

# NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of **Newton Popleford and Harpford Parish Council** which took place at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Popleford at 7.15pm on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**Present:** Cllrs. Carpenter, Compton, Dalton, Hughes, Malawana (from 7.40pm), Tillotson, Tribble and Walker  
 Cllr. Chris Burhop, Ward Councillor  
 Ted Swan, Honorary Footpath Warden  
 Jacqui Baldwin, Parish Clerk and RFO  
 2 members of the public

Cllr.Carpenter, as Vice Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the fire regulations and evacuation procedures. He reminded those present that the meeting would be recorded by the Clerk.

		Action:
AM24/01	<b>Election of Chair:</b> Cllr. Carpenter invited nominations for the office of Chair. <b>Cllr. Tillotson proposed Cllr. Tribble. Cllr. Tribble accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations the proposal was seconded by Cllr. Walker. Resolved 5 votes in favour, two abstentions.</b>	
AM24/02	<b>Chair to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office:</b> Signed in the presence of and witnessed by the Clerk to the Parish Council. Chair thanked Councillors for their continuing support and confidence.	
AM24/03	<b>Election of Vice Chair:</b> Chair invited nominations for the office of Vice Chair. <b>Cllr. Carpenter proposed Cllr. Hughes. Cllr. Hughes accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations the proposal was seconded by Cllr. Compton and resolved 6 votes in favour, one abstention.</b>	
AM24/04	<b>Vice Chair to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office:</b> Signed in the presence of and witnessed by the Clerk to the Parish Council.	
AM24/05	<b>To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted:</b> Apologies received from Cllrs. Harrison and Lipczynski were accepted and approved.	
AM24/06	<b>Declarations of interest from members of the Parish Council/Dispensation Requests:</b> Cllr. Tillotson has a dispensation to discuss and vote on matters relating to the allotments which is valid until May 2027. Cllr. Hughes has a dispensation to discuss and vote on matters relating to trees which is valid until May 2027. No further declarations made or dispensations requested.	
AM24/07	<b>To review the Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 (as previously circulated) which were approved on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023:</b> <b>To consider any matters arising from those Minutes:</b> Chair noted that the graffiti has not been removed from the river bridge. Venn Ottery Village Green footbridge has now been installed. Cllr. Hughes confirmed that shrubs have yet to be planted to 'soften' its appearance. New flood defence equipment has been purchased with a grant from Devon Communities Together.	
AM24/08	<b>To receive and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 as previously circulated:</b> <b>Chair proposed that the Minutes be approved as drafted. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved 6 votes in favour, one abstention.</b> <b>To consider any matters arising from those Minutes:</b>	

	<p>Chair reminded members to review the interactive map of Traffic Regulations Orders in the parish in preparation for the June Council meeting. Clerk confirmed that Cllr. Bailey is trying to arrange an on-site meeting with Highways to discuss the yellow lines in Brook Meadow.</p> <p>A licence agreement is now in place passing responsibility for the maintenance of the grass bank in School Lane to the Parish Council.</p> <p>As requested, information about holding public referenda was circulated to Councillors by the Clerk.</p>	
AM24/09	<p><b>To note arrangements for the payment of Chair and Members Allowances for 2024/25:</b></p> <p>Chair stated that members are entitled to receive an annual payment – known as the Parish Basic Allowance - which is a figure calculated to cover expenses associated with the basic duties of being a councillor. The sum payable is based on a percentage of the allowances paid to EDDC Councillors (which is currently £4,360 per annum). Payments are subject to PAYE and to assist with cash flow payments will be made in two tranches – at the end of June and the end of December.</p> <p>Having decided to pay the Parish Basic Allowance the Council is obliged to budget for it and make a payment to each member unless a member communicates to the Clerk that he or she does not wish to receive payment. Chair asked Councillors to communicate with the Clerk accordingly.</p>	ALL
AM24/10	<p><b>To consider Committee memberships for 2024/25:</b></p> <p>Chair proposed that the subject of committee membership be dealt with at the June meeting. In the meantime, those members who currently serve on the Finance and Policies &amp; Personnel committees were asked to confirm to the Clerk whether it is their intention to continue. Chair requested that any member with a specific interest in serving on any committee please communicate this to the Clerk before the June meeting.</p>	ALL
AM24/11	<p><b>To consider nominations for Voluntary Footpath (P3) Warden:</b></p> <p><b>Cllr. Carpenter proposed that Mr Ted Swan be elected Parish Footpath Warden for the coming year. Mr Swan accepted the nomination. Proposal seconded by Cllr. Hughes and resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p>Chair thanked Mr Swan for continuing to carry out this important role which is much appreciated by Councillors and the wider community.</p>	
AM24/12	<p><b>Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow a Public Forum to take place. Seconded by Cllr. Hughes and resolved unanimously.</b></p>	
	<p><b>Public Forum:</b></p> <p><b>a) Neighbourhood Policing report</b> There was no representation from the Neighbourhood Policing Team but the Chair noted that the annual crime statistics had been provided by PC Driver as promised at the Annual Parish Meeting and had been circulated to members.</p> <p><b>b) County Councillor report: Cllr. Jessica Bailey</b> Cllr. Bailey had sent her apologies in advance of the meeting. Her written report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>c) District Councillor report: Cllr. Chris Burhop</b> Cllr. Burhop congratulated Cllrs. Tribble and Hughes and Mr Swan on their appointments. Cllr. Burhop spoke about the appointment of Tracy Hendren as the new CEO of East Devon District Council. He noted that 2024 is EDDC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, celebration of which will commence in June. Following recent elections the Democratic Alliance Group now has a majority on Council replacing the Conservatives.</p>	

	<p>Cllr. Burhop reported that 451 families are currently on the waiting list for social housing in the district – of these 9 require emergency intervention (Cat A) and 442 are at immediate risk of homelessness (Cat B). There are four families in the parish on the category B list – two requiring 1-bed accommodation and two requiring 4-bed accommodation.</p> <p>Cllr. Burhop urged Council to respond to the latest Local Plan Consultation. EDDC is requesting feedback on eight new aspects of the plan prior to the 27<sup>th</sup> June deadline.</p> <p>South West Water will be holding a “drop-in” session at the Ocean in Exmouth on 29<sup>th</sup> May and Cllr. Burhop encouraged residents to attend.</p> <p><b>d) Report from Ted Swan, Parish Footpath Warden</b></p> <p>Mr Swan reported that the footbridge on Footpath 6 has now been replaced and the broken gate on Footpath 3 has been removed.</p> <p>As a result of intervention by Cllr. Bailey the issue of the route of the new footpath from the EDDC car park to Church Green will be resolved shortly. Emma Hellier, DCC’s Public Rights of Way Officer, has confirmed that funding will be available to carry out improvements to Footpath 1 which will include the reinstatement of the collapsed handrail.</p> <p>There has been no further significant erosion to Footpaths 16 and 19 (routes to the Red Bridge).</p> <p>Mr Swan asked whether there had been any progress on the designation of a footpath across Venn Ottery Village Green.</p> <p><b>Clerk to follow up with the DCC Rights of Way officer responsible.</b></p> <p><b>e) Report from the Climate Change Group:</b> Report published and circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>f) Questions and representations from residents/parishioners:</b> No comments or questions raised.</p>	Clerk
AM24/13	<b>Chair closed the Public Forum and proposed that Standing Orders be reinstated to preclude any further public participation. Seconded by Cllr. Hughes and resolved unanimously.</b>	
AM24/14	<b>To consider matters listed on this Agenda that Councillors believe should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.</b> None so considered.	
AM24/15	<p><b>a) To appoint the Responsible Financial Officer for 2024/25:</b> <b>Chair proposed that Jacqui Baldwin be appointed RFO for the financial year 2024/25. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved with 7 votes in favour, one abstention.</b></p> <p><b>b) To confirm bank mandate signatories for 2024/25:</b> Chair noted that the current bank signatories are herself, Cllr. Walker and Cllr. Carpenter. The Finance Committee will consider adding to the number of signatories if they deem it necessary.</p> <p><b>c) To consider arrangements for the renewal of the Council's insurance 2024/25:</b> Chair advised that Council’s insurance is due for renewal on 9<sup>th</sup> June. A pre-renewal meeting has taken place with brokers and a quotation is awaited from the current providers, Ansvar. As Council made a significant claim last year Chair noted that the premium may rise substantially</p>	
AM24/16	<b>To review and, if thought fit, re-adopt Council’s Standing Orders:</b> <b>Cllr. Malawana proposed that Standing Orders be re-adopted unchanged. Seconded by Cllr. Hughes and resolved unanimously.</b>	
AM24/17	<b>To review and, if thought fit, approve Council’s revised Financial Regulations and Delegation policy:</b> Chair noted that the Policies & Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee had reviewed Council’s Financial Regulations and recommend that the amended version that had been circulated in advance of this meeting be	

	<p>approved. The amendments provide clearer guidance on how changes to the Clerk's salary are to be dealt with in future. <b>Chair proposed that Council approve and adopt the revised regulations. Seconded by Cllr. Tillotson and resolved 7 votes in favour, one abstention.</b></p> <p><b>Clerk to note and update Council's website.</b></p> <p>Chair advised that, as stated in the Minutes of the May Finance Committee meeting, the National Association of Local Councils has published new model Financial Regulations which it recommends Council's adapt to their own circumstances and adopt in place of the existing Financial Regulations. The Finance Committee has committed to deal with this matter in August and submit the revised document to Full Council in September for approval.</p>	Clerk
AM24/18	<p><b>To review and, if thought fit, re-adopt Council's Code of Conduct and to note requirement for Members to review their Register of Interests forms: Cllr. Carpenter proposed that Council's Code of Conduct be re-adopted unchanged. Seconded by Cllr. Walker and resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p>Chair reminded members that they should review the content of the Register of Interest Forms submitted to EDDC last year. Members are responsible for informing the Monitoring Officer of any changes.</p>	ALL
AM24/19	<p><b>To consider Council's representation on external bodies:</b></p> <p><b>a) Newton Poppleford Village Hall</b></p> <p>Cllr. Walker confirmed that she was happy to continue to represent the Parish Council on the Village Hall committee.</p>	
AM24/20	<p><b>Chair's announcements/matters of urgency for report only:</b></p> <p>None raised.</p>	
AM24/21	<p><b>Financial Matters:</b></p> <p><b>a) To consider and review Financial Reports for April 2024 as per documents previously circulated to members and published on-line:</b></p> <p>Noted</p> <p><b>b) To approve May invoices for payment as previously circulated to members:</b></p> <p><b>Chair proposed that invoices totalling £4,025.46 be approved for payment. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton and resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>Clerk to note and action on the due dates.</b></p> <p><b>c) To receive an update on the Annual Audit arrangements:</b></p> <p>Chair reported that, as the Internal Auditors report has not yet been received, the Annual Governance documents will be dealt with at the June meeting. The Annual Return must be submitted to External Auditors by 1<sup>st</sup> July.</p> <p><b>d) To ratify the decision of the Finance Committee to enter into a 5-year contract for the maintenance of the MUGA surface from April 2025:</b></p> <p>Clerk stated that, as instructed by the Finance Committee, comparison quotations had been sought from 5 companies. Two responded, one declining to quote due to travel distance and the other quoting £995 + VAT per visit. <b>Cllr. Walker therefore proposed that Council enter into a 5-year contract to maintain the MUGA surface with ETC Sports Surfaces at a cost of £775 + VAT per annum. Contract to commence in March/April 2025. Seconded by Cllr. Tillotson and resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>Clerk to note and action.</b></p> <p><b>e) Questions to RFO from members of Council relating to the financial reports.</b></p> <p>None received.</p>	Clerk
AM24/22	<p><b>Correspondence received (not already circulated to members):</b></p> <p>None reported.</p>	
AM24/23	<p><b>Planning Matters:</b></p>	

	<p>a) <b>To consider planning applications received after agenda publication (subject to circulation prior to the Ordinary meeting on separate agenda):</b> None received.</p>	
	<p>b) <b>Planning determinations/decisions advised:</b> Planning decisions advised are noted on the Monitoring Report.</p>	
	<p>c) <b>To note Council's Neighbourhood Plan 'Monitoring Report:</b> Report update circulated to members of Council prior to the meeting</p>	
AM24/24	<p><b>To consider proposals pertaining to the future of the Public WC in School Lane car park:</b></p> <p>a) <b>Cllr Compton proposed that the already obtained quotations for redecoration, refurbishment and upgrading of the existing Public WC facilities, including the fitting of "Pay for Use" door locks, be progressed tailoring a Scope of Works which falls within the available budget. Seconded by Cllr. Hughes. With only 2 votes in favour motion not carried.</b></p> <p>b) <b>Chair proposed that the Public WC be refurbished, within the available budget, by upgrading the current disabled toilet to a "Pay for Use" unisex facility and that the existing ladies and gents be converted to storage facilities for the parish. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p>Proposal (c) on the agenda that "the Council gives notice to EDDC to terminate the lease on the premises" was not tabled as proposal (b) was carried.</p> <p>A scope of works to be prepared and quotations sought for submission to the Finance Committee. Chair to inform EDDC of Council's decision.</p>	Chair
AM24/25	<p><b>To consider whether Council should hold a Parish Fireworks Event in November 2024:</b></p> <p><b>Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow contributions from Cllr. Burhop and members of the public. Seconded by Cllr. Hughes and resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p>After discussion it was agreed that Council would hold a Fireworks event in November. Cllr. Burhop confirmed that he was prepared to assist with the organisation and would contact the contractor about preferred dates (1<sup>st</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> November) and costings. Council was reminded that the contractor had discounted his fee for the 2023 event due to the delay in the firing time. This will allow Council to give free entry to children this year.</p> <p>Cllr. Malawana suggested that the contractor should be asked to factor the cost of additional staff into his fee if this will ensure that the display takes place on time. A penalty could then be imposed for any delay.</p> <p>Advertising material to make clear that free entry for children is for one year only and to acknowledge that this is a goodwill gesture from the contractor.</p> <p>Food/bar concessions to be offered to the PTFA and Harpford Hall.</p> <p>Mr Swan requested that Council make proper arrangements to secure the area and deal with the remains of the bonfire in a more timely way. Unburnt wood and thousands of nails posed a hazard for people and animals for many weeks following last years event.</p> <p>Cllr. Burhop said that a working party will be required to assist with planning and organisation. Cllr. Dalton expressed the hope that this would not be left to the usual small group of people. All Councillors should be prepared to assist either with the planning, management of the event itself or the clear-up afterwards.</p> <p>Cllr. Malawana said that a group of parents from the school had already offered to assist with the bonfire.</p> <p><b>Chair proposed that Standing Orders be reinstated to preclude any further public participation. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton and resolved unanimously.</b></p>	
AM24/26	<p><b>To receive an update on matters pertaining to footpaths and Public Rights of Way:</b></p>	

	<p>Chair noted that Cllr. Bailey had provided an update on the Red Bridge in her report. Further clarification is required as to exactly how DCC propose to progress proposals for land purchase.</p> <p>Cllr. Bailey had also provided separate information about the footbridge over the river at Dotton. Further erosion has prevented a temporary structure being put in place and any replacement bridge may have to be re-located further downstream or additional bank protection constructed upstream. DCC and the EA are consulting on the best way forward and how this project will be funded.</p>	
AM24/27	<p><b>To receive an update on the development of Council's new website:</b></p> <p>Chair reminded members that development of a new website is one of the items on Council's Action List 2024-2027. Council has budgeted the sum of £2,500 to amalgamate the two existing websites and develop a fully accessible and compliant website with additional features. Chair, Cllr Malawana and Clerk have had discussions with the selected website developer, and it is planned to launch the new site on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September.</p>	
AM24/28	<p><b>To consider whether Council should respond to a public consultation on the relocation of Tipton School:</b></p> <p>As several children from the parish attend Tipton School it was agreed that Council should respond to this consultation. Cllr. Hughes will prepare a draft for approval by Council and submission prior to the deadline of 19<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	HH
AM24/29	<p><b>Date of next Annual Meeting – Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b></p> <p><b>Date of next Ordinary Meeting – Monday, 24th June 2024, 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford</b></p>	

With no further business to consider, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 8.35pm.