



Chittlehamholt, Satterleigh and Warkleigh Parish Council

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Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 29th November 2021 In Chittlehamholt Village Hall – at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting chaired by	Councillor Paul Blackwell
Meeting minuted by	Parish Clerk Linda Stapleton
Councillors present	Councillor Paul Blackwell (Chairman) Councillor David Ball Councillor Andrew Kitchen (Vice Chairman) Councillor Malcolm Neal Councillor Steve Wilkinson
In attendance	Councillor Paul Henderson (DCC)

Note:

CSW Parish Council meetings are normally recorded – videos of proceedings can be accessed at: <https://cswparish.org.uk/the-council/how-we-make-decisions/council-meetings/19-past-meetings>. Minutes are therefore limited mainly to action agreed, with the time of the video recording included against the relevant minute.

7 members of the public were in attendance. The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

01/11/21 **Introduction and apologies** – apologies were received from Cllr Andrew Coupe and Cllr Ray Jenkins (NDC).

02/11/21 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** – there were no declarations of interest.

03/11/21 **Reports** (video recording time: 00:01:15)

a. **Police** – Cllr Wilkinson reported attending the launch of the current Police & Crime Commissioner's Plan – a link to the Plan and a number of initiatives being undertaken would be placed on the Council's website. He would shortly be meeting with the local inspector to discuss local issues.

b. **Devon County Council/North Devon Council** – points noted from Cllr Henderson's briefing included:

- Following the theft of a significant amount of equipment not far from Chittlehamholt, he asked that anyone noticing anything strange should be encouraged to report the behaviour to the Police.
- He expected workshops to be available for parish councillors to be involved in developing the 'Local Plan' at a future point; currently workshops were being held for district councillors.
- NDC had completed the purchase of Green Lanes for £8.6m.
- In response to a question related to a planning application in South Molton, Cllr Henderson explained the background and recent events which resulted in Section 106 payment and affordable housing originally agreed to be significantly reduced. He explained how this had occurred and that it was not an isolated occurrence.
- A recruitment drive was underway for staff working in social care.
- DCC would be discussing its budget in the following week, when it was anticipated that social care would be the major recipient of available funding.

04/11/21 **Minutes** (video recording time: 00:11:55)

- **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th October 2021** – the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2021 (*circulated separately*) were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

05/11/21 **Items raised by parishioners** – there were no issues raised at the session which was held prior to the meeting.

06/11/21 **Maintenance of roads, footpaths, etc** (video recording time:00:12:40)

- a. **Highway maintenance/verge ploughing (Phase 3)** - Cllr Wilkinson reported on the well-attended Highway meeting which was held over two days and other matters related to maintenance of roads. Points to note included:
 - The capital budget for Highways had been reduced by £20m which would clearly impact on the amount of road repair in Devon. DCC would prioritise A & B roads and therefore parishes were unlikely to benefit from road repair other than the repair of pot holes.
 - Cllr Wilkinson was maintaining liaison with Richard Sables (DCC Highways) in connection with priority works, including those already planned which he described. In the future, there may be a need to consider alternative arrangements for undertaking some repairs, should DCC not be able to fund all priority work.
 - The area to be covered in Phase 3 of the verge ploughing was currently being considered by Cllr Wilkinson.
- b. **Progress with issues reported to Highways** – Cllr Wilkinson advised that, notwithstanding comments above, it was important for people to personally report pot holes around the parish, or advise the Council which would ensure this was achieved.
- c. **Winter travel** – Cllr Wilkinson referred to the paper outlining costs of commissioning a gritting service as and when required (*circulated separately*) and confirmed that the Council needed to agree a way forward before inclement weather arrived. From his briefing and the discussion which took place, the following was noted:

- It was confirmed that all gritting bins were full.
- Cllr Wilkinson intended to liaise with the two new Snow Wardens for Chittlehampton Parish Council in relation to the road of common interest.
- There was a need to publicise the 'snow route' across local news outlets; this would be the safest way to or from the village as, if gritting did take place, it would be confined to the 'snow route'.
- There were only 10 occasions across Devon when gritting took place; grit did not remove ice until cars drove over it and unless wet spray was applied (which was too expensive for the Council) it did not improve the road condition.

Cllr Wilkinson proposed; Cllr Ball seconded and all agreed to commission A & B contractors to grit at £120 per visit. It was noted that budget arrangements had been made for this cost.

- In response to a question, it was felt that local farmers could be asked to assist in the event that snow clearance was required.
- The process for calling out A & B contractors was explained, with Cllr Kitchen also named as a 'Snow Warden' for the Parish and able to link calling out the contractors alongside his current employment. Cllr Kitchen provided further details for initiating gritting.
- It was confirmed that Cllr Wilkinson, in liaison with Highways, had approval for the type and location of signs. A draft of the proposed sign had been circulated by him and Cllr Ball reported on the type of sign and price he had sought which would be in the region of £30.

Cllr Wilkinson proposed; Cllr Ball seconded the purchase of discs and signs for the 'Snow Route' in line with Cllr Wilkinson's example and costs provided by Cllr Ball.

Cllr Wilkinson/Clerk

07/11/21 **Projects** (video recording time: 00:26:30)

a. **Launds**

- i. **Weekly checks** – Cllr Ball reported on issues arising from the November checks which included attention being given to the base of poles and an area of the basketball surround which had water pooling in it. It was noted that Cllr Kitchen would undertake checks in December and Cllr Neal in January.

Cllr Kitchen/Cllr Neal

- *Updated rota* – the Clerk would be circulating an updated rota in January.
- *New gates* – welcoming the grant from DCC approved by Cllr Henderson of £750 which had now been received, he confirmed he would be working with Henry Godfrey to fit these.

Clerk

Cllr Wilkinson

- *Community Orchard* – Cllr Wilkinson reported that the nursery had offered to replace the two dead crab apple trees. He had also spoken with a representative from the Gardening Club related to their wish to plant a tree.
- ii. **Grass cutting** – Cllr Ball confirmed that he had explored options and provided some costings in support of these. However, following consideration of the draft budget, he suggested deferring consideration of alternative methods to those currently proposed for a couple of years when it may be feasible to consider other options alongside the installation of an electric charging point. Reflecting on estimates provided previously, *Cllr Wilkinson proposed; Cllr Kitchen seconded and all approved that A & M Contractors be awarded the contract for cutting/strimming grass during 2022.*

Clerk

- iii. **Gazebo storage** – the Clerk advised that she had yet to contact the village shop regarding long term storage.

Clerk

08/11/21 **Planning** - (video recording time: 00:32:25)

- a. **Highbullen Hotel, application 73265** – the Decision Notice to approve was received related to reserved matters for the erection of 58 holiday lodges pursuant to Condition 3 of Planning Permission 58603, also including information pursuant to planning conditions 5,6,7,8,9,11 & 17 (outline planning permission 58603) (amended plans and documents (*circulated previously*)).

Cllr Ball referred to an e-mail circulated by Cllr Coupe with which he concurred. Cllr Coupe had given his view that the Decision Notice was not in accordance with NDC policy. Although concerned that a decision had been made which was not in accordance with policy, Cllr Ball's view was that no further action could be taken on this particular decision notice.

- b. **Highbullen Hotel – application 73268** – the Decision Notice to approve was received - for the approval of details in respect of discharge of conditions 8, 10, 13, 14 & 15 attached to planning permission 58603 (outline application for erection of 58 holiday lodges & 16 bed hotel extension (amended plans) (*circulated separately*). The same view was expressed about this decision.
- c. **Highbullen Hotel – application 73266** – the Decision Notice to approve was received – for the creation of internal access road (pursuant to application ref 58603) (*circulated separately*).
- d. **5 Taw View – application 74378** – for the erection of a garage (*circulated separately*). Following discussion, *Cllr Kitchen proposed; Cllr Ball seconded and all agreed that a comment be submitted concerning the fact that the development would impinge on the neighbour's property, in particular related to reducing daylight*. The Clerk agreed to draft the Council's response.

Clerk

- e. **Fire Beacon Lane – application 74103** – demolition of existing barn and erection of replacement dwelling (to replace planning approval 70290) Delegated Decision (*circulated separately*). Cllr Ball went in to some detail to explain his observations about the application which he considered was not compliant with NDC policy. Whilst in principle he had no objection to the design of the development, since this was not in line with policy, he did not feel the application could be supported. *Cllr Ball proposed; Cllr Neal seconded and all agreed that the Council object to the application because of this issue*. The Clerk was asked to draft a response.

Clerk

- f. **Head Barton, Kings Nympton:**
 - i. **Applications 74812 & 74813** – approval of details in respect of condition 4 and approval of details in respect of discharge of condition 5 (respectively) – subject to Delegated Decision (*circulated separately*). These applications were noted.

- ii. **Applications 1845 & 71846** – Decision Notices to approve were received – for the conversion of redundant barns to form two residential dwellings, camping barn and associated parking and Listed Building consent for the foregoing (respectively) – *(circulated separately)*.

- g. **Planning & Policy matters** – it was noted that the Council’s formal complaint had been acknowledged. It was also noted that a report from the Task & Finish Group Meeting held earlier in the meeting to explore NDC policy issues with Ms Maria Bailey would be circulated in due course.

Clerk

09/11/21 **Finances** – *(video recording time: 00:50:00)*

- a. **Increase of hire charge for Village Hall** – Spence Seaman, Chair to the CSW Village Hall Committee (Committee) was welcomed to the meeting. Cllr Kitchen explained the reason why the additional charge for hiring the Village Hall had been discussed by the Council.

Spence Seaman commenced his briefing by stating that the Committee felt very aggrieved by the comments made at the Council’s (public) meeting in September which questioned the Committee’s commitment to the hall and its future as the hub of community events. He believed that the timing was very unfortunate and ill informed, given that the Committee had agreed to resume ‘normal’ service from the 1st September including starting to re-energise events and fund-raising activities. However, with the escalating cases of COVID 19 in North Devon, the Committee had subsequently decided to defer any such events to the New Year. Mr Seaman went on to make a number of points, some of which are detailed below:

- The Committee has been running at three to four members below the eight or more required.
- The Charges to the Council have only been increased by £48 per annum, which could cover between 11 – 15 meetings for a year.
- Work planned and delivered to improve the Hall’s facilities were detailed since 2014, when most of the current Committee took office and the bank balance was £975.13.
- Fund raising and other events were also detailed, including reference to the Queen’s Tea Party which was organised at no cost to villagers.
- At the start of the Pandemic the bank balance was £7,077.37; the current balance was £4,532.80. The Committee had received a £10k grant from the Government which it was trying to protect to put towards the toilet area refurbishment. The only income received during the past 18-month period had been rent from the shop.

In conclusion, he explained that whilst an apology for the comments made at the September meeting would go some way to appeasing Committee members’ feelings, most of them felt the wish to ‘stand down’ as a result of what was said at the Council’s meeting. He pointed out that he was raising these issues as the Committee was aware of the need to secure the future management of the Hall and therefore the need to explore options for the way forward. He thanked the Council for enabling him to air the above issues.

In response, the Chairman agreed that a way forward needed to be explored, following which suggestions of a public/open meeting were aired, although a number of councillors doubted this would generate any additional interest from people willing to volunteer. It was noted that Devon Communities Together had offered to host a public meeting. Other points made included:

- Discussions with Highbullen Hotel who may be able to assist, which Mr Seaman said he would follow up. The Chairman offered to accompany Mr Seaman if that was considered to be helpful.
- The type of volunteer required and suggestions that it may be easier to find people to undertake the individual tasks required in a similar way tasks are allocated to manage the Village Shop activities.
- Cllr Wilkinson and Cllr Neal offered an apology on behalf of the Council for anything which was said that caused the difficulties expressed.
- Cllr Kitchen offered an apology for anything he said that caused an offence and offered to assist with finding a way forward.
- The Council accepted the rise in the charges which had now been included in the budget for the next financial year; the additional cost had not been included within the current budget.

It was noted that the Council would return to the matter for further discussion.

Note: some points in the forgoing minute have been taken from a briefing note provided by Spence Seaman.

Next agenda

- b. **Current balance** – it was noted that the balance, as at 15th November 2021, was £9,140.80 which included the £750.00 grant from DCC for the new gates to Launds Playing Field.
- c. **Budget/Precept for 2022/23** – Cllr Kitchen presented the Budget for 2022/23 (*circulated previously*). Points noted, including those in response to questions were:
- An explanation for the slight decrease in reserves.
 - Most of the additional cost resulted in budgeting for gritting, although this may not be required and therefore monies from this available.
 - Funding for the electric car charging point had been excluded.
 - Spending per year was approximately £7,000 against an income of £5,000; hence the need to increase the Precept to build-up reserves which he proposed at 50%.
 - It was accepted that with the decrease in funding for Devon County Councils there would be a greater requirement for parishes to take on activities such as road repair. This would require continuous exploration of possible funding sources.
 - It was important for parishioners to be informed about the position.
 - Cllr Kitchen was congratulated by Cllr Ball on the production of the budget. He agreed that parishioners needed to be informed and suggested it may be appropriate to again seek their views in order to update the Parish Plan.

Cllr Kitchen proposed; Cllr Neal seconded and all resolved to approve the Budget for 2022/23 and the Precept, which was set at £5,900.00.

d. Payments – it was resolved to make the following payments:

- i. **SiteGround Hosting Ltd** (*reimbursement to Cllr Coupe*) - **£604.37 (including £100.73 VAT)** for 3-year hosting of the Council's website (*ref Budget 2021/22 line 9/Minute 09/10/21c*). This payment was *proposed by Cllr Ball; seconded by Cllr Kitchen and approved by all.*
- ii. **Cartridge People** (*reimbursement to the Clerk*) - **£59.80 (including £9.96 VAT)** for two printer cartridges (*ref Budget 2021/22 line 5*) – This payment was *proposed by Cllr Kitchen; Cllr Neal seconded and all agreed the payment.*

10/11/21 **Matters Raised by Councillors** – (*video recording time 01:38:50*)

- **Electric Car Charging Point** – The Chairman noted that this project had been deferred for the time being.

11/11/21 **Training** – routine DALC newsletters which contained training opportunities and circulated separately were noted.

12/11/21 **Correspondence** (*video recording time: 01:39:40*)

- a. **South West Heritage Trust** – a request for funds to support the North Devon Records Office during 2022/23 was received (*circulated separately*). It was agreed to defer discussion to the next meeting.
- b. **John Hart, DCC briefing – 8th December** – to note the briefing for North Devon parish councils (*circulated separately*). Cllr Wilkinson indicated the possibility of his 'virtual' attendance.

Next agenda

13/11/21 **Date of next meetings** – 10th January 2022.

A parishioner raised the issue about the Decision Notice related to Highbullen applications discussed earlier. Noting that the Council had raised a formal complaint with NDC regarding the implementation of planning policy, he asked whether the Council would have an opportunity to raise its concern about issues related to the Highbullen applications at a later point. Cllr Ball expressed his view that any further action in relation to the application in question was unlikely. The point was made that the complaint was made about policy implementation in general.

Summary of Items of Expenditure

Description	Amount		S 137
	Net Amount	VAT	
SiteGround Hosting (reimbursement to Cllr Coupe) for 3-year hosting of the Council's website (<i>ref Budget 2021/22 line 9/Minute 09/10/21c</i>)	£503.64	£100.73	
Cartridge People (reimbursement to Clerk) for 2 printer cartridges (<i>ref budget 2021/22 Line 5</i>)	£49.64	£9.96	

Summary of Actions

Councillor/Clerk/ Next agenda	Minute reference	Details
Clerk Cllr Ball & Cllr Wilkinson	06/11/21 c	Place contract for gritting with A & B Contractors. Finalise details for the purchase of signs for the 'snow route'.
Cllr Kitchen Cllr Neal Clerk	07/11/21 a i	Undertake weekly checks in December 2021. Undertake weekly checks in January 2022. Issue revised rota for weekly checks in 2022.
Clerk	07/11/21 a ii	Place contract for grass cutting during 2022 with A & M Contractors.
Clerk	07/11/21 a iii	Contact Village Hall regarding long term storage of gazebo.
Clerk	08/11/21 d	Prepare draft response.
Clerk	08/11/21 e	Prepare draft response.
Clerk	08/11/21 g	Prepare and circulate report of Task & Finish Group meeting.
Next agenda	09/11/21 a	Way forward for supporting the continuation of the Village Hall.
Next agenda	12/11/21 a	To consider request for funds to support the North Devon Records Office during 2022/23

Signed

Chairman

Date 10th January 2022