



AXMOUTH PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK:
ANDY COMERFORD
EYRE COURT HOTEL
2 QUEENS STREET
EX12 2NY
Tel no: 07895 910543

A meeting of Axmouth Parish Council was held on Wednesday 17th January 2024, at 7pm at Axmouth Village Hall.

Those present:

Cllr Ron Badger (Chair), Cllr Nigel Daniel (Vice -chair), Cllr Graham Mather, Cllr Jane Drown, Cllr Chris McBride Cllr Ella Staff.

In attendance:

Andy Comerford (Clerk), Cllr Ian Hall (DCC) and Cllr Susan Westerman (EDDC).

1. To receive and acknowledge apologies.

Apologies received from Cllr Paul Zisman (prior commitment) and Cllr James Condron (Illness).

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of Interests: In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. Members are also reminded that any change to their Declaration of Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer at East Devon District Council within 28 days of the change.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th November 2023 to be approved. (circulated).

Approved and signed by Cllr Badger, Chair of that meeting.

4. To agree any items to be discussed after the public, including the press have, been excluded:

None present.

5. Highway Matters:

- a) Higher Lane drainage ditch. Cllr Daniel (e-mail circulated)
Cllr Badger reported that 3 or 4 years ago Highways had inspected the site and quite categorically stated that the responsibility of looking after this ditch rested with the property owners. Cllr Daniel stated that he had reported the issue to Highways and to Cllr Hall. Cllr Daniels said that Cllr Hall was going to follow up and we should wait for the reaction from Highways.

[Email:-clerk@axmouth.eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@axmouth.eastdevon.gov.uk)



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- b) Cllr Drown reported her concern over surface water becoming an ice hazard in the cold weather. Cllr Badger suggested that this was caused by a blocked drain and he would report the problem.

7.10pm Cllr Hall arrived.

- c) Parking in Chapel Street. Cllr Daniel (e-mail circulated)
Cllr Daniel reported that 2 residents had asked him if anything could be done about parking in Chapel Street as entrance to their properties could be difficult. Cllr Daniel wondered if bollards could be placed rather than yellow lines. It was felt that it was possibly parking by patrons of local hostelrys that were the main issue and not other residents. A hatched area was considered and Highways could be consulted. **Action: Clerk to contact Highways.**
- d) VAS report to 4th December. Cllr Mather said that the maximum recorded speed on Church Street was 45mph at 2.10am. The average recorded speed was 32 to 33mph. Remaining data was all within normal parameters.
Cllr Mather stated that he could only continue with his responsibility for VAS until end of Feb. Cllr McBride offered to take over. This was agreed by the Council. Cllr Mather had prepared a written briefing of the responsibilities and would do a full handover with Cllr McBride. Cllr Daniel offered to help Cllr McBride when he needed extra hands. Cllr Badger thanked Cllr Mather for all his hard work with the VAS camera and reporting back to the Council.

6. Financial Matters:

- a) To approve the financial statements to the end December 2023. (circulated)
Approved and signed by Chair.
- b) To discuss and approve the budget and precept for 2024/25. (circulated). Elements of the budget were discussed particularly budgets for the Playground maintenance and that for Axmouth Brook. It was agreed that the Playground maintenance budget would be considered by the Playground Committee. It was suggested that the Axmouth Brook budget could be considered to be used for the ditch maintenance in Higher Lane as discussed under Item 5 a). Cllr Daniel proposed using the £420 budget to negate the threat of flooding but it would have to be made clear that this was a one off payment by the Parish Council as the responsibility for the ditch rested with the adjacent property owners. There was discussion over the legal responsibility for the ditch. Cllr Hall said that Highways could supply a template letter that clarified the position . The clerk will contact Highways for a copy. It was unanimously agreed by The Parish Council to use the budgeted £420 for the ditch maintenance.



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It was agreed that the figure of £12,582 would be requested for the Parish precept for 2024/2025. Proposed by Cllr Badger, seconded by Cllr Daniel. All in favour. **Action. Clerk to submit Precept request letter EDDC.**

- c) To discuss Village Hall and Fixed Assets maintenance. Cllr Mather reported that the planned repairs for the Village Hall would have to be delayed. It was due to start this month but would now be re-planned later in 2024. It was agreed that the remaining Village Hall maintenance budget would be transferred to the earmarked account to be available when required.
- Cllr Mather reported that there was a Village Hall Committee handover meeting on the 24th January and the new committee would be then take over the planning for things like the hall maintenance.
- Cllr Drown reported that, having checked all items for which were designated as her Responsibility, all were in good order except for the bus shelter roof on which some tiles were loose. Cllr Daniel offered to look at the roof to see if it were a simple repair that he could carry out or seek greater expertise if required. Cllr Drown offered to revarnish the two notice boards when the weather had improved.
- Cllr Daniel suggested that the remaining list should be re-visited after the Playground Comm. agreed to take on the responsibility for related items.
- d) Approve payments to:
- 1) Parish Online. £36.00 (circulated).
 - 2) Sheerspeed Shelters ltd (Gazebo suppliers) £1321.20. Approved.

7. Planning applications: None received.

8. Footpath Update: Nothing to report

Cllr Drown asked if it was just one landowner that we were waiting for an answer from. Cllr Daniel responded that there others to be approached once the major partners had agreed,

9. Playground:

The Clerk reported that the first meeting of the New Playground Committee would be on Wednesday the 24th Jan in the Village Hall. Cllr Mather informed the Council that the Playground meeting would be in the side room as the main hall was booked for the Hall meeting.



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10. Gazebo:

Purchase order placed, payment agreed item 6 d) 2). Collection expected at end of Feb beginning of March.

11 Parking in Chapel Street. Cllr Daniel. Discussed under Item 5. Cllr Hall added that he didn't think that highways would be able to do anything to help but the Clerk should contact Highways as agreed.

Higher Lane. Continuing Item 5 a) Cllr Hall reported that he had been in contact with Highways and the Flood Officer. The responsibility for the ditch rests with the Landowners and the Parish Council should consider writing them explaining their responsibilities. (Highways could supply a template letter for this).

12 Implementing a 20mph zone. Cllr Zisman

Move to February agenda as Cllr Zisman not in attendance. Cllr Hall reported that new funding was available for the 20mph initiative. As our application had already been submitted we would not have to do so again.

13. Reports:

- a) District Councillor. Cllr Westerman reported that Warm Hubs were being introduced around the district. Some public toilets had been selected for upgrading. Veterans on housing benefits would continue to be supported. Cllr Westerman had just received information that there would be capital funding available for play parks and she would be happy to investigate this for the Parish Council. Council Tax support would continue for low income family's. Cllr Westerman said that the District plan for housing was being completed but would have little effect on Axmouth.
- b) County Councillor report. Report circulated. In addition Cllr Hall thanked Cllr Mather for his support as a Parish Councillor and said how much he had enjoyed working with him. Cllr Hall then discussed his report and concerns for future budgets and the scrutiny of budgets. Cllr Hall then read out his letter to every Officer and Councillor involved in the scrutinising process:



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“Dear Cllrs & Officers,

Please can I ask in advance that you all consider the following and, if possible, build upon this email and discuss, or come up, with a better and sustainable roadmap for a better Devon from 'pre cradle to very old age' and the following crosses over all aspects of what we are trying to achieve on behalf of those we collectively represent and what influence we can bring to the forthcoming budget setting process.

As Cllrs, Officers and, therefore, Devon County Council, I wish you to please individually, and collectively, to consider the following.

Since I first became a DCC Elected in 2017, I have watched and been part of the budget setting process and time and again, I keep seeing repeated efforts to legally have a balanced budget to avoid handing back the keys to Westminster, while trying to truly transform what we can collectively do to ensure we truly get best value for every 'Devon Pound' to work for the residents of our amazing County while knowing that no organisation can solve all its challenges alone.

Since 1989 I have, like so many, been involved with the Volunteer Community Enterprise Sector (VCSE) or, back in the day, known by other descriptions but has always had the golden thread of community.

Back in the 70's, when we had no cars, double glazing, central heating, holidays, broadband, landlines or mobiles etc., etc., and, not forgetting, not much money for food or 50p for the electricity meter or Television, I know that this may be perceived that I am looking through possible 'rose tinted glasses' that I feel we had so much more than we do today, as we had resilient communities that had the necessary VCSE glue that was not there in name, but was evidently there to help communities to be flexible, to evolve through time and to help stick things together. I, in part, feel we don't need to reinvent the wheel, but we need to look at how we can learn from the past to give communities the strongest supportive framework to flourish in the future, which needs to have wraparound support that aligns with our present governance review and transformation strategy.

As an elected member, and as co-chair of One Eastern Devon Partnership Forum (there will be a 'One Devon' newsletter this week to inform you all of what has been going on for the last 8 months plus), I, with absolute certainty, know the power of working in partnership, to ensure that collectively we spend the 'Devon Pound' as well as we can, and we can join-up our efforts.

Please note: One Eastern Devon Partnership Forum (OEDPF) Stakeholders.
NHS, Police, University of Exeter, District Councils, Social Care, VCSE, Children Services, Adult Health, DCC as examples.

I would like to ask all Scrutiny Committees to consider asking the following questions:



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1. Given the financial pressures on all statutory organisations and VCSE, and again, if we are of the mindset that we can't solve all our challenges on our own, again, does the aforementioned budget and budget process encourage or discourage partnership working, particularly in the wellbeing and prevention space to reduce demand for DCC funded services?
2. I have been wondering for a few months now.....in my exciting role as the Co-Chair of OEDPF will any final budget support my role (and the Lead Members role as Chair of the ICP) in trying to ensure DCC is at the heart of partnership working that benefits us all?

I presently sit on both Children's & Adult Scrutiny Committee's, I am the DCC representative on the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS TRUST as one of the Council of Governors, previous Member of CIRS and I am a Foster Panel Member as well as being co-chair of One Eastern Devon Partnership Forum.....so, I have been seeing things from multiple lenses!

Finally, I have over the last year seen new energy and therefore optimism from Officer's and I feel now we are starting to know with confidence to what our challenges are, thank you and well done all.....we as Cllrs also need embrace the opportunity to really change and empower our communities as integration from the coalface up needs to be rapidly strengthened."

Cllr Hall expressed his frustration at trying to get a full position for Seaton Hospital. Since 2017 the NHS had spent 1.8 million pounds on the property and Cllr Hall wanted to make sure that the areas he represented were getting value from the money spent on the hospital wing and wanted help from the Parishes in meeting the local need. Cllr Westerman asked if it would be helpful if she asked Richard Ford to contact Cllr Hall. Cllr Hall replied that he had made unsuccessful attempts to talk with Mr Ford but it would certainly be useful if Cllr Westerman could arrange for all the relevant information to be sent to him.

At 8.07pm Cllr Badger left the meeting and Cllr Daniel took the Chair.

Cllr Westerman explained that after a number of local consultations Mr Ford was supporting the return of the wing to Seaton residents to become a hub to support a number of clinics and initiatives. Cllr Drown stated that there was already a model for use of the wing by Local organizations in existence. Cllr Drown asked if this was just a wish on behalf of the NHS to cash in on some assets. Cllr Hall said that the NHS were spending 49 million pounds on maintaining under used properties and if it was possible to put together a local business plan that showed that there was value in keeping it open.



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- c) Parish Councillor reports: Cllr Mather said he was sorry to be leaving the Council and had enjoyed his service on it. He was moving back to Hampshire to be closer to his family but would miss Axmouth very much. Cllr Daniel expressed his thanks to Cllr Mather and said that he would be very much missed by Axmouth.
Cllr Daniel reported graffiti appearing around the river mouth area. He had reported it on the East Devon website. Cllr Hall suggested reporting to the Police as he had found that PCO's had had some success in other areas when working in schools to prevent it from occurring.
- d) Clerk's report: No report.

12 To accept any relevant correspondence: None received.

Date of the next Parish Council Meeting: 21.02.2024

Signed _____ Date _____

Meeting closed 8.15pm.