

LUXBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Luxborough Parish Council held online via Zoom on Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors D Powell (Chair), A Sparling (Vice Chair), J Duke, R O' Hare J Tombleson, C Henson, F Nicholson – County Councillor, S Pugsley – District Councillor, Dan Barnett Access and Recreation Manager – Exmoor National Park.

Jeanna Grenville – Clerk.

- 1 **Public Question Time:** No members of the public in attendance.
- 2 **Welcome and Introductions:** The Chair opened the meeting at 7.40 pm following a delay caused by technical issues. All agreed to audio recording of the meeting.
- 3 **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from Cllr Duke who had a clash of meetings.
- 4 **Declarations of Interest:** None were declared.
- 5 **Verbal briefing from Dan Barnett of Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) regarding diversions of public footpaths:** Councillors had been interested to obtain a briefing about the circumstances when footpaths or bridleways may be diverted, which appears to signal a change in policy. Mr Barnett explained that ENPA had increased work on Orders for footpaths. There is a 'definitive line' for all footpaths, recorded on a central record. Over time, sometimes decades, the footpath may deviate from the definitive line and become 'offline'. This may occur for a number of reasons and means that ENPA have no legal jurisdiction over them. There are over 400 offline footpaths on Exmoor with ENPA prioritising resources to tackle those causing the most problems for the public. Agreed diversions to footpaths may create both private and public benefit, for example by making the footpath more inviting or safer for walkers, or by improving privacy. If it is agreed that footpaths may be diverted in the interests of the property owner, the applicant bears the costs in full, as has been the case with the current application for Old Stowey. Anyone can apply and it may cost £3,000 to create the diversion. This then creates a new definitive line. Cllr O' Hare noted that many farms and properties within the Parish are blighted by footpaths and bridleways which inflict severe impacts on their privacy. Mr Barnett noted that a potential future change in the law would place a duty on public authorities to consider all applications. It was observed that that landowners may create an alternative permitted path, as long as they keep the definitive line open; this can be a cost-effective option. The Chairman thanked Mr Barnett for his interesting briefing. [Mr Barnett left the meeting.]
- 6 **Minutes of the Meeting of 27 January 2021:** Resolved to adopt the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- 7 **Planning: 6/20/21/101 Hazery Proposed creation of new entrance. Landscaping -** The Parish Council remains concerned about the adverse visual impact that the proposed construction will have on the natural landscape and would still like to see a representation of how it would look, particularly from the Luxborough (East) side and from the roadside when passing the property. The plans show that there will be a ramp with a large retaining wall with wrought iron works and electric wooden gates which would appear to be highly visible from the highway. **Road Safety -** the visibility splay at the driveway set out in the planning documents is likely to be inadequate. Well-founded local knowledge of the highway would suggest that speeds are likely to be around 50 mph on this stretch of the road. The works will require significant lorry loads of materials to be delivered. The Councillors queried whether the turning radius will allow haulage vehicles to enter the driveway directly without a need to reverse into the highway to manoeuvre which could represent a safety hazard. The Parish Council's reasonable request for further information to inform its decision making had been denied by the applicant, eliciting a discourteous and somewhat unprofessional

Initialled

response. Cllrs would still like to see evidence of the structural necessity for the works and the pre-application report from Highways would be of interest. There was insufficient information to allay Cllrs concerns, however they would be pleased to reconsider the application in the light of further information. **Resolved** to Object.

- 7 **Finance: Resolved** that the authorised signatories in the current Mandate, for the Luxborough Parish Council be amended to remove former Clerk, Debbie Wass and add current Clerk, Jeanna Grenville, with the current mandate to continue as amended. Resolved funding for Clerk's mobile phone at £2 p/month (costs split 20:80 with Cutcombe Parish), Code of Conduct Training at £15 (split 50:50 with Cutcombe Parish). Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks to be considered at the next meeting with costs.
- 8 **Chairman's Announcements:** The Chairman welcomed the prospect of returning by mid May of face-to-face meetings. Noted that the area at the T junction new the Royal Oak had been drained to facilitate parking. Cutting back of foliage overhanging the highway at Chargot House is understood to be in hand.
- 9 **Correspondence and Meetings:** Nothing to report.
- 11 **Annual Council Meeting:** This is to be scheduled by end of May, Clerk to confirm deadline. Clerk queried whether there would be public concerns about safety due to Covid in a face-to-face meeting. Cllrs noted their preference for a face-to-face meeting and that the village hall will be set up for socially distanced Police Commissioners elections. Measures would be taken to address any safety concerns raised by parishioners.
- 10 **Items of Interest:** The Clerk thanked the Cllrs for their investment in her training so far. Cllr Nicholson had emailed an update concerning council tax, budgets, unitary proposals, affordable housing. Any questions can be posed to her via email. Cllr Pugsley noted the District Rate has come up by £5 for a band D property. Regarding the Eight Parishes Affordable Housing Working Group, there is a public consultation regarding prospective sites, with one being in Luxborough adjacent to Tarr Water, Pooltown. The Chairman noted that this is proposed to be for self-build projects. The Exmoor Panel will be considering this at its meeting of 11 March. The application for the mast remains ongoing with no further information available.
- 11 **Items for the Next Meeting;** SLCC Membership and annual parish meeting and forum.
- 12 There being no other items, the Chair closed the meeting at 20:45