**Minutes of West & East Putford Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 6 December 2016 in Bradworthy Primary Academy at 7.30pm.**

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| **Chaired by: Councillor Mrs L Drake** | | | **Clerked by: Sue Squire** | |
| **Present: Councillors**  **A Bewes**  **P Bond**  **M Cornish**  **Mrs L Drake**  **Mrs P Geen**  **J Jessel**  **N Moulder**  **D Pomeroy**  **M Thomas**  **J Wooldridge**  **County Councillor R Julian**  **Mr R Dixon, Natural England**  **Hannah Gibbons & Simon Tomasso, Devon Wildlife Trust** | | | **Agenda: -**  Presentations  Items raised by members of the public  Co-option of Parish Councillor  Apologies  Declarations of Interest  Approval of the Minutes of 18 October 2016  Reports  Matters Arising  Planning & Planning Correspondence  Finance  Correspondence / Notices & Publications Received  Matters raised by Councillors / Clerk  Date of next meeting | |
|  |  | | | **Action:** |
|  | **Presentations:**  **Mr J Nolan, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service** advised on the morning of the meeting that he was unable to attend due to personal reasons. He was unable to get a stand-in at the last minute and apologised to Parish Councillors.  Information was sent for use in various publications / websites and key locations around the Parish to get the message out to as many people as possible.  By working in a partnership with you the Fire and Rescue Service is able to reach those most at risk in the community and provide them with a FREE home fire safety visit.  This visit can be arranged by contacting Bideford fire station admin team (office hours) or through the 0800 number on the poster, by registering name and contact details. A suitable date and time will then be arranged for one of the fire safety technicians to visit the resident within their own home, they are not there to judge how anyone lives their lives. They can provide advice and guidance on how they can make their homes safer from the dangers of fire, they can provide and fit free smoke alarms at the time of this visit and may be able to offer other equipment subject to their individual needs.  The Fire and Rescue Service work closely with other agencies to ensure that members of the community that are at increased risks whether it be from fire, burglary or persons living alone and are vulnerable are supported and they try to offer assistance we try to offer assistance so everyone can live within their own homes.  **Mr R Dixon (Natural England) and other representatives gave a talk following a site visit to Common Moor.**  He is the responsible officer for Common Moor SSSI (Special Scientific Interest). Devon Wildlife Trust was keen to help.  Hannah spoke about the project she was working on, specifically culm grass. This acts like a sponge by retaining water.  Simon is responsible for scrub work, flailing and swayling.  Rob Dixon explained that since 2012 ongoing monitoring had been carried out. The last survey involved standard monitoring methods over 2 days which found that the Moor was unfavourably declining. It is one of the most important habitats.  The government has commissioned Natural England regarding SSSIs, and last year the area was surveyed on behalf of Natural England when they looked at interests and scrub, showing an unfavourable condition with no species found.  Hannah advised there is a pre-conception that wildlife benefits from scrub but this is not the case.  Grazing with cattle is a good way of maintaining diversity. If the grass is left and under managed, the area starts to dominate  Mr Dixon showed 1947 aerial pictures taken by the RAF, then in 2006 and in 2014.  It is Devon Wildlife Trusts remit and something Natural England has to do as the wildlife is declining.  Common Moor is Devon’s most important habitat.  Natural England is looking to organise countryside stewardship.  The idea of the Moor being fenced and grazed had been discounted.  Devon Wildlife Trust wish to do burning (swayling) and there would be a payment of £15,500 per annum involving scrub control. Out of this, £8,000 would be left for the Parish Council and commoners who want to be involved.  If it went ahead, the benefits would be financial with improved wildlife value.  Common Moor is the second most important of SSSSi, the special fritillaries.  It is an asset to local tourism, has easy access for local people on foot or horseback.  As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the culm grass acts as a sponge for heavy rainfall and carbon monoxide and is something the Parish can be proud of.  There had been a site meeting which looked at the practicalities of burning and the conclusion was to break up the Moor into 5 areas with fire breaks and flailing and burn in 2 blocks in long strips in rotation to help scrub encroachment.  Common Meet used to be burnt by accident which had the effect of keeping the scrub in check.  Scrub encroachment was confirmed.  Simon has expertise in managing such sites and burning.  Simon spoke about issues with burning confirming that most wildlife survives well.  They would be looking to maintain firebreaks of 15’ with a fast fire, not hot, and burn with the wind to take the dead dry matter off and encourage natural growth for the following year.  Simon has a lot of experience in this method.  The marsh fritillary larvae burrow themselves into the ground when there is smoke and they are geared up to cope with fire.  Rob confirmed that after burning, species thrive  Question: How do you manage communication with people who live around the moor?  Answer: They will be advised, the Fire Brigade is advised and people would be invited to take part.  Question: You said about money available for commoners rights.  Answer: There would be £15,500 per annum for 10 years. The Agreement would be with the Parish Council or commoners or a commoner.  How the money is divided is up to stakeholders. The Agent receives a bulk of the money and the rest divided between commoners to use as they wish.  Devon Wildlife Trust could start in January and put in fire breaks.  Question: It is up to commoners to decide if parish should have e the money or if the parish would like the money does it have to participate.  Answer: The Parish Council could be responsible for the Agreement, or the commoners, and whoever was responsible would decide.  Question: Who is a commoner?  Answer: People who have current legal rights to the moor. If there is an agreement, it is suggested a base payment is made and a certain amount for grazing rights.  Councillors Moulder, Cornish and Mrs Drake were commoners and a full list of the names is available. If all commoners do not agree, the agreement cannot proceed.  Common Moor is protected by its SSSi status.  Councillor Moulder recalled that when this subject was raised in the past, three commoners could not be found.  Mr Dixon advised that one had been found and it would be necessary to advertise in the press and Parish Magazine to try and locate everyone and he hoped that no one would be against the proposals as all have a responsibility to get the Moor back to how it was previously.  Question: What decision would you like from the Parish Council?  Answer: A Countryside Agreement would start on 1 January 2017.  Question: What are the options?  Answer: There would be money available for the Parish which could be proud of turning the decline around on a legal basis. It would be hoped that the Parish Council would agree but it could not get involved.  Question: What kind of involvement would be expected from the Parish Council?  Answer: This would be administrative and an Agent could be appointed to work on behalf of the Parish Council and commoners. Mr Bob Hicks was involved with the Thornhillhead Moor project and is involvement with the ongoing management.  Devon Wildlife Trust have said it would be involved as an Agent if required  Question: If the Parish does not want to be involved, would it be up to those with common rights to administer it and get an Agent?  Answer: If the agreement is with commoners then the appointed agent could be Mr Bob Hicks or Devon Wildlife Trust. The administrator would be paid a sum with the remainder going to the commoners or the Parish.  Question: Are those the 2 options available and do we have to decide at this meeting?  Answer: Yes.    Question: When do you start?  Answer: Early February to mid March.  Question: How is the burn managed and kept from highway as that is where most scrub is?  Answer: The willows could be used as breaks. The burn would begin at the roadside and signage would be used. Wind direction is a factor.  Question: Would the willows be cut back?  Answer: Some of the funding could be managed to cut willows.  Question: As soon as the Agreement has been made and responsibility for the Moor assumed, Highways will want the willows cut back. It was noted this had already been covered in the previous answer.  Answer: There would be an annual sum to include capital works and it could be included in the Agreement. Simon advised that £3,000 is the maximum a professional would charge for burning. £4,000 per annum would be paid for scrub control over 4 years.  Question: Is Public Liability Insurance required?  Answer: This would have to be looked at in terms of burning. Devon Wildlife Trust is insured for burning and it would not be an issue in the first year.  Common Moor is ownerless but there is a responsibility for it.  County, District and Parish all have responsibility and it was suggested that legal advice was sought.  It was suggested that a sum was put into the Agreement for that purpose.  Councillor Mrs Drake recalled that the Council has always been concerned regarding that issue.  Councillor Pomeroy commented that from a practical point of view, the flailing would have to be done with a tractor.  Answer: Yes, and care would need to be taken as it is uneven ground.  Three cuts a year was recommended and fire breaks would be maintained every year.  If there was an accidental fire, it would be contained by fire breaks, the animals would thrive and people could still walk on the Moor and marker posts would be in place.  There would be an alternative route for horse riders.  A fire break would be required about Councillor Mrs Drake’s home as it was thatched.  Councillor Mrs Drake handed the representatives a sample of Swagenham Moss.  Councillor Mrs Drake noted there were no more questions and considered it was necessary to establish about Public Liability cover. Mr Dixon would send details about the work for the Clerk to enquire if the Parish Council’s insurance covered public liability for the proposed work.  Devon Wildlife Trust would be interested to help and show Councillors other sites which are well run with the aid of burning.  If flytipping was a problem, TDC would collect. | | | Clerk |
| 40. | **Items raised by members of the public.** None present. | | |  |
| 41. | **Co-option of Parish Councillor.** No letters of application had been received. | | |  |
| 42. | **Apologies.** Councillors P Bond and Mrs M Lewis, PCSO R Rowe. | | |  |
| 43. | **Declarations of Interest.**  Councillors Mrs Drake, Cornish and Moulder declared a Prejudicial Interest in Minute No. 46.5. | | |  |
| 44. | **Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 October 2016.**  **Approved and signed as a correct record.**  Councillor Jessel noted that the Minutes recorded that Councillor Mrs Drake did not consider he respected her feelings and he confirmed that he had done so. Councillor Mrs Drake did not agree. | | |  |
| 45. | **Reports:**  **45.1 Police.** The Clerk had been in correspondence regarding a representative for Farm Watch as it was noted a member of the public had registered their interest when at a Parish Council meeting, but nothing more had been heard. PCSO Rowe sent the following report:  **Holsworthy Rural Policing Update: 01/10/16 – 31/10/16**  The following incidents have occurred:  **- Thornbury –** Criminal Damage to fence resulting in livestock escaping  **- Chasty –** Property taken from dwelling by unknown means  - **Milton Dameral** – Vehicle filled at petrol station and made off without offering payment  **45.2 County Councillor R Julian.** A letter of thanks to be sent regarding his work in getting the state of the roads improved.  **45.3 District Councillor R Hicks.** Not present. No report received.  **45.4 Meetings attended by Councillors.** | | | Clerk |
| 46. | **Matters Arising:**  **46.1 Parish Plan.** Councillors Mrs Geen advised there was nothing to report and the matter was deferred to the Spring.  **46.2 Roads in the Parish.** The Clerk had received a reply to one enquiry regarding representations from the public regarding lengthsman in the area. It was advised that due to no date, time and registration number of van given, it could not be followed up.  As regards the works programmed for the areas in question, an email had been received advising that although there was insufficient money available to do all the locations, the depression before Putford Bridge would be subject to deep reconstruction works, whilst a section of the road leading to East Putford (a section of the hill leading from Putford Bridge) would be subject to resurfacing from Councillor Julian’s pothole fund.  It was noted that the work had been carried out.  Councillor Bewes efforts in connection with the large pothole near Putford Bridge was recognized.  Councillor Bewes spoke of an accident involving a school bus going up Putford Hill which is not on a gritting route.  The incident has been taken up with County Councillor Julian and it was understood the bus route had been altered.  Councillor Pomeroy advised that bags of grit will be distributed around the Parish.  **46.3 Parish Council Website.** The application for funding had been successful and the sum of £350.00 awarded.  Councillor Thomas advised that £60 of this money would be used for the construction of the website and would like to use the balance for a laptop, suggesting that it could be loaned to parishioners if their computer had broken or for people to learn how to use a computer if they did not have one.  He would draw up a rental agreement.  Councillors were in agreement with the purchase of a laptop which Councillor Thomas intended to purchase in January.  **46.4 West Putford Notice Board.** This had been relocated. An Invoice in respect of the materials purchased was considered under Finance.  **46.5 Natural England.**  It was noted a letter was drafted and circulated to Councillors ahead of sending to Natural England.  The talk was given earlier in the meeting.  Councillors Mrs Drake, Cornish and Moulder declared a Prejudicial Interest.  Councillor Mrs Drake informed the meeting she had attended the site meeting as a resident, not as the Parish Council Chairman. She further informed the meeting that she would be prepared to take on the administration of any Agreement but would need to know what it entailed.  Councillor Mrs Geen spoke about a 10 year Agreement which should have an element of future proofing and felt that legal advice should be sought as regards the insurance.  Commoners rights would not be altered, but Councillor Mrs Geen was concerned that commoners were consulted.  **Councillor Pomeroy proposed that the Parish Council are in agreement with Natural England’s suggestion of burning and swayling Common Moor with Devon Wildlife Trust involved with a caveat of forming a committee of interested parties, commoners and Councillors.**  **Natural England would need to let the commoners know. Further that the Parish Council would like Devon Wildlife Trust to manage it rather than appoint an agent and management details to be agreed.**  **Seconded by Councillor Jessel and agreed with the exception of those not eligible to vote, having declared a Prejudicial Interest. (Councillors Mrs Drake, Cornish and Moulder).**  **46.6 Local Government Boundary Commission.** It was noted that this Council’s representations had been submitted.  **46.7 North Devon & Torridge Local Plan.** It was noted that this Council’s representations had been submitted.  **46.8 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement.** It was noted that this Council’s representations had been submitted.  **46.9 TDC Rough Sleeper Register.** It was noted that this Council’s reply had been sent.  **46.10 Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner.** Comprehensive reply to enquiry regarding internet crime had been received and it advised:  The best way to do this is via Action Fraud via www.actionfraud.police.uk or 0300 123 2040. This is a function operated on behalf of all police forces by the City of London Police. To be clear though, given the enormous number of reports they receive, generally Action Fraud will only record and log the matter for intelligence collation purposes. In some cases, Action Fraud will pass the matter back to the local police force to consider investigating further if there is a viable investigation trail and likelihood of successful outcome.  In terms of vandalism which is essentially criminal damage, this should be reported to the police through 101. There are a number of exceptions for example vandalism to railway station which should be reported to the British Transport Police via 0800 40 50 40. Also, graffiti is generally best reported to the local council, (TDC).  Phone 999 if life is threatened, if people are injured, if there is a fire, if offenders are nearby, if immediate action is required to save lives, stop injury or catch criminals.  Details to be sent to Councillor Thomas and for inclusion in the Putford Post. | | | May Meeting  MT  Clerk to obtain details from insurers re PL cover  Clerk |
| 47. | **Planning & Planning Correspondence.** There were no Planning Applications to consider.  **Planning Correspondence.** There was no Planning Correspondence to consider. | | |  |
| 48. | **Finance.**  **48.1 Balances: Lloyds Bank Treasurers Account as at 31/10/16: £4,735.49**  **48.2 The following payments were approved and authorised:**  **Mrs S Squire**  Salary (2 months) net of PAYE £166.74  Contribution towards broadband (2 months) £ 3.00  Photocopying £ 21.35 **£191.09**  **HMRC** PAYE **£ 40.60**  **Mr J Cooksley** Refurbishment of the notice board **£ 55.18**  *The Clerk had submitted a TAP (Town and Parish) Fund application for this amount. The Fund deadline is 31/1/17.*  **The sum of £50.00 to be included on the next Agenda as a payment to Bradworthy Primary Academy for the hire of the school for meetings.**  **48.3 Lloyds Bank.**   * **Text Alerts.** Confirmation was awaited that this system has been put in place. * **Internet Banking.** The bank had requested the Clerk to provide identity and proof of address and this is being addressed. * **Additional signatories to the Account.** The bank had requested proof of identification and confirmation of address for Councillors Bond, Cornish, Moulder and Wooldridge who would visit the Branch with the details requested. * **Key Account Party.** The Bank require a form completed by Councillor Mrs Lewis and D Pomeroy. Enquiries had been made as to the reason for this.   **48.4 NS&I.**  Confirmation had been received that the new signatories had been added.  **48.5 2017/18 Budget.**  **48.5.1 To set the Budget.**  **Proposed by Councillor Cornish, seconded by Councillor Moulder. Unanimously agreed.**  **48.5.2 To agree the Precept.**  **Proposed by Councillor Mrs Geen to increase this to £2,500 from £2,100.**  **Seconded by Councillor Moulder. Unanimously agreed.**  **48.6 Mrs L Cooksley.** Details of a Heritage Festival in May 2017 and asking if the Parish Council would consider a donation. The suggestion of applying for TAP funding had been made.  **Proposed by Councillor Mrs Geen to donate the sum of £200.00. Seconded by Councillor Thomas. Unanimously agreed.** | | | Clerk  Ch.No.303  Ch.No.304  Ch.No.305  Next Agenda  Clerk  PB, MC, NM, JM  Clerk to complete forms and send to TDC |
| 49. | **Correspondence.**  **49.1 Mrs L Cooksley.** Email requesting the Parish Council to consider the return of Parish documents which would be stored by the Bradworthy History Group..  Councillor Jessel explained how the documents are kept at the North Devon Records Office and did not support the documents being removed from the controlled conditions to ensure they did not deteriorate.  The Clerk to enquire how the Bradworthy History Society would look after the documents. | | | Clerk |
| 50. | **Matters raised by Councillors / Clerk.**  **50.1 2017 Meeting Dates:**  Tuesday, 21 February  Tuesday, 18 April  Tuesday, 16 May  Monday, 10 July  Wednesday, 20 September  Tuesday, 21 November | | | Clerk to book school |
| 90. | **Date of next Meeting:** Monday, 21 February 2017 in Bradworthy Primary Academy at 7.30pm.  The Meeting ended at 9.45pm. | | |  |
| **Summary of Decisions:**   * **Minutes of 18 October 2016** * **Swayling of Common Moor subject to conditions** * **Payments including a payment of £200 for a forthcoming Heritage Festival** * **2017/18 Budget and Precept** | | | | |
| **These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.** | | | | |
| Signed:  Chair of West & East Putford Parish Council: | | Date: | | |