

# LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on  
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7:00pm

Present: Cllrs Skeaping (Chair), Hulett, L Lenton, K Lenton, Moyses, Gilpin. Cllrs Mott & Southcott (WDBC), Simon Thompson (N.T. Lydford Gorge), 2 members of the parish.

## 1. Public Session

Paul Brookes raised the question of the parish council website; he felt that it was outdated and with poor functionality. Some of the material it contains is out of date and it is not a good advertisement for the village and the council. Cllr Gilpin stated that he is looking to introduce a joint or shared calendar with Nicholls Hall although trustees want to see the calendar in operation before joining it. Suggestions were made that perhaps what would be more appropriate would be a website for the whole village rather than solely for the parish council.

Simon Thompson described that the gateway to the site at the bottom of Gorge Hill has been broken – assumably with a vehicle – but will be fixed. Simon also announced that BBC Winterwatch have been filming at the Gorge on the life cycle of ferns. It is not known presently when the episode will go to air.

Brian Cook thanked the council for the neat job they did of moving the Home guard bench at Gorge Hill.

## 2. Apologies for absence

Nil.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Moyses expressed a personal interest in the Hall Farm planning application (item 13)

## 4. Minutes of the meeting 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

These were accepted by all as an accurate record of the meeting.

## 5. Matters arising from the meeting 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

1. Lengthsman – it was agreed that the Clerk should book the Lengthsman for a full day. Cllrs Skeaping and Hulett will meet with him on the day and brief him on what they would want him to do. (AP1 – Clerk to book the Lengthsman for a day).
2. The Clerk explained that he has been exploring the option of having a professionally built website to replace the existing self-built Wix site which cost the council £215 this year. He requested permission to continue discussions with Barry Isaacs of WesternWeb in Lamerton and invited those present to look at their website. This was approved (AP2 – Clerk to discuss the possibility of a community website with WesternWeb & AP3 – write to trustees of Nicholls Hall to enquire what they might want to be included in a community website). (AP4 – Cllr Gilpin to make the same enquiry of the Sports Field committee).
3. Cllrs Mott and Southcott stated that they would look favourably at a request for financial support provided it was to establish a community website.

## 6. Gorge Hill

1. The Clerk read an email from Brad Elliott, DCC Highways Neighbourhood Officer, in which he explained that plastic verge markers can be installed to prevent offroad parking on the verge at Gorge Hill, but that it would be necessary to carry out safety checks beforehand to ensure that no utilities ran in that area. The markers can be installed by the parish council, but he felt that the installer would need to be part of the Road Warden scheme for insurance and safety reasons. (AP5 – Clerk to enquire whether Highways would be able to carry out the work, and what the cost might be).

01/2024

2. Councillors discussed the question of where the newly printed 20's plenty signs might be installed. It was agreed that it was up to parishioners to volunteer their properties to have a sign installed and displayed. (AP6 – Clerk to include article in newsletter).

#### 7. Thermal imaging camera – loan from WDBC

Cllr L Lenton outlined her findings. It was agreed that Cllr Lenton would arrange the loan of a camera (AP7), and the availability would be advertised to parishioners. Cllr Mott explained that the images from the camera can be used as effective evidence when seeking grants for insulation.

#### 8. Car Park

1. Councillors were asked by Cllr Mott whether they wanted to raise a question with the Dartmoor National Park Authority, asking them to reconsider their charging policy for Lydford, or whether they wanted an agenda item for the Authority March meeting, which will need to be raised by Cllr Mott as a Member. After discussion it was agreed that the council would like Cllr Mott to raise a motion, to which Cllrs and members of the parish will speak. The wording of the motion was agreed – “I request that the authority recognises the special characteristics of Lydford and the role the public car park plays in servicing the wider community. To that end I ask that the question of charging in the village is revisited by members”.
2. Councillors were reminded that the motion will need to be supported by evidence, which will need to be obtained before the March meeting of the Authority.(AP8)
3. It was agreed that a Councillor would attend the authority meeting when called to speak on behalf of the council.
4. Concerns were raised about visitors to Penny Cottage parking in the splay entrance to the car park. (AP9 - Cllrs Skeaping and L Lenton will raise the matter with the licensee of the Castle Inn who owns and operates the property).

#### 9. Playground

1. Cllr Gilpin stated that the repairs to the equipment have been completed, at a total cost of £570, which was above the £500 agreed by Councillors. The Sports Field Committee has agreed to contribute the £70.
2. The increasing problem of dog mess on the Sports Field was raised again. There was some support for encouraging trustees to ban dogs from the site entirely, but this was a matter for trustees. Cllr Mott stated that a dog waste bin had never been installed at the site, but that one could be installed. The cost would be £500 to install the bin and £200 per year to have the bin emptied once a week. (AP10 - Cllr Gilpin to enquire of the Sports Field committee to see if they'll pay for it).

#### 10. Neighbourhood Watch – Lydford

Councillor Hulett agreed to act as the council link with the Neighbourhood Watch group.

#### 11. Streaming of public meetings of the council

Councillors doubted the advantage of broadcasting their meetings and agreed to leave the matter in abeyance, to be reviewed once the website has been replaced / updated.

#### 12. Finances

- a. Councillors resolved to approve the following payments:

i. J. Bright	£368.24	January salary
ii. HMRC	£87.60	PAYE January
iii. DALC	£18.00	Good Cllr Training – Cllr Gilpin

- b. Budget

Cllrs agreed unanimously to set a precept of £9,910 for the coming year. This represents an increase of almost 17%, or £7.94 p.a. for a band D property but brings Lydford into line with the average precept for all the councils in West Devon.

Proposed Cllr Skeaping, seconded Cllr Hulett, all in favour.

## c. Banking reconciliation 31.12.23

Opening balance 1.4.23	£10,015.25	Bank holdings at 31.12.23	
Add receipts	£9,551.78	Deposit Account	£13,133.22
Less payments	<u>£6,388.43</u>	Current Account	£45.38
	£13,178.60	Less O/S items*	<u>£0.00</u>
			£13,178.60

\* All outstanding payments cleared 29.12.23

**13. Planning**

Councillors agreed to approve both applications –

- 0525/23 – Installation of replacement of rear doors / windows and fascia at Lyd Barn, EX20 4AW (Grade II listed property)
- 0539/23 – Change of use from agricultural to light industrial, Hall Farm Barn, EX20 4BJ

Councillors noted without comment the approval of application –

- 0477/23 – Use of land to station a mobile home granny annexe, Elim, EX20 4BA

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

- Cllr L Lenton announced that the new parish notice boards had been delivered and were in storage awaiting installation by the DMAT estates staff.
- Cllr Hulett proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of the community to Anthony Parnell and his group of volunteers who laid on a very popular and very successful dinner on Christmas day in the Nicholls Hall. This was roundly supported by all present.

**15. Matters relating to the proposed purchase by DMAT of land adjoining Lydford Primary School.**

The Clerk reported that as requested he had written to Dan Morrow, CEO of the MAT, but had not yet received a reply.

**16. Co-option of a Councillor to fill vacancy left by the resignation of Cllr Neil Grigg.**

It was agreed that there needed to be a proper procedure in place to select the appropriate candidate. As none presently exists it was agreed to defer the matter until February's meeting. (AP11 – Clerk to formulate and circulate a co-option procedure for adoption as the first point of business at the February meeting).

Meeting closed 8:40 pm

**Action points from the meeting:**

A.P.	To be taken by	Action	Outcome
1	Clerk	Book the Lengthsman for a day's work, to be directed by Cllrs Skeaping and Hulett.	
2	Clerk	To discuss with WesternWeb the possibility of creating a community website.	
3	Clerk	Ask the Nicholls Hall trustees whether they would be willing to contribute towards the creation of a community website.	
4	Cllr Gilpin	Ask the Sports Field trustees whether they would be willing to contribute towards the creation of a community website.	
5	Clerk	Enquire whether DCC Highways would be willing to install the verge markers, and if so, the probable cost.	
6	Clerk	Include in the Parish Newsletter an invitation to borrow the thermal imaging camera from WDBC	
7	Cllr L Lenton	To arrange for the booking of the WDBC thermal imaging camera.	
8	All Cllrs	To gather evidence of the unique and local usage of the Lydford car park, ready for presentation to DNPA at the Authority's meeting on 1 <sup>st</sup> March.	
9	Cllrs Skeaping and L Lenton	Raise the matter of parking in the entrance to the car park outside of Penny Cottage with the licensee of the Castle Inn who owns and operates the property	
10	Cllr Gilpin	Enquire of the Sports Field committee to see if they'll pay for installation of a dog waste bin at the Sports Field	
11	Clerk	Formulate and circulate a co-option procedure for adoption at February's meeting	