

# LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7:00pm

Start – 7:10 – Clerk forgot his keys!!!

Present – Cllrs Skeaping (Chair), Hulett, Lenton L, Lenton K, Moyse, Cook. 3 members of staff from NT Lydford Gorge, Cllrs Mott and Southcott (WDBC).

**1. Public Session (15 minutes)**

The council heard further from Simon Thompson, Heather Kaye and Demelza Hyde (NT, Lydford Gorge) Heather Kaye on some of the factors behind the closure of walks within the Gorge, and to made representations to them on behalf of parishioners.

The key points of the discussions were –

- The site has been divided into two circular walks around the Devil’s Cauldron and the Waterfall. These will be open all year round. Other walks – including Tucker’s Pool – will be seasonal only.
- Councillors asked about the anticipated impact this will have on visitor numbers to the Gorge, and consequently to the village. It is expected that numbers will stay at the same level because the two major attractions will still be open.
- Safety issues are paramount and some of the walks are now “dangerous”. If they were all to be kept open it would be at the expense of what is already in place.
- Councillors expressed themselves worried that these closures are merely the beginning and asked for reassurances that there will be no further closures in the future. The NT staff stated that this round is planned to be the last of the closures within the Gorge.
- The Gorge is a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of the temperate rainforest climate within the gorge, and because of the exposed Devonian geology. Dramatic weather changes (high rainfall, flooding, drought) are having a major impact upon these features, which must be preserved.
- Overall, 1.5 miles of riverbank needs to be re-built.
- Councillors asked about the relationship between the Gorge and the wider community. There were 237 visits from local residents 2022-23, 75% of which were at the waterfall end. The Gorge receives many visits from DMAT schools, but none in recent years from Lydford Primary School.
- The NT takes a stall in the Lydford show.

**2. Apologies for absence Cllr Gilpin – work commitments. Accepted.**

**3. Declarations of Interest**  
Nil.

**4. Minutes of the meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

It was resolved to accept the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Skeaping, seconded Cllr Hulett. All in favour.

**5. Matters arising from the meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Clerk has asked the Lengthsman for a date when he can undertake work within the village, under direction from Cllrs Skeaping / Hulett. A reply is awaited. (Subsequently arranged for Thursday 21.3.24) Verge markers are more costly than first expected. Clerk has sought direction and will purchase a reduced number.

**6. Lydford Gorge**

Previously discussed.

**7. Dog waste in the village**

Councillors discussed the continuing problem of dog mess within the village. Cllr Cook has received an offer from ex Councillor Lesley Fowler who has got together a team of volunteers who would be willing to maintain any dog waste bin that might be put up at the entrance to the sports field – where dog mess is felt to be a particular issue.

It was agreed that Councillor Cook should put Lesley in touch with the Chair of Trustees of the sports field so that they can explore together whether this is a feasible option. (AP1). It was suggested that the council could support the purchase of any bin through a grant.

**8. Council website**

Because of Cllr Gilpin's unavoidable absence, no update was received. Councillors are mindful that certain aspects of the existing provision (domain and email address) will expire on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and asked what could be done to expedite the urgent issues. Might the council have to revert to the original plan of having a website professionally built? (AP2 – Clerk to work more closely with Cllr Gilpin to ensure matters are expedited). The question of website provision to be placed on the April agenda. (AP3)

**9. Gorge Hill**

No updates.

**10. Defibrillator**

Councillors recalled the training offered when the present defibrillator was installed. Almost no-one came from the parish. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask for expressions of interest from the community so that the correct training can be provided.

Cllr Cook explained to the council what was required in maintaining the equipment. Cllr K Lenton did not feel that she had the time to commit to completing the Ambulance Service paperwork required but did offer to keep a watch on the equipment to check that it was functional.

**11. Car Park**

Councillors noted gratefully that DNPA have agreed that parking charges on Sundays will not commence until 13:00.

Councillor Mott informed the council that DNPA do not expect to be able to have the charging infrastructure installed and operational until early summer.

It was agreed that the toilet opening times notices on the block in the car park need to be removed as the toilets are no longer provided. Cllr Hulett agreed to remove them. (AP4)

**12. Finances**

a. Councillors voted to approve the payments:

i. J. Bright	£368.24	March salary
ii. HMRC	£87.60	PAYE March
iii. DALC	£108.00	Training, Cllrs Hulett and Gilpin
iv. Notice Board Co Ltd	£1669.15	New notice boards.
Proposed Cllr Skeaping, seconded Cllr Hulett, all in favour.		

b. Banking reconciliation 29.02.2024

Councillors noted the banking reconciliation and the actions taken by the Clerk under the Scheme of Delegation

Opening balance 1.4.23	£10,015.25	Bank holdings at 29.02.24	
Add receipts	£9,648.77	Deposit Account	£11,700.21
Less payments	<u>£7,941.11</u>	Current Account	<u>£22.70</u>
	£11,722.91		£11,722.91

## c. Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

- 12.3.24 Transfer £600 from deposit to current account.
- 12.3.24 Transfer £1,670 from deposit to current account.

**13. Planning**

Nil

**14. Business not listed on the agenda below, by permission of the Chair.**

Cllr Moyse is managing the signing of a petition being organised by West Devon MP Geoffrey Cox regarding the extremely poor quality of most of Devon's roads and asking national government to consider Devon an exceptional case, giving more money to DCC highways because the county has so many miles of highway.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Annual Meeting of the Parish will take place in May, and asked that they think about what we might do to attract parishioners to come to the meeting and contribute. Cllr Hulett described an incident a few days before the meeting when a fully loaded articulated HGV travelling north on the back road from the Mucky Duck missed the left turn to proceed under the railway bridge towards Bridge House and Lydford Village and instead crossed the carriageway and drove up the track towards The Barn and Ingo Brake. shot up Ingo Brake instead of following the road through the village. **AP5**, Clerk to write to DNPA as it was felt that the authority might be responsible for signposting. (CC Cllr Mott) **AP6** - Cllr Hulett to send photos for forwarding to DNPA.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:10

A.P.	Action required of	Action required	Outcome
1	Cllr Cook	Pass to Cllr Gilpin the contact details for the volunteer group willing to service any new dog poo bin at the sports field	Information passed.
2	Cllr Gilpin, Clerk	To work together to ensure that lydfordparishcouncil.com domain is transferred together with the clerk email address.	Completed
3	Clerk	Place the question of website provision on the April agenda	Completed
4	Cllr Hulett	Remove opening times signs outside closed public toilets.	
5	Clerk	Write to DNPA with information of the HGV that drove up the lane to Ingo Brake.	Completed
6	Cllr Hulett	Pass on any photographs taken of the HGV incident to assist the report.	Completed