

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH MOLTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY 13th January, 2021 AT 7.30 P.M. USING ZOOM CLOUD MEETINGS

Present: Councillor R. Peek (Chairman); Councillor J. Dunn (Vice Chairman); Councillor C. Barron; Councillor E. Bulled (online at 7.35 p.m.); Councillor A. Darley (online at 7.35 p.m.); Councillor W. Geen; Councillor H. Jennings; Councillor Johnson; Councillor I. Milne; Councillor R. Procter; District Councillor E. Bulled (online at 7.35 p.m.), County Councillor J. Yabsley (left meeting at 9.18 p.m.) and the Parish Clerk, Noel Brooks

678/01/21.1 Apologies: – Councillor R. Smaldon – all agreed.

679/01/21.2 Declaration of Interests: Councillor Geen regarding Planning Application: 72482 – Councillor Geen neither took part in the debate nor vote on this case.

680/01/21.3 Devon and Cornwall Constabulary: Chairman Peek would forward all future informative e-mails on policing issues received from Michael Harrison of the Police & Crime Commissioner's Office to members.

681/01/21.4 Representations From The Public: Vice Chairman Dunn had received a representation concerning fallen trees over the River Mole off the bridle path immediately upstream from Flitton Water – this might potentially affect the flow of the river. **Action:** The Clerk is to log this issue on the reporting section of DCC's website.

682/01/21.5 - Planning:

Planning Applications For Consideration Received Since Last Parish Council Meeting

Case Ref	Address & Proposal	Decision
72482	Barton Pitts, North Molton, Devon EX36 3EX Grid Ref: 272338; 132047 Change Of Use Of Land To Allow Siting Of Timber Cabin For Holiday Accommodation	Supported – Vote: 8 For & 1 Abstention Due To The Planning Portal Not Functioning.
72583	West Millbrook, North Molton, Devon EX36 3LP Grid Ref: 275738; 130331 Prior Approval Change Of Use Of Agricultural Building To 1no. Dwellinghouse (Class Q)	Supported – Vote: 8 For, 1 Against & 1 Abstention Due To The Planning Portal Not Functioning.
72652	Land North East of New Park, North Molton, Devon EX36 3HH Grid Ref: 272387; 128976 Retrospective Application For The Erection Of An Agricultural Storage Building	Supported On The Casting Vote Of The Chairman Vote: 5 For & 5 Against
72681	21 Oakford Villas, North Molton, Devon EX36 3HN Grid Ref: 273428; 129724 Side And Rear Extensions Together With Alterations To Dwelling	Supported – Vote: 9 For & 1 Abstention

Planning Applications Advised Since Last Parish Council Meeting

		Decision
72161	4 South Leigh Farm South Molton Devon EX36 3EH Grid Ref: 271485; 12872 Formation Of A Menage	Approved
72256	Burrow Mead, East Street, North Molton Devon EX36 3JF Extension And Alterations To Dwelling	Approved

683/01/21.6 - Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of North Molton Parish Council held on 9th December, 2020 - approved, unanimously by those councillors who had attended the meeting.

684/01/21.7 – Clerk’s Report On 9th December, 2020 Minutes

Sale of Laurels Playground’s Gazebo – Chairman Peek reported that a sale had not been effected due, in part, to the difficulties involved for any prospective purchaser in dismantling and transporting the gazebo. However, the gazebo had been moved to another area of the playground which suited Phase I of the project and which might well work with the intended Phase II as well.

Loose Stones In The Pavement Wall In East Street – Action: County Councillor Yabsley is to continue to pursue this issue with DCC Highways.

Listing Of The Raised Pavement in East Street & Cobblestones Outside the Village Shop – Action: Vice Chairman Dunn would endeavour to liaise with Historic England on this matter.

Missing ‘Heasley Mill’ Village Road Sign – The relevant case number W201375380 had not been updated by DCC since December. However, members reported that the sign had not been replaced so the Clerk would continue to chase progress.

Fyldon Cross Road Sign Buried In Hedge – The Clerk had logged this issue (W201375405) on DCC’s website under *Problem Reporting* but Councillor Barron reported that the matter had not been attended to. The Clerk would continue to chase DCC on the issue.

Removal Of Signage Relating To Completed Roadworks At Crowbarn Hill & North Molton Hill – Members reported that the signs had been removed.

Possible Procurement, For Community Use/Maintenance Purposes, Of DCC-owned Land Adjacent To Roberts Field And Opposite The Lower Poole Phase II Development – Chairman Peek had received an e-mail from the Administrator and had had a telephone conversation with him. The intention was for the Administrator to build three of the planned houses with the remaining housing being built under an as-yet-to be-agreed joint venture between the lender and a contractor – the position on the delivery of social housing within these intended schemes was not known but the Chairman asked County Councillor Yabsley to take up a watching brief on this issue and keep members informed which he duly accepted. With the benefit to the community in mind in securing a successful conclusion to the housing development, Chairman Peek had agreed for the Parish Council to assist wherever it reasonably and impartially could in enabling communication with NDC should negotiations become delayed for any reason. Members had previously dropped the idea of procuring the land for a car park for reasons of capital and on-going maintenance costs but would consider the purchase of the land as a green area for community use which would give the Parish Council control over maintenance with a view to keeping the area tidy. On this basis, in August 2020, members had agreed to explore the possibility of purchasing the land for £1.00. The Administrator had envisaged that any sale to the Parish Council would be considered but could be affected by any terms to be agreed with the parties involved in the completion of the overall house-building project.

Planning Application: 70819 – Stitchpool Farm – The Clerk had chased the Case Officer, but no response had been received to date.

Exploration Of Funding Possibilities For Laurels Playground Project – Phase II – The Clerk was awaiting confirmation from the Project Team of the extent of Phase II.

Laurels Playground S.106 Project Phase I – The Clerk had signed the *tk play* (Option 5) contract and sent it to such business.

Libra School – Lawful Development Certificate Application: 62/49/20/004 – The Clerk had e-mailed DCC regarding the Parish Council’s Highways-related concerns requesting that DCC consider the issues involved and, if in agreement, write separately to the Exmoor National Park Planning Authority suggesting future control of the situation through a retrospective planning application with conditions rather than through the proposed above Certificate. Both Chairman Peek and District Councillor Bulled had written to the Exmoor National Park Planning Authority expressing their and the Parish Council’s concerns with the same recommendation.

Danger Posed By Open Drain/Culvert Cover In The Road At Upcott Below Ley Cross – Action: County Councillor Yabsley would chase the issue with DCC’s local Highways Manager, Richard Sables.

685/01/21.8 Matters Arising From The 9th December, 2020 Minutes Not On This Agenda: None

686/01/21.9 Items For Discussion:

- a) Presentation By Matt Barrow On Community Fibre Broadband** – Matt Barrow of DCC explained the complexity of the roll-out of *Superfast Broadband* for the parish and surrounding area. H.M. Government’s current definition of *Superfast Broadband* was the provision of a 24-30 m.b.p.s. data download service to each property. *Superfast* fibre boxes were already present in North Molton with delivery to homes from those boxes via copper wires. However, copper wires involved data speed loss proportional to the distance a recipient property was from the nearest box. Beyond 1.2 km the service diminished to between 2 and 16 m.b.p.s.. Within the 1.2 km limit *Superfast* speeds were achievable via the current copper wire technology. The aim was to bring everyone up to *Superfast* speed capability by the end of 2021 and to supply as many houses as possible with FTTP. FTTP was the most expensive to install infrastructure-wise but carried the capability of potential download speeds of 1 gigabyte per second, subject to contract, which far exceeded the current *Superfast* definition. Funding for this work had been made available through the *Gainshare* arrangement whereby private providers were obliged to pay monies relational to profits back to the Government which had originally invested funds in providing the basic fibre infrastructure – it was not envisaged that monies would need to be raised via the voucher scheme to provide *Superfast* provision to the whole of the parish. The complexity of contracts meant that *Airband*, *BT* and *Openreach* staff could all be working on the overall project in the same vicinity;
- b) Highways Team Update** – Councillor Milne reported that the priorities for drainage work had been re-ordered with the contractor/s working through the list – emergency work for Heasley Mill and Warkleigh Hill had been undertaken. Work at North Molton Hill and the Old Road was next on the schedule. All grit bins had been reported on the DCC Portal as requiring refilling – the broken grit bin at Millbrook had been reported. Councillor Geen reported that drainage work had also been completed between Brayford and Kinsford Cross and at Yardwells Hill. Councillor Bulled expressed concern regarding safety due to an easement on Warkleigh Hill having been missed and due to a blocked drain on the Warkleigh Road which had led to flooding across the road at the Libra School with the potential to lead to ice with all of the potential attendant consequences. Councillor Geen would alert the contractor/s to this situation. Councillor Milne stressed that whilst contractors were aware of the priorities on the Parish Council’s list, they had to optimise their working days which sometimes meant that areas on the top of the list were not always a practical first priority for their daily schedules which involved other non-Parish Council work;
- c) Laurels Playground S.106 Project – Update By The Laurels Team** – Councillor Darley reported that the contractor had laid the tarmac and installed the frames for the new equipment at the end of December. Two people had suggested that the basic black tarmac with a red fleck would look better with an overall colour finish of red or green – this was purely aesthetic – the additional cost would be £830 plus VAT. After a considered debate, members agreed on a vote of 9 For and 1 Against not to spend additional funds on the colour option for the tarmac. Councillor Bulled informed members that the play equipment would be installed in ten days’ time. Members welcomed Councillor Johnson’s idea of designing a mural for the long wall with a view to local children each painting a section after lockdown – Councillor Johnson would

liaise with the Project Team on this aspect. Members agreed that the playground should remain shut until after lockdown;

d) Parish Council's Main Noticeboard – Update By Councillor Geen – Councillor Geen would chase the contractor with a view to effecting the provision of the new noticeboard as soon as possible;

e) Adopted BT Phone-box (In The Square) Update – Councillor Jennings reported that the shelving was ready for installation which would be delayed until after lockdown. The inside of the box would be cleaned and touched up where necessary with paint. Councillor Johnson would progress with designing and producing the sign in readiness.

687/01/21.10 Chairman's Report/Urgent Matters Brought Forward By The Chairman – None

688/01/21.11 Finance -

Barclays Community Account	Balance as at 31 st December, 2020:	£15,326.40
Barclays Business Premium Account	Balance as at 31 st December, 2020:	£ 6,058.26

i) Receipts: **Barclays Business Premium Account** - £0.15 – Interest Received For The Period 7th September, 2019 to 6th December, 2019

ii) Payments:

a) **Clerk's Net Monthly Pay & Expenses** - £511.71 – Comprising: Net Pay: £432.60 plus contribution to telephone & office costs of £15.00, **Zoom Cloud Meetings** Monthly Subscription: £14.39 and **One.com** Annual Internet Domain Fee (Inv:27919967 Paid From Clerk's Own Funds on 24th December 2020) £49.72;

b) **Tekline Publishing** - £30.00 – Inv:10231 – Annual Website Maintenance Fee;

c) **HM Revenue And Customs** - £17.20 – P.A.Y.E. Due In January For The Period: Oct. – Dec. 2020.

iii) Any Other Accounts Received After Preparation of Agenda:

An Invoice, payable by *North Molton History Society* had been raised in the sum of £35.71 in respect of the shared web domain and services.

Unanimously, members agreed to pay the above sums.

689/01/21.12 Correspondence – None

690/01/21.13 Reports – None

691/01/21.14 – Matters Brought Forward By The District Councillor – District Councillor Bulled reported that the vaccination roll-out had commenced in Witheridge and Barnstaple but not so far in South Molton. Some NDC staff had tested positive for Covid-19 – in the main, this had affected the recycling teams where one affected staff member would bring a whole team into self-isolation which potentially had an effect on services. Most NDC staff were working from home. NDC was saving money on councillor expenses during lockdown. Virtual meetings were due to end in April but NDC had proposed that they be extended for both District and Parish Councils with the added facility, where possible, for members to meet virtually at face-to-face meetings when they could not physically attend for whatever reason. Support for the private members' Climate Emergency Bill, due for its second reading in March, was agreed by a majority of five votes in the NDC Full Council Meeting. District councillors had discussed how to stop cheap plastic bodyboards from being sold on the roadside. The forthcoming Census would likely be largely conducted online. Councillor Milne raised the issue of children requiring laptops during lockdown. She would liaise with the school in the first instance to obtain its

steer on the level of likely uptake before considering how best to advertise for donations of old laptops for delivery to the school subject to their being safely and technically prepared for such donation.

Date And Time Of The Next Meeting To Be Held Remotely Over The Internet Using *Zoom Cloud Meetings* Software Under The Provisions Of *The Coronavirus Regulations Bill 2020*: Wednesday 10th February, 2021 at 7.30 p.m.. The Meeting closed at 9.38 p.m..