

Minutes of the Ordinary Cutcombe Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th June 2023 at the Moorland Hall

Present: Councillors Jon Levenson (Chair), Eric Norman (Vice Chair), Roger Foxwell, Sarah Cook, Claire Rooke, John Davis

In attendance: Liz Stitt – Clerk, Cllr Pugsley, Cllr Nicholson

Also Present: Three members of the public

Item	Minutes	Action
	<p>Public Question Time</p> <p>i) There was a query raised as it said 'Annual' parish meeting on the agenda, the clerk apologised and confirmed that this was a typo and that it is in fact an ordinary council meeting.</p> <p>ii) A further query was also raised regarding the election that has been called and the member of public said it was a waste of money. The chair explained that all the correct processes have taken place and due to ten electors asking for an election this has to go ahead, this was not a decision made by the council. The member of public asked if an extension can be given to hand in nomination papers. The Clerk will ask if this is possible.</p>	Clerk
23/53	To receive Apologies for Absence None received	
23/54	To receive declarations of Interest Cllr Norman item 13 iii)	
23/55	<p>To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of the 16th of May 2023 Cllr Davis read out a statement regarding the previous minutes which read as follows:</p> <p>“First of all, I would like to ask to have a transcript of the minutes of the meeting of the 16/05/23. And also, an audio copy of that meeting, I would also ask what was the reason not to consult with the vice chair over the draft minutes of that meeting breaking with a protocol that has been carried out for over the last ten years.</p> <p>I would also like to make it clear as to my objection to councillor Foxwell, it is not personal that has been suggested I have supported him on many issues on this council and the Moorland Committee, my objection is because he has voted on several occasions for Open Market Housing, which is---- if you didn't know is against Park policy.</p> <p>In all my years on this council I have strived to get the type of housing that will benefit the community as a whole and for young people to put down roots in the towns and community's they were born into.</p> <p>Several years ago, we had twenty-five new houses built in the Village not one of them affordable to buy to help get young people onto the housing ladder. And to quash the idea that new housing in the village equates to a rise in pupils, out of the twenty-five houses built only four children attend the school.</p> <p>As we are all aware that there are plans afoot for fifteen new houses in Wheddon Cross we are aware of this because the property developer was allowed to give a presentation of the plans on behalf of the land owner, The chairman was informed by me that it was against the rules but he overruled my objections, he later apologised and said he was wrong.”[a member of public joined the meeting]</p> <p>Cllr Davis said we seem to be pushing forward for housing that I do not feel is needed, or the right type of houses for the people who live in this village.</p> <p>Cllr Levenson said it's not possible to have a transcript of the meeting as this would take the Clerk too long to type up, but we will endeavor to send the audio recording of the meeting to Cllr Davis. The Clerk re-sent round the draft minutes with 'open market</p>	

	<p>housing' corrected which was sent round before them being published.</p> <p>Cllr Davis said it says in the minutes that 'I believe it is against park policy' it is against park policy and there's proof of it at an application where it was refused as the open market aspect was against park policy. Cllr Levenson said there is some interpretation there because during the hustings when asked that very subject many of the people said sometimes they need to look where there is a case for affordable housing but can only be supported with open market housing that may have to be the case, whether that goes against the policy as you say, I don't think it's going to be as clear cut as you say. Cllr Davis said they gave a concession on open market houses in Meadow Close. The fifteen houses that are planned for here with four open market houses beggars' belief what the reason is for that. Cllr Levenson said we haven't seen the application for that, but believes it is better to know what is coming down the road rather than an application landing on the council. Cllr Levenson also said it was his suggestion that was unanimously approved that every application that contains affordable housing we would consult with Exmoor Young Voices to see their views, so I couldn't be more supportive about the need for affordable housing.</p> <p>Cllr Levenson said the minutes have been amended to include the words 'open market housing' and was re-sent as a draft to everybody. Cllr Davis asked for the words 'I believe it is against park policy' to be removed as it is against park policy.</p> <p>Cllr Norman said he asked this specific question at the hustings event and not one applicant answered the question, they side stepped it every time. Exmoor Young Voices have stated time and time again they want self-build in each of their own parishes for their own use where people live, until that time, as long as I've got breath in my body, I will voice my opinion that Exmoor Young Voices will be heard at all times. Cllr Levenson said he also raised this at the first LCN meeting that all planning applications that involve affordable housing please could Exmoor Young Voices be regarded as consultees, which is probably unlikely, but I voiced it. We couldn't have been more supportive of the need for affordable housing in the appropriate place and the appropriate way whether it's self-build or affordable housing.</p> <p>Cllr Davis said there was a meeting a few nights ago about housing where Cllr Pugsley said it's a top priority that all types of housing are pushed forward but I think we need to be very careful that we don't lose sight of what's needed in a village and what's not. Cllr Levenson said we had heard from Cllr Norman and myself and the general consensus of this room is in agreement.</p> <p>It was resolved to approve the minutes.</p> <p>Cllr Davis read a statement handing in his resignation as Councillor which read as follows:</p> <p>'After twenty five years on the Cutcombe Parish Council I feel it's time for me to resign so this will be my last parish council meeting.'</p> <p>Cllr Levenson said thank you for twenty five years of fantastic service to the community. Cllr Norman said Cllr Davis has been our longest serving parish councillor and has come from difficult circumstances and has proved his worth beyond doubt, being on the standards committee for so long he has a great knowledge of what is and what isn't, and we take that for granted. Cllr Levenson seconded that and said Cllr Davis's comments are always valid and interesting and whenever you speak, we all listen so thank you for that. A round of applause was given for Cllr Davis.</p>	
23/56	To receive and discuss the clerks report This was received and noted.	
23/57	<p>To receive the Chairs Report The chair reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Sadly, Cllr White's wife, Sue, has passed away and the council wishes to send condolences to the White family. A minute's silence was held for Sue White. ii) A vote of thanks to Cllr Norman for arranging for the gang mowers to be repaired. The Cricket field is looking fantastic. iii) Bus shelter update - Cllr Norman is going to chase this as no work has been 	Cllr Norman

	<p>done on it recently.</p> <p>iv) Update on the inaugural LCN meeting that took place. Cllr Pugsley was elected chair and Mike Ellicott was elected as vice chair. There were good discussions about the various priorities that were agreed by all that included housing for young people, business opportunities, highways and there was a lot of talk about vulnerable people that we need to think about and look after in the community as well. Plus, I rattled a cage about fibre broadband. Cllr Pugsley said the priorities were to keep Exmoor alive as a living and working community for the next generation or two generations, we can't look too far ahead. Cllr Davis said he has been a trustee for over twenty years on the Exmoor Youth Club and the one thing that bothers him is Wheddon Cross has no facilities for children after fifteen. There are not many facilities or clubs for children. We need to have more infrastructure in the village to cope with more children. One thing we need to do on Exmoor is start facilitating for young people ages 15 – 18. Cllr Levenson said that he is sure the LCN will take this into consideration.</p> <p>v) Cllr Pugsley has also written to the head of planning at ENPA regarding the transformer issue but has not had a reply.</p> <p>vi) It would be good to put more things in the Across Exmoor magazine and asked for a volunteer to put things together for this. It was suggested to put the feelers out and ask if anyone in the village would like to help with this and come to the next meeting. It was also suggested Cllr Levenson talk to Helen Davies regarding this who runs the Wheddon Cross Facebook page</p> <p>Cllr Levenson moved agenda item 9 to the between items 16 and 17 on the agenda</p> <p>Cllr Foxwell asked if a final figure had come in yet for the sharpening of the gang mowers, the Clerk reported that the invoice has not been received yet. Cllr Levenson highlighted there will be extra on the invoice due to hidden work that was needed doing on them after the servicing and sharpening.</p>	Cllr Levenson
23/58	<p>To receive reports from Somerset Councillors</p> <p>i) The National Park Consultative meeting takes place on the 22nd of June at 7pm in the Moorland Hall. Cllr Levenson passed on his apologies for this meeting as he is away.</p> <p>ii) There are overnight road closures coming up on the road down to Dulverton. Cllr Rooke highlighted some road signs that were wrong, Cllr Pugsley and Cllr Nicholson said when wrong road signs are put up let them know as soon as possible. The quicker they know the quicker it can be sorted.</p> <p>iii) The next highways subgroup meeting is taking place on the 23rd of June. The highways subgroup will be re-constituted in September, the council's new highways representative can put themselves forward to be on the group then.</p>	
23/59	<p>To consider Highways and Transport Matters</p> <p>i) There were some signs down that Cllr Norman did not have the contact details of who to contact for this. Cllr Pugsley suggested to email Kali Martin regarding the signs that are down.</p> <p>ii) It was reported at the latest LCN meeting they are hoping to do the work on the land slip in September or early October.</p> <p>iii) Chapter 8 training is needed for the new highway's warden. This will be looked into when we have a full council.</p> <p>iv) Cllr Foxwell confirmed there are no outstanding tasks from the original list of works that were put into the highway steward but there are more now that need doing since things have grown and signs have twisted round. It was recommended for Cllr Norman and the Clerk to drive round and see what signs need moving and vegetation needs cutting to send to the highway steward. Cllr Levenson said we want to keep this pilot going so this is a great opportunity to file a lot of tasks that need doing otherwise we will lose him.</p> <p>v) Cllr Davis said thank you to whoever has kept the road clear on the A39.</p>	Cllr Norman Clerk
23/60	<p>Update on Moorland Hall & Recreation Ground Jill Thompson gave an update:</p> <p>i) The cricket team is great and uses the hall.</p> <p>ii) New pavilion ideas have been looked at. Research will be done to apply for funding.</p>	

	<p>iii) The signatories have all been updated to all the trustees of the Moorland Hall. A side account will be set up for fundraising but still under the umbrella of the Moorland Hall.</p> <p>iv) Cllr Norman highlighted that the Hall looks unkempt as the flags are still out from the Coronation and the bank hasn't been strimmed. Jill said they've been a bit busy and apologised about this but will look into this as soon as possible.</p> <p>v) Cllr Levenson asked about a croquet club starting on the sports field as he knows people that would like to start this. Jill said they would like to look into this.</p> <p>vi) Jill is looking into getting the woodwork around the hall repainted along with some other works and wondered if the Parish Council could help with costs towards this. Cllr Levenson asked Jill to get some costs together for the work which can be put to the Council for consideration.</p> <p>vii) Cllr Norman highlighted that the Moorland Hall is asking for money from the Parish Council towards decorating the hall and they are thinking about building another establishment which will also need decorating so they need to think long term about how they are going to finance it all as we cannot expect the parishioners to keep funding it if there is no plan going forward on how to fund it all. Jill said there will be a business plan going forward.</p>	
23/61	Resolve to agree whether Snowdrop Valley should go ahead in 2024 Cllr Norman said Snowdrop Valley made a profit this year so why should we have to decide on whether it goes ahead. Common sense tells us that this should go ahead, and he finds it frustrating that we should be deciding on this. Cllr Levenson said it is on the agenda as it came up at the previous meeting and it is quite simple for somebody to propose that it goes ahead. It was proposed, seconded, and unanimously agreed for this to go ahead. [Cllr Pugsley and Cllr Nicholson left the meeting]	
23/62	To review the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders These were reviewed and agreed.	
23/63	To consider any planning matters There were no planning matters	
23/64	<p>Finance:</p> <p>1.1 Agree the 2023 – 2024 Snowdrop Valley budget if agreed to go ahead in item 10. Cllr Levenson said it is a bit of a guess as to what we can expect to get from the event as it is so weather dependent. It was clarified that any spending under the S.137 section of the Snowdrop Valley Budget will go to the full council for a decision. It was proposed, seconded, and unanimously agreed to use this budget.</p> <p>1.2 Agree a donation amount to Cutcombe First School for a new storage area. The council was circulated the quote for two new storage areas that Cutcombe First School are looking to get. Cllr Norman proposed that the council put the full amount towards the storage units. Cllr Foxwell was concerned that we may be setting a precedent by paying the full amount as we have also had some other requests from the Preschool and from the Moorland Hall. Cllr Norman said that the School and Preschool helped run the café at the Snowdrop Valley Event, if we say we will only pay a percentage of what they have asked for it will be a slap in a face to all the people who helped run the café. It was proposed to pay the full amount to the school for the Storage units, this was seconded, and a majority show of hands carried this.</p> <p>1.3 To receive and approve the schedule of payments and note receipts It was proposed, seconded, and agreed to pay these.</p>	
23/65	<p>End of Year Audit 2022/23</p> <p>1.1 Internal Audit Report 2022/23 – To receive the Internal Audit Report and resolve on any recommendations. Cllr Levenson said the Clerks first internal audit was very, very good, the councillors gave the Clerk a round of applause. The council will take on board the recommendation of not going above the insured limit when transferring money. It was agreed to go ahead with the clerk's job re-evaluation. The Clerk will get together some quotes for this.</p> <p>1.2 Annual Governance Statements 2022/23 – To resolve upon the response to the Annual Government Statement. The Council resolved to agree to these statements.</p> <p>1.3 Annual Accounting Statement 2022/23 – To approve the Annual Accounting</p>	Clerk

	<p>Statement. The council proposed, seconded, and unanimously agreed to approve the Annual Accounting Statement.</p> <p>1.4 Confirmation of Public Rights Period – To confirm the dates for the public rights as Monday 3rd July – Friday 11th August. The council approved these dates.</p>	
23/66	<p>To receive and acknowledge the minutes of the Finance & Risk Working Group Meeting dated 16th May 2023 These were received by the council and noted.</p>	
23/67	<p>To note the correspondence which Councillors have received in the correspondence report. The report was received and noted by the council.</p>	
23/68	<p>Resolve to select five nominees for the ENPA Board Cllr Levenson read out all the nominees names. Cllr Davis queried how Cllr Foxwell can be put forward by another council. Cllr Levenson said the Monitoring Officer confirmed to him in writing that a councillor can be nominated by another council as long as they aren't nominating somebody else. Cllr Davis said it puts this council in a bad light as Cllr Foxwell didn't ask this council if he could go to another council to be nominated, and it's bad the Exton council didn't liaise with us. Cllr Foxwell said he went through all the right channels to do it and he didn't need to have approval to do it from the council and there is still no guarantee that I will be nominated anyway. Cllr Rooke said it was insulting when Cllr Foxwell put the rules in our faces at a previous meeting. Cllr Davis said Cllr Foxwell could have talked to the council about wanting to put his name forward before the meeting, but he didn't, he could have laid out his plans of what he wanted to do, and my vote may have gone a different way. Cllr Norman said he would like to know what Cllr Foxwell said to Exton Parish Council when he asked to be nominated and asked if Exton Parish Council asked the reason why this council didn't nominate him. Cllr Foxwell said they asked, and I said that the parish council didn't put my name forward as they didn't think I was a suitable candidate. Cllr Levenson went through the nominees with the councillors and after discussing them at length the council decided to vote on six of the nominees which went as follows:</p> <p>Andrew Bray – 6 votes Michael Ellicott – 6 votes Roger Foxwell – 3 votes William Geen – 5 votes Jeremy Holtom – 3 votes Nicholas Thwaites – 4 votes</p> <p>As there was a tie between Roger Foxwell and Jeremy Holtom the chair used his casting vote to put Roger Foxwell forward. Therefore, the Council will be nominating, Andrew Bray, Michael Ellicott, Roger Foxwell, William Geen and Nicholas Thwaites.</p>	
23/69	<p>Items for the next Agenda.</p> <p>1.1 Asset Register</p> <p>1.2 Financial Risk Assessment</p> <p>1.3 Agree on Preschool iPad donation</p>	

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Appendix

- i) Clerks Report
- ii) Schedule of Payments
- iii) Correspondence Report