

Winkleigh Parish Council.

Draft Minutes of the Full Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 24th January 2024 At Winkleigh Community Centre, Castle Street, Winkleigh. EX19 8HU at 7.30pm

Email:clerk@winkleighpc.org

Website:www.winkleighpc.org.

Council Members

Cllr Angela Findlay Chair	Cllr Greg Goldsworthy Cllr Alan Jacobs	Cllr Benjamin Roth Cllr Andrew Warner
Cllr Alex Phillips Vice-Chairman	Cllr Andy Keys Cllr Pauline Odulinski (Proper Officer & RFO)	Cllr Jason Roberts Cllr Josh Rickard Cllr Adam Wonnacott

Also Present: Cllr Andrew Saywell, Devon CC, Cllr Simon Newton, Torridge DC
Alan Matthewman, Parish Clerk. 5 members of the public

01.01.24 **Welcome** – Chair opened the meeting

02.01..24 **Apologies for Absence Greg Goldsworthy (Indisposed)**

03.01.24 **Declaration of Interests** (None Advised)

04.01.24 **Adjournment for Public Participation – 15 minutes (3 minutes per attendee)**

One member of the public drew attention to some broken poles supporting bins that needed replacement. Another wanted to request a visit from Highways to catalogue the potholes in the village (see Cllr Saywell below), There was also an area in the village where there had long been a smell from the drains, the Street Safety Group had written to Michael Newcombe who had offered to come with Cllr Andrew Saywell to assess the situation and plan remedial actions.

05.01.24 **County Councillor Report:** The Chair invited Cllr A Saywell (Devon CC) to give his report. He opened by updating the situation regarding the devolution of powers to Devon and Torbay which was expected to be signed within the next few days. On budget issues the projected deficit had been reduced to just £4.5 million and he was confident that the council would be in small surplus for 2023-24 A lot of serviceability road patching around Winkleigh but there were very limited resources to do this. Winkleigh Airfield road will be resurfaced in Feb-March this year. He pointed out that he still had some grant money available but it would need to be claimed by mid - February.

Cllr Alex Phillips asked on timing on Airfield Road. SW Wood Products had gone and therefore this was a good time. Cllr Warner queried the means of allocating funds to road repairs but Cllr Saywell confirmed that they were doing as much as could reasonably be done within the financial constraints.

The chair thanked Cllr Saywell and invited District Councillor Simon Newton to make his presentation.

He began with a summary of recent events. He asked if the clerk had received any communications about Community Land Trusts which were being promoted by TDC as a means to increase the supply of low-cost land for affordable housing development in the area. The clerk replied that he had received no such approach as yet.

Cllr Newton had recently attended a meeting which set out the plan for the North Devon Hospital in Barnstaple. Although no longer described as a plan for a new Hospital, the committed plans would require the replacement of 60% of the current buildings so, when completed, which admittedly would take some time, the facilities would be substantially enhanced.

TDC had approved certain changes in taxation laws. Previously unoccupied and unfurnished properties attracted 100% premium in tax after 2 years. The delay has now been changed to 1 year. In Second Homes there had been no premium over normal tax rates but as from April 2025, TDC can levy 100% premium on second homes. Within TDC it will generate about £2.8 million extra. His personal view was that people who could afford the property would not be bring them back onto the sale or rental market since they will be able to pay the higher charges. Torrridge have approved their strategic plan and their current budget showed a deficit of £500,000 which is likely to be taken from reserves. Councillor grant of £500 close to agreement to enhance the warm space operation in Winkleigh. He had also been privileged to visit Acorn School. (Cllr Saywell drew attention to the Growing Communities fund) and other grants were discussed. Recommended Vicky Feather at North Devon Plus for advice on grant funding.

- 07.01.24 **To Receive and Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd November 2023.** Cllr Warner raised two issues. 7.11-23 should read a single candidate for the single available seat. In 11-11-23. There was some confusion over what the decision should be regarding the council might do to supplement the information by drawing up an on-line directory. Cllr Roth felt that 9-11-23 implied that he had criticised the clerk which had not been his intention. With these amendments the minutes were approved, **proposed by Cllr Warner seconded by Cllr Phillips.**
- 08.01.24 **Matters Arising from the Minutes if not addressed in this Agenda.**
I: To accept the quotation from DCC to erect 1 bollard on A3124. The quotation of £658.44 was accepted and a provisional total cost to cover any additional work and cost increases. **Motion proposed by Cllr Phillips to authorise the expenditure of up to £750 for the supply and erection of 1 off bollard** was approved unanimously. The clerk was asked to contact DCC to arrange for the work to be done.
- 09.01.24 **Motion:** To consider and update proposals for the provision of benches. Cllr. Warner raised the desire of councillors to have a QR code sign in appropriate places to give people needing help quick access to relevant information.
He moved a motion to obtain a 6-foot memorial bench for Hollocombe. His had identified the teak Sandhurst bench at a cost of £495 plus VAT with an additional £60 for fixing t the concrete base. Cllr Phillips proposed, seconded by Cllr Roth that the council purchase a Sandhurst bench with fixing bolts and place it on the site of the old bench at Hollocombe. The motion was carried unanimously. It was also agreed that the plaque recognising the contribution made to the village by ex-councillor Simon Hodgson should be affixed to this bench. Cllr Roth undertook to draft a suitable message for this. The clerk was instructed to arrange the purchase and advise the council.

It was noted that the circular bench at Ring-o-Bells was rotten and should be removed. The area needed to be cleared and Cllr Phillips agreed to do this.

10.01.24 **Planning:**

Before this part of the meeting was started the Chair apologised that the individual sites to be considered had not been listed meaning that residents were not aware which sites were up for consideration. She suggested that all the sites, excluding the Zephyr development where the time window was about to close, should be held over for an Emergency Planning Session to be held at the Community Centre at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 7th February, The Clerk agreed that a detailed list of the properties to be discussed would be the practice in future. Proposed by Cllr Findlay, seconded by Cllr Roth and agreed unanimously.

a: The application for a new porch at Zephyr, 1/0925/2023. Recommendation that the application be approved subject to future restriction on permitted development with respect to this application to prevent future substantial development without formal planning application(s). The motion was Proposed by Cllr Odulinski, seconded by Cllr Warner and carried unanimously.

b: No decisions on applications had been notified in the period.

c: Situation regarding two derelict homes on Eggesford Road. The Chair had received a letter from Margaret Miller regarding these properties as well as a letter from Geoffrey Cox MP advising Ms Miller to get the WPC to act as Torridge DC were unable to act. The Chair referred to past efforts by Cllr Simon Newton to move the situation forward but, in spite of long conversation with the owner, now resident in the Channel Islands, absolutely no progress had been made. The position of Torridge DC was that they did not have the resources to take any enforcement action. The bungalow at one end was not too bad, but the other one is highly problematic. The middle unit had one party wall which was a stud partition and the front wall had collapsed. Cllr. Phillips enquired if it was possible to get health and safety ruling that might enable action to be taken. There was little appetite at TDC for any such drastic action. The Chair agreed to write to Ms Miller, copy to Sir Geoffrey Cox MP confirming that we would take another look to see if anything further could be done. There was also a family trust involved according to the owner. It was agreed that Cllr Newton and Findlay progress this

d: Provision of verbal report of meeting to discuss Townsend Hill development. This was in response to reports that the developer was moving away from the development; this was not felt to be true so the matter was left. The Archaeological dig should begin by the beginning of March.

11.01.24 **Administration**

a: To note the resignation of Cllr. Odulinski as Proper Officer and the appointment of the Clerk as Proper Officer effective 1st February 2024 in accordance with the contract signed on his appointment.

b: To ensure that the role of RFO is fully in place for the clerk by 1st March 2024. This will include his assuming responsibility for all dealings with the bank account, payment of bills and banking of receipts, all of which are required to enable him to take responsibility for the signing of Agar Certificates as required by law. The clerk reported that slow progress was being made with the bank and that ongoing challenges with the computer supplied to the clerk were slowing progress quite seriously.

c: To agree a monthly payment date of the monthly salary being the 24th day, or following working day, of each month. Agreed to move all further discussion on these issues to Section 2.

12.01.24 **Website**

To consider a proposal by Cllr Warner that a page be created entitled “Winkleigh Cares” with the emphasis on support for residents needing help for mental health and crisis issues.

In the above context to determine who will be responsible for the creation and management of this site.

Cllr Warner explained that if we were to have contact plaques on benches then we would need a proven active site, Suggested, that the discussion be moved to the meeting on 7th February which was approved unanimously.

13.01.24 **Employment Committee – Discussion of all matters in this section also be moved to Section 2, as agreed in 11.01.24**

a. To Approve the Renewal of Microsoft Membership £59.99 – still pending due to lack of movement on bank account.

b: Decision on bank status – Decision was taken in July 2023 to move the bank accounts to Lloyds from Natwest but this was shelved when it appeared that it was quicker to leave things as they are. However, nothing has happened to update the mandate which is threatening the end of year operations.

Change to Bank Mandate: We need a minimum of 2 councillors and the RFO with two to approve any payments.

14.01.24 **Finance**

a: to receive and note the latest available information on the accounts and the expected outcome for the year to end March.

The clerk explained that the amount in the two reserve funds was substantially in excess of the amounts that had been envisaged to be in the reserve accounts at the current time. In view of this, but also in the light of likely expenditure he recommended that the bank accounts be left as they are for the time being. Cllr Warner reported that the Bungalow Committee had envisaged that all income into the Bungalow Account should be moved to the General Account with the reserve account being increased by annual transfers to reserve. The Clerk felt:

- A) In the light of the need to decide a precept such a change would not change the payment.
- B) One disadvantage would be that the balance between income and expenditure on the bungalow account would be less obvious.
- C) That until the cost and timing of all the repairs was clearer, it might be better to allow the reserve to build rather more speedily
- D) Before a decision was taken full council would need to debate and make a decision.

Cllr Warner stated the situation as they saw it, which was: the provision for spending from the current year of £2250 on roof repairs should come out of bungalow reserve, leaving £18000. The requirement for replacement of the roof, assumed to be 5 years away was £25,000 and for boiler replacement, £3000 giving a total requirement of £28,000 or £10,000 more than current level. This would suggest an addition to reserves of £2000 per annum.

Cllr Phillips stated he understood that the roof contained asbestos, although an asbestos report had stated that there was no asbestos there. Pre-Planning application had been referred to Historic England which seemed likely to require a replacement tin roof with insulation.

The Clerk confirmed that, by the year-end, the total of cash balances would be, general cash in bank, £20,000, General reserves c. £11.000, and Bungalow Reserve

£18,000 making a total of cash in the bank of £49,000. On the basis of this summation and budgeted expenditure of £44,000, it was proposed by Cllr Warner, seconded by Cllr Findlay that a precept demand be sent in to Torridge DC for a sum of £46,000, an increase per taxpayer of c. 5%. This was approved unanimously.

15.01.24 **Footpaths**

To determine the status of Winkleigh PC as regards the Devon CC P3 footpaths protection planning and appoint a footpath warden to act as co-ordinator
The chair sought a volunteer to act as footpath warden. Cllr Roth agreed to take on this role and the clerk agreed to inform DCC footpaths section of Cllr Roth as the designated representative.

16.01.24 **Members Reports/Questions**

Cllr Roth enquired if the Clerk had had time to contact TDC regarding additional bin provision.
What is the current status of knowledge of affordable housing issues? Consideration should be given to setting up a group of councillors with a brief to review this problem. To be discussed at the next full meeting.
Cllr Findlay reported to council that the TDC monitoring Officer had finally concluded the investigation regarding the issues surrounding her relationship with a previous clerk. She was pleased to report that, following the investigation, and a further review by an independent legal representative, it had been decided that there was no case to answer and the matter was closed.

17.01.24 **Bungalow**

- a: Timing of Boiler Replacement – discussion carried forward to a future
- b: Timetable for roof repair – also held over
- c: Action to recover costs of damage resulting from roof repairs are
- D: Rent review policy and control – review is quite specifically based on RPI so any cost increases

Cllr Findlay asked for a motion to extend the time of the meeting as had elapsed. Motion proposed by Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Roth and unanimously.

Cemetery

- a: Situation report on Insurance claim on shed roof. The clerk confirmed that a claim had been lodged with the old insurer and a payment of £975 been received from Aviva paid on 11th August. Three quotations had been received. Placement of order to be confirmed at next meeting in Part 2.
 - b: Cost and responsibilities for maintenance of grass, ditches and hedges. Quotations to be sorted so that contract can be placed
 - c: responsibility for safety compliance and charging.
- Mr Roth had spoken to numerous providers regarding charges. Average for Winkleigh, excluding head stone £1407. Winkleigh Charge only £800 for a plot and other charges. Well below the South West average.
Proposal would be tabled at a future meeting to revise charges to a more realistic measure.
- e: arrange for provision of additional TDC bin for flowers, etc. Had been discussed at the prior meeting approved. Clerk to tackle TDC regarding this.

19.01.24 **Relations with Sports Hall Management**

a: To discuss the form future support might take over a possible contribution to the maintenance cost of the children's play area. The costs are currently estimated at £1000 per annum and it was agreed that the matter should be part of the grant process so that the matter could be considered separately each financial year

b: what provisions should be made against possible requests / claims in

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EXEMPT SESSION

Confidential Matters (PART II) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2)

The public and press are requested to leave the meeting.

The Chair asked for a motion to move to Part 2 of the meeting and further extend the meeting, The motion was proposed by Cllr Phillips, Seconded by Cllr Keys, and approved unanimously.

The chair confirmed that discussions arising from clause 11.01.24 and 13.01.24 would be open for discussion during Part 2.

Administration c\ That the clerk be paid for each month on the 24th of the month.

Microsoft: Unable to process it for lack of computer space.

Bank matters: Decision to stay with Natwest rather than moving Lloyds was agreed as it was quicker.

Suggestion from Cllr Phillips that the clerk's probation period be extended for 1 month..

Cllr Phillips requested sight of the monitoring officer report to Cllr Findlay

Members voted to exit Part Two, and resume the open meeting. Motion was tabled to stay with Natwest Bank, Fix the Clerks payday at 24th of the month, that his probation period be extended by 1 month and that a replacement computer be acquired with a maximum revenue allowance of £800. The composite motion was proposed by Cllr Warner, Seconded, by Cllr Roth and approved unanimously.

The meeting ended at 9:55

