**Minutes of West & East Putford Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 18 April 2017 in Bradworthy Primary Academy at 7.30pm.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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**  **Mrs M Lewis**  **N Moulder**  **D Pomeroy**  **M Thomas**  **J Wooldridge**  **County Councillor R Julian**  **Mr R Dixon, Lead Adviser, North Devon**  **Land Team, Natural England**  **Christine Goodall, Team Leader, North**  **Devon Land Team, Natural England**  **Lisa Schneidau, North Devon Nature**  **Improvement Area Project Manager,**  **Devon Wildlife Trust**  **Andy Kearsey, Advisory Officer,**  **Devon Wildlife Trust**  **Members of the public** | | | **Agenda: -**  Items raised by members of the public  Co-option of Parish Councillor  Apologies  Declarations of Interest  Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on  21/2/17  Reports  Matters Arising  Planning & Planning Correspondence  Finance  Correspondence / Notices & Publications Received  Matters raised by Councillors / Clerk  Date of next meeting | |
|  |  | | | **Action:** |
| 64. | **Items raised by members of the public.** None present. | | |  |
| 65. | **Co-option of Parish Councillor.** No letters of application had been received. | | |  |
| 66. | **Apologies.** PCSO Rowe.  Councillor J Wooldridge tendered his apologies after the Clerk had left for the meeting. | | |  |
| 67. | **Declarations of Interest.**  **Councillor M Thomas. Member of the Putford Post Committee.** | | |  |
| 68. | **Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 February 2017.**  **Approved and signed as a correct record.** | | |  |
| 69. | **Reports:**  **69.1 Police.** When sending her apologies, PCSO Rowe provided the following report:  **Holsworthy Rural Policing Update: March 2017**. The following incidents have occurred:  ASHWATER – Theft of pressure washer and Solar Panels  ANVIL CORNER – Theft of Batteries  St GILES ON THE HEATH – Criminal Damage to motor vehicle tyre  MILTON DAMEREL – Criminal Damage to property at Holiday site  WEST CHILLA – Property Stolen from secure Caravan  BRANDIS CORNER – Commercial Property entered using key – items stolen.  **69.2 County Councillor R Julian.** Not present. Councillor Julian arrived after the meeting had ended.  **69.3 District Councillor R Hicks.** Not present.  **69.4 Meetings attended by Councillors / Clerk.** None. | | |  |
| 70. | **Matters Arising.**  **70.1 Common Moor.** There had been numerous communications since the last meeting.  Mr R Dixon (Natural England) explained the history of Common Moor which had been in a state of decline. It would be possible to move forward with an agreement similar to another nearby Common.  Burning would require firebreaks which would be maintained over the whole year to give protection should the area accidentally catch fire.  Some people who were involved in the burn were present at this meeting. They had inspected the Moor on the way and noticed it had already started to green up.  Councillor Bewes asked if the willows would be cut.  Answer: Natural England plan to do some scrub control in year 2.  The Countryside Stewardship Agreement would start on 1 January 2018 and the first payment would be in October 2018. The Parish Council can start to claim annual management payments.  Scrub clearance can be a capital item in year 2 and some every year. There would be £15,000 for the management of the site.  Councillor Jessel felt from previous meetings that the Council was reluctant to proceed as Common Moor was not owned by them and there were insurance problems.  He wanted to know what the legal basis would be for any agreement. He had drawn on his brother’s advice, a senior partner at Farrels responsible for legal affairs for the Duchy of Cornwall. The firm had written standard work covering Commons and were consultants on the 2006 Commons Act.  Mr Jessel had also written the legal history of landscape and was one of the best people from which to seek legal advice. He does not usually give this on a personal basis but had done in this instance.  Councillor Jessel had talked with his brother about insurance and concern of Councillors. Common Moor is a legal bog considering the nature of the land and Councillor Jessel would go on his brother’s legal advice and wished to know the legal standing of any agreement and advice received.  In connection with the swayling which took place on 16 March 2017, there had been correspondence with the Parish Council’s insurers regarding Public Liability cover.  A reply had been received on 6 February 2017 advising: “If they are responsible for the land then yes it would be covered as they need to maintain it and keep it accessible for people, but it would need to be properly risk assessed before any work was carried out”.  Councillors were kept fully informed by way of a comprehensive email from the Clerk (hard copy for Councillors not with email facility) on 7 March 2017.  For the avoidance of any doubt, Public Liability cover was discussed with PSP Insurance Solutions who specialised in providing cover to organisations where they were responsible for the land but not owned by them. It was felt that this cover should be in place to give an extra layer of protection and accordingly instructions were given for the cover to commence on 16 March 2017.  The Policy has been received.  A letter had been received from Councillor Jessel in which various questions were asked. The Clerk did not have the answer to these and forwarded the letter to Natural England for them to respond direct which they had done.  Ahead of the swayling, firebreaks were created with specific liaison with Councillor Mrs Drake whose property lay close to the swayling area. In addition, the necessary consent of Natural England had been received.  It was considered the swayling had been a successful operation.  The Clerk had successfully registered the Parish Council with the Rural Payments Agency and obtained an SBI Number.  With an SBI Number obtained, it was possible for the Clerk to request a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Application Form from Natural England and this had been obtained well within the deadline of 13 April 2017.  The Clerk is progressing the completion of the Application Form which had to be submitted to Natural England by 5 May 2017.  Natural England had, in connection with the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Application Form, registered the field numbers which had been supplied.  A request had been received from Hannah Gibbons, NIA Farm Adviser (Culm), Devon Wildlife Trust to collect seeds from Common Moor this year. Purple moor-grass is a key Culm species and Common Moor has it in abundance. As this site is a SSSI, Devon Wildlife Trust would need a derogation and she would be interested to know if the Commoners were keen about it.  If permission was given, the Team would be on site for less than a day and would only access the least tussocky areas accessible to a quad. The harvest would probably be done in September, taken from about 2 or 3 ha of land. Devon Wildlife Trust to collect seeds.  Mr Dixon explained the reason why there had been a request to harvest the seeds.  Councillor Mrs Drake asked if the seeds would be weighed after collection and was advised that Lisa will ask Hannah of the Devon Wildlife Trust to contact her direct about this.  Councillor Mrs Drake asked if the project was for one year.  Answer: The collection cannot be any more than 1 in 3 years.  **Proposed by Councillor Mrs Drake that this was agreed. Seconded by Councillor Bewes, unanimously agreed.**  On the morning of the meeting, Natural England had confirmed that Common Moor had been registered under the name of West and East Putford Parish Council.  Councillor Jessel was of the opinion this should not have been done.  Mr Dixon advised that Natural England had consulted with their head of legal in London and Councillor Jessel had copies of the correspondence.  Councillor Mrs Geen asked about communications with the Commoners.  Mr Dixon advised that he had been in touch with all of them and had provided the Clerk with an up to date list.  Councillor Thomas asked if there would be an active plan.  Answer: Yes, written by Devon Wildlife Trust and funded by Natural England.  When will that be available?  Answer: Because of the hiatus of the proposal, agreement and payment a £1,100 stand alone capital grant can create a management plan which will advise on scrub control and burning.  The area would be divided into 5, 6 or 7 blocks. Scrub control would be carried out in a chunk in year 2. It was only possible to have a 2 year capital works plan. £7,500 would be paid twice a year. Some of this funding would be expected to be allocated for future work.  Councillor Thomas: Would the Parish Council have a say in the management plan?  Answer: Yes, it is the Parish Council’s agreement.  How would it work?  The management plan will be written by Devon Wildlife Trust. They will let the Parish Council and Natural England see it. The document can be tweaked over time.  They want to create a route off the main route which would serve as a fire break and wanted to hear what people wanted included.  Councillor Mrs Lewis asked if the willows are going to be cut.  Answer: 10% of the scrub will be cut and this can be stated on the management plan.  Councillor Mrs Drake showed the meeting an adder skin which had been shed, found on the Moor.  Councillor Jessel was glad the situation had moved to where the Common is going to be managed. This was something that he been worked for. He mentioned capital outlay and recalled that the Parish Council had spoken about fencing and cattle grids. What kind of capital costs and what is counted:  Answer: Capital costs include scrub control and possible firebreak control.  There is also an eyesore payment scheme to deal with litter dumping.  Rob Dixon confirmed that the Moor would not be fenced.  Councillor Pomeroy: How many years is the management plan for?  Answer: It is a 10 year agreement. There are two scheduled monuments on this important site.  Councillor Jessel advised a rare hover fly had been found.  Lisa Schneidau spoke about Devon Wildlife Trust’s involvement in the scheme and everyone was delighted that the Parish Council is in agreement, reiterating this was an important site.  Devon Wildlife Trust run a series of projects. Culm grassland is very scarce and important and they are working with people all over North Devon, farmers and Commoners to try and get land back into management. They are looking to restore grassland and recreate it. There is funding until 2020.  Devon Wildlife Trust will do their best to support the Parish Council in any way they can helping to get the agreement together. A timetable needs to be prepared to make sure everyone can comment.  They are also able to help with all of the first year’s swayling. After that, it would be worth looking at capital costs for contractors to do the work. There needs to be a transition.  Councillor Moulder asked if the swayling could be undertaken by Councillors / Commoners if firebreaks were in place.  This was confirmed with the encouragement to take ownership of the work.  Mr Dixon advised he had spoken at length with two separate contractors who had given an estimated cost of £2,500 to £3,000 per annum to maintain the firebreaks and carry out the swayling.  Lisa advised that from a Commoners perspective there are 19 sites across the area with culm grass land. They are all different and she is trying to get a network together.  The Clerk is to contact the Commoners asking if they were in agreement with the Parish Council and Devon Wildlife Trust managing Common Moor with the type of work outlined. To be mentioned that it does not affect legal rights.  Councillor Mrs Geen asked if there was anything else Natural England want the Parish Council to do.  Mr Dixon replied that the Clerk was doing fantastic work getting the application together and encourage Councillors to support her in this work. Mr Dixon thought that the Clerk had done well in the work for this project.  Councillor Mrs Drake asked if the Commoners have to be approached legally.  Mr Dixon replied that they should be if there is a majority.  Councillor Jessel advised that in legal terms, Commoners do not have any say but have rights with grazing and coppicing but not pollarding or digging for minerals. It would be a courtesy move not a legal necessity.  Mr Dixon advised that the rights are grazing rights.  Councillor Pomeroy considered the Moor had done well even though it had not been managed.  Mr Dixon spoke about all the species found on the Moor.  Councillor Pomeroy noted that a small area had been burnt and asked if this was now finished.  It was confirmed that it had been finished for this year.  Councillor Thomas asked if there would be full monitoring of the site.  Mr Dixon replied that Natural England would carry out assessments on a 4 – 5 year rolling rotation.  Devon Wildlife Trust had done Marsh Fritillary assessments annually.  Burning would be carried out in February and March in rotation on various blocks.  Councillor Moulder asked about putting in firebreaks earlier.  Mr Dixon advised that firebreaks would give the opportunity for things to survive. Two flails per year were being looked at.  Councillor Jessel asked if people shooting had a right to be on the Moor.  Answer: No there are no shooting rights, only grazing rights and in so doing, they are contravening SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) rights.  **Councillors to formally agree that the Clerk is the Parish Council’s administrator for the Countryside Stewardship of Common Moor.**  **Proposed by Councillor Moulder, seconded by Councillor Thomas and agreed with one abstention.**  Mr Dixon expressed huge thanks to Devon Wildlife Trust for their help.  Councillor Jessel had requested the Clerk to provide him with Natural England’s responses not only for his own information but also for his records before the next meeting. As the letter did not arrive in time for the Clerk to be able to attend to this, the information was passed to Councillor Jessel at the meeting.  He asked for the correct procedure for putting items on the Agenda and this was advised.  **70.2 Parish Council Website.** Councillor Thomas confirmed he had prepared a rental agreement for the Parish Council laptop.  **70.3 Return of Parish documents to be held by Bradworthy History Society.** It was noted that the Clerk had passed on the Parish Council’s reply to Mrs Cooksley. | | | Clerk  Clerk |
| 71. | **Planning and Planning Correspondence.**  **71.1 Applications: The following was considered:**   * **Planning Application 1/0245/2017/FUL – Conversion of redundant primary school to a single dwelling with ancillary living accommodation – West and East Putford Primary School, Putford.**   **It was resolved to recommend approval.**  **71.2 Planning Correspondence:** The following TDC Decision Notice was noted: APPROVAL for Application 1/1075/2016/FUL – porch over front door of park home – 1 Powlers Piece Park, Putford. | | | Clerk |
| 72. | **Finance.**  **72.1 Balances.** Lloyds Bank Treasurers Account as at 8 March 2017: £8,951.90.  **72.2 A request for a donation was considered to the Putford Post for the purchase of a printer.**  **A letter of application had been received and a copy of the latest set of accounts to comply with the criteria laid down for Parish Council’s to follow.**  **Councillor Thomas declared an interest.**  A follow up email had also been received from the Chair of the Putford Post and website as follows:  *You will see from this that the Putford Post has reserves, though we made a loss last year.*  *The Parish Council may feel that the PP Committee has enough in the bank to buy our own printer. The PP Committee recognise this could be the case, but we are concerned that if we did this it would reduce our reserves to a more critical, potentially unsustainable level. We would not want reserves to fall by too much as there are still the additional setup costs of the new printed version to cover (paper, ink and containers at the distribution points) as well as unknowns about the income from advertisers and future funding of the website.*  The Clerk had passed contact details of Parish Magazine Printing (Mr Phil Tucker of Whitsone near Holsworthy) to the Chair with the suggestion that a quotation was obtained. Mr Tucker was known to the Clerk in a professional capacity as he prints her Church Magazine at a very competitive price.  Councillor Jessel asked if any research about advertisers would be done. Councillor Thomas advised not as such and continued that some advertisers had been lost, some gained.  Councillor Mrs Drake recalled that the Putford Post had always managed in the past and had reserves in hand. She was against giving a donation. A lengthy discussion followed.  **Councillor Mrs Drake proposed that no donation was given. Seconded by Councillor Mrs Geen.**  **Councillor Pomeroy proposed that a donation of £100 was given. Seconded by Councillor Jessel.**  **Vote: On the proposal not to give a donation: 2**  **On the proposal to give a donation of £100: 5. Carried. There were two abstentions.**  **72.3 The following payments were approved and authorised:**  **Mrs S Squire**  Salary (2 months) net of PAYE £166.74 \*  Countryside Stewardship Salary (overtime) £102.10 \*  Contribution towards broadband (2 months) £ 3.00  Photocopying £ 26.80 **£298.64**  **HMRC** PAYE **£ 67.00 \***  **PSP Insurance and Financial Solutions** Public Liability Policy **£478.20**  **Devon Association of Local Councils** 2017/18 Subscription **£ 72.31**  **Putford Post** Donation **£100.00**  **Bradworthy Runners** Fitness Group EquipmentTAP Fund application \*\* **£156.67**  **Holsworthy Rural Community Transport** Surplus of TAP allocation \* \* **£148.33**  **\* These figures are different to those on the Agenda, due to the payroll administrator making a minor error.**  **\*\* These cheques were authorised at the same time as the other payments were approved. Minute No. 72.4 refers.**  **72.4 TAP (Town and Parish) Fund.**  It was noted that the sum of £505.00 had been awarded as follows:  Three Villages Heritage Festival £200. Cheque No. 000310 had been issued at the last meeting and this amount reimbursed the Parish Council.  Holsworthy Rural Community Transport £148.33  Bradworthy Runners for fitness group equipment £156.67 | | | Clerk  Ch.No.311  Ch.No.312  Ch.No.313  Ch.No.314  Ch.No.315  Ch.No.316  Ch.No.317 |
| 73. | **Correspondence / Notices & Publications Received – were placed on the table to see and read.**  **73.1 Kier.** Notification of road closure on the road from Wrangworthy Cross to Grove Cross, East Putford from 31/5/17 to 2/6/17 for South West Water utility works.  **73.2 TDC.** Details of North Devon Coast AONB’s Small Grant Scheme now open for 2017. | | |  |
| 74. | **Matters raised by Councillors / Clerk.**  **74.1 Councillor Thomas** had received representations regardingBroadband where there had been no improvement in the speed.  BT had advised it was actively looking at improving Broadband. Phase 1 had been completely at Bradworthy.  Phase 2 was broken down into 6 lots and BT 4 lots. The two outstanding lots included West and East Putford.  There is no timetable for improved Broadband.  Councillors agreed that the Parish Council should write to Open Reach and ask for clarity as to what is happening.  **74.2 Councillor Jessel** spoke about West Putford Bridge Hill where following an accident with the school bus in icy weather, he had asked that a warning sign was put up. He noted there was a school sign even though the school had closed and would like it to stay as it formed part of the character of the village.  This to be on the Agenda under Matters Arising for the next meeting. In the meantime, Councillors to talk to parishioners for their thoughts and an article to go on the website.  **74.3 Councillor Mrs Lewis** advised that the Three Villages Festival had not been given permission for Putford Church to be used and that Putford’s contribution would be held in Abbots Bickington.  Councillors felt disappointment about this, especially as last year’s event had been so successful and enjoyed by many and questioned whether it should be called the Three Villages Festival because it did not include Putford for the Putford contribution side of it.  Councillors would make more enquiries as to the reason behind permission not being given. | | | Clerk  May  Agenda  Cllrs  Cllrs |
| 75. | **Date of next Meeting:** Tuesday, 16 May 2017 at 7.15pm in Bradworthy Primary Academy.  It will commence with the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Council (AGM) Meeting.  Councillors Cornish and Bond gave their apologies for this meeting.  Councillor Cornish asked that an item on mobile phone signal was discussed.  The Meeting ended at 9.18pm. | | |  |
| **Summary of Decisions:**   * **Minutes of 21 February 2017** * **The Parish Clerk be the administrator for the Parish Council’s management of Common Moor** * **Planning** * **Donation to the Putford Post** * **Payments** | | | | |
| **These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.** | | | | |
| Signed:  Chair of West & East Putford Parish Council: | | Date: | | |