Case Officers.
- b. **Sign – Launds Playing Field** – Cllr Wilkinson suggested that the sign indicating what action should be taken in an emergency should be reviewed. The reasons for its current wording and alternatives were aired, with agreement that the issue should be referred for further discussion to the Strategy Task and Finish Group.

Strategy Task and Finish Group

- c. **Possible dwelling** – Cllr Kitchen reported on his further enquiries related to what appeared to be a dwelling on the B3226, by the river and within the Council's parish. Following discussion, it was agreed to raise the issue at the next meeting with the suggestion that the matter may need to be raised with the relevant authorities.

Next Agenda

- d. **Dangerous junction** – a junction where there was particularly poor visibility and therefore a danger to drivers was raised by a parishioner. Following discussion, which confirmed there were few powers by which the Council could take any action other than possibly erecting a 'slow' sign, it was agreed just to note the concern as the junction mentioned was one of many similar dangerous points in the parish which required particular caution by drivers.

12/07/19 **Training opportunities for Councillors/Clerk** – routine DALC newsletters circulated previously were noted.

13/07/19 **Correspondence**

a. **North Devon Council**

- i. **Correct planning permission** – the Council noted the reminder from NDC to local residents that they should make sure they get the right planning permission for their development before starting work.
- ii. **Increase service charge** – the change in the service charge for online planning applications was noted.

- b. **Environment Agency** – a request to publicise the changes related to exemptions from applying for a licence to abstract water was received. It was agreed to circulate this information to the local news outlets.

Clerk

- c. **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service** – the consultation process which related to proposed changes to service delivery was received. It was agreed to circulate this information to the local news outlets.

Clerk

- d. **Ongoing concerns/complaint/new enquiry** – a parishioner’s communications and the Council’s responses (circulated previously) were noted. It was confirmed these related to the following:
- i. *Repeated requests for information related to verge ploughing/highway maintenance;*
 - ii. *A request to inspect accounts;*
 - iii. *A request for hard copies of information/costs related to the Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) Night Landing Site and concerns raised related to this project which constitute a complaint.*

Cllr Ball expanded on the issues raised and the Council’s responses, from which the following was noted:

- An explanation of the public’s rights and limitations during the inspection period.
- The expectation that the inspection period would reduce requests for information by the public being made to statutory organisations.
- In response to the question raised by a parishioner in the Open Session, Cllr Ball explained the right of individuals to raise issues with the External Auditor and the costs of doing so, which would need to be met from the Council’s reserves. He also confirmed that these costs would need to be recouped by an increase in the precept in the following financial year.
- The number and content of the communications being received had prompted an enquiry with the local ombudsman, who had confirmed action which could be taken by the Council. In this connection it was agreed that the issue be placed on the next agenda to consider whether the amount and content of this parishioner’s communications met the Council’s criteria for ‘Unreasonably Persistent and Unreasonable Public Behaviour’ policy.

Next Agenda

- In response to a question, Cllr Ball explained that the Council’s complaints’ policy enabled the involvement of representatives from both the North Devon and Devon County Councils in a review of how the Council had handled a complaint. It would be the complainant’s option to pursue their concerns in this way.

14/07/19 **Items for immediate release to local news outlets** – items to share with the local news outlets were suggested including the consultation about changes to Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue service delivery and the changes related to exemptions from applying for a licence to abstract water.

15/07/19 **Date of Next Meeting** – Monday, 19th August, 2019.

Summary of Items of Expenditure

Description	Amount	
	Net Amount	VAT
Elite Precast Concrete Ltd – for posts to accommodate warning signs related to the Air Ambulance Night Landing site (ref Budget 2017/18).	£121.60	£24.40
Linda Stapleton (Clerk) reimbursement for two ink cartridges.	£79.84	£15.96
North Devon Council for Clerk's Salary	£364.99	£1.29

Summary of Actions

Councillor/Clerk/ Next agenda	Agenda Item	Details
Next Agenda	6/07/19 a	Consider process for directly commissioning hedge cutting across the parish.
Cllr Kitchen	6/07/19 b	Make enquiries and report back about temporary repair to noticeboard.
Clerk	6/07/19 c	Report Council's aim to improve area surrounding ware memorial – through news outlets.
Next Agenda	6/07/19 d	Consider establishing a community project related to repairs to gates to Satterleigh Church.
Clerk	7/07/19 b	Continue with the process of registering the Exeter Inn as an ACV.
Clerk	9/07/19 c	Establish whether NDC had yet undertaken the review stated in their e-mail response.
Clerk	10/07/19 iv	Establish correct wording for organisation to receive payment.
Strategy Task & Finish Group	11/07/19 b	Consider appropriate wording for 'in an emergency' sign on the Launds Playing Field gate.
Next Agenda	11/07/19 c	Consider appropriate action regarding possible dwelling.
Clerk	13/07/19 b	Publicise the changes through local news outlets.
Clerk	13/07/19 c	Publicise the consultation through local news outlets.
Next Agenda	13/07/19 d	Consider whether communication meets Council's policy criteria.

Signed

Date