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The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Luxborough Parish Council held online via Zoom on Wednesday 13 January 2021 at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors D Powell (Chair), A Sparling (Vice Chair), J Duke, R O' Hare, J Tombleson, D Yiend, C Henson, F Nicholson – County Councillor, S Pugsley – District Councillor.

Jeanna Grenville – Clerk.

Two members of the public were present.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

None were received.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Powell and Henson each declared a prejudicial interest regarding the planning application for replacement of play equipment on the village green.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16 December were approved and formally adopted as a true and accurate record.

5. Public Speaking

The applicant and one other member of the public spoke regarding the planning application for the installation of children's play equipment being considered under item 6. Standing down as chair of the meeting, Councillor Powell also spoke regarding the proposal as a member of the public.

[Councillors Powell and Henson disconnected from the Zoom meeting and Councillor Sparling took the chair. One member of the public disconnected from the Zoom meeting.]

6. Planning

Application 6/20/20/108 – proposed replacement of existing play equipment on the village green.

The Councillors discussed the application, noting that it would provide welcome recreational amenities for children of all ages within the village. It was noted that there would initially be three installations which would be sited to ensure that maximum flexibility was retained for the various other recreational uses and proper maintenance of the green. Councillor Sparling proposed and Councillor Tombleson

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seconded that the application be supported. The five Councillors present were all in favour.

[Councillor Powell re-joined the Zoom meeting and resumed as Chair. Councillor Henson was unable to re-join for technical reasons. One member of the public disconnected from the Zoom meeting.]

7. Chairman's Announcements

Councillor Powell reported that the British Heart Foundation had advised that the free defibrillator for the church on offer from the landlord of the Royal Oak was obsolete. A new model could be obtained at a discounted price of £600. Councillors noted that the cost-benefit of investing public funds in a defibrillator in Churchtown was unproven and it was therefore agreed to re-consider this matter in the future.

The Chairman noted that he had inspected the flooding reported at Hill Cottage and had found some of the drains to be blocked. Councillors reported some erosion of the verge on Vellers Way as a result of blockages. Somerset West and Taunton are no longer clearing drains unless there is an emergency due to financial reasons and Councillor Nicholson was asked if any influence could be brought to bear in this respect. Councillor Nicholson noted that the matter had been raised but no response had yet been received.

The site visit to West Slowley Barn in consideration of the application for location of an emergency services' mast was to take place on 19 January at 12:30, to be attended by Councillors Henson and Tombleson.

It was confirmed that the Lawful Certificate application for Allercott Farm in the parish of Timberscome has been withdrawn.

[Councillor Nicholson disconnected from the meeting.]

8. Finances

The Responsible Finance Officer's report was discussed. Noting anticipated reserves of approximately £2,000 at the 2020/2021 financial year end, Councillors resolved to set expenditure at £1,922 for the 2021/22 financial year.

Councillors resolved to set the precept at £2,500 representing a 21% increase on the previous year, taking into account their intention to keep the precept as low as possible along with the fact that it had not been increased this financial year.

9. Matters of Interest

The Police Community Support office had advised the Clerk that crime rates remain low in Luxborough with support for vulnerable parishioners available from a number of community resources.

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The Clerk had received an open letter from the Leader of Somerset West and Taunton updating on the continuing discussion of proposals regarding county council reforms. Councillor Pugsley noted that two alternative proposals are under consideration by the Secretary of State.

The Clerk notified Councillors that her appointment as the Clerk for the neighbouring parish of Cutcombe has been agreed.

It was noted that a footpath diversion had been applied for in Cutcombe. Councillors did not wish to provide formal commentary on the proposal, but questioned the process for obtaining support from the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) for such proposals. Councillor Pugsley advised that diversions were frequently approved. He would contact a colleague from the ENPA who might be willing to speak to this at a future meeting.

[Councillor Henson reconnected to the meeting.]

Councillors Powell and Sparling reminded colleagues that they would be attending the Exmoor Area Panel.

10. Items for the next meeting

Feedback from the Exmoor Area Panel.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20:45.

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