

LUXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd October 2018 in Luxborough Village Hall commencing at 8pm

Present: Chairman, D. Powell, Vice Chairman, A. Sparling, Cllr Duke, Cllr Henson, Cllr Tombleson, Cllr Yiend, Clerk D Wass and Robin Offer, Conservation Officer at ENP.

1. Apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr O'Hare due to holiday and Matthew Legg of Avon and Somerset Police due to work commitment.
2. **Declarations of Interest.** None.
3. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2018.** The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Chairmans Announcements.**
 - The Chairman thanked Cllr Sparling for looking after parish council affairs in particular the beech tree problem in his absence.
 - The white lines by the bridge have been painted but unfortunately not quite where we would have liked them, however they seem to be effective.
 - The anti dog fouling signs have been erected and appear to be successful.

5. Exmoor Panel Meeting Report.

- Cllr Sparling attended the meeting and reported that the issue of reducing salting was discussed at great length. SCC are very short of money and have decided not to provide free salt. Precautionary salting of roads will no longer be carried out. Parish councils will be able to purchase salt if required but at present no costs are available. Francis Nicholson is investigating the costs of buying salt. Parish councils have been asked to discuss paying for their own salt. SCC will no longer fill the bins. There are three bins in Luxborough for salt. If we want another box we have to buy it ourselves. The question is will parishes be prepared to pay for salt bags. At present Luxborough has enough salt in the bins but if and when this runs out then the parish council will have to pay for it. Gritting is also being cut back and will only be carried out on roads directly into the village if and when an event occurs necessitating this such as ice and snow.
- Policing. Same issues as before in that there is very little rural crime in this area but poaching is a big problem especially at this time of year. The police would like members of the public to call 999 if they see anything or anyone suspicious as firearms are involved. Rural crime is very underreported as people feel that nothing happens when they do report it but the police would like any unusual behaviour reported in order for them to establish a pattern and possibly track offenders movements.

Police in urban areas are to be given bikes instead of cars but not in rural areas like Exmoor.

- There was a very interesting presentation from Somerset Waste Partnership. A lot more materials are going to be eligible for recycling by 2020 and already the

recycling centres will be able to take a lot more hard plastic like yoghurt pots, meat trays etc and by 2020 this will be collected at the roadside as well. Too much food waste is being put into the black bins, 25% of the average bin is food waste. The public need more education on this especially as the food waste can be used as bio mass.

- The ENP is behind on cutting back of footpaths as they are two rangers short. Purley Lane has now been trimmed back.
- ENP has carried out a survey of the Ash trees on Exmoor and discovered that 98% of them will be lost. They are looking at replanting with a different species in particular Lime as this does not seem to suffer from so much disease.

6. Beech Tree Felling Update. Robin Offer, Conservation Officer at ENP, addressed the meeting and after careful consideration and consultation with his colleagues it is agreed that the trees need to be felled. It would be prudent to fell the three beech trees at the same time and he is to contact Keith Yates of SCC to discuss this. If Highways would remove the trees at their own cost in their own time then ENP have funds available in the Caremoor Fund which should be available to help with the cost of replanting replacement trees and the ongoing care of them beyond what Highways need to do to comply with their duty of care to further enhance the area. Mr Offer felt it would be best to fell the trees, grind the stumps out and remove some of the top soil and replace with new top soil in order to provide the best nutrients for the new trees. Mr Offer will inform the PC via the Clerk of the outcome of his discussions with SCC Highways in this regard. The committee decided that they would support the removal of the three trees but not just two of them as this would leave the third vulnerable and would also compromise any replanting. The timber from the trees, if healthy enough, could then be made into benches and sited around the village. Mr Offer suggested that Nick Hosegood who lives in the village would be the person to carry this out. Mr Offer has discussed this with him and he is willing to do this. The fungus is primarily a root fungus so if it has not gone too high there should be good wood higher up which could be used.

The issue of the seat was raised as there was great concern that this might be damaged and it was agreed to remove and store it until all work had been completed. The Chairman offered to instigate this.

The Clerk is to contact Mr Yates and say that the PC strongly request that all three trees are felled at the same time and to ensure that no work is carried out until the bench seat has been safely removed.

7. Dog Fouling Signage. The signs have been purchased from Active Signs at a cost of £29 plus VAT and a cheque had been sent in payment. The signs as reported earlier have been erected.

8. Salt Supply. As reported earlier the provision of salt must be funded by the parish council and The Chairman will check on current supplies to see if more is needed for this winter but he is sure there is adequate at present.

9. Play Area Update. The update had not been received from the Play Area Committee however the Chairman reported that the old play area would be flattened and built up to prevent the wet patch around the bowling area and five new pieces of equipment would be positioned around the whole field. The position of these will take account of the marquees for the fete. Planning permission is only required for structures over 1.6 metres. Approval has been obtained by the County Council Play Area Advisor and fund raising will be carried out. It has been decided that due to insurance restrictions Chris Henson cannot manufacture the equipment but if it is purchased in kit form from an approved supplier he should be able to install it which should save a lot of money.

10. Financial Matters.

- A cheque for £112.50 was signed in favour of Luxborough Village Hall in payment of the rent for PC meetings for the last year.
- A cheque for £300 towards the signpost refurbishment was signed and will be sent to ENP c/o Charlotte Thomas, Historic Signpost Project Officer.
- The last bank statement received was dated 31 August 2018 showing a balance of £3,900. Taking into account the payments that have gone out since that date the balance should currently be £3128 which includes the two cheques signed at this meeting.

11. Items of Interest.

- Airband. Airband will supply broadband to the village hall at no cost to the village and an email has been received with a request to address the parish council and survey the village hall. It was felt that it was not necessary to have any more meetings with Airband and the Clerk was asked to contact them and tell them to carry on with connecting the village hall to broadband.
- The driveway application at Loftbrook has been approved and completed.
- SALC have sent a list of their autumn training courses for new councillors. Cllr Yiend would be interest in attending but not until next Spring due to work commitments.
- A letter had been received from Avon and Somerset Police containing a survey which the pc completed at the meeting.
- Housing Needs Survey. The final report has been received and a consultation will be held on 16th October.

12. Items for the Next Meeting

- Waste is being dumped by the entrance to the woods at Pooltown, mainly garden waste and grass clippings. The Chairman asked the Clerk to speak to the person who gardens at Holywell.

- The bridge at Pooltown needs a working party to remove vegetation that is growing up around it before it causes any structural problems.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed

Date