MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH MOLTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY
13th FEBRUARY 2013 IN THE NORTH MOLTON VICTORY HALL

Present  Councillor Dunn, Councillor Procter, Councillor Gammon, Councillor Stanley,
Councillor White, Councillor Henderson, Councillor O’Brien and the Clerk

332/3/13 1. Apologies  Councillor Janes, work commitments. Motion proposed to sanction
this absence, all agreed.

Absent, no apologies, Councillors Mather and Bulled.

333/3/13 2. Declaration of Interests.  None.

334/3/13 3. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary  No police representatives were present, but
the clerk had previously been given brief details of events over the past month.

Over the past 35 days there had been 15 calls.

5 over Concern for Welfare. 4 road related. 2 Anti-Social Behaviour/neighbour related. One
missing person. One abandoned 999 call (a child playing on the phone) and one suspicious
incident. Crime trends continued to revolve around theft of fuel, quad bikes and break-ins to
outbuildings, garden sheds and industrial units.

The clerk said that he had asked for a little more detail on some of the events, and that, if
provided, it would be recorded at the next meeting.

335/3/13 4. Representations from the public

Councillor Procter stated that he had received complaints about rosebushes outside
Penswell Cottages that projected into the footway and needed pruning. Several other
councillors had received similar complaints. Agreed, that Councillor Henderson would raise
the matter with Exmoor Property Lettings.

Councillor Procter stated that he had received complaints about vehicles parked near the
bridge in North Molton at Bendle Cross. Inconsiderate parking meant that drivers using the
junction had their view obscured. This had been raised before and it was recognised as an
ongoing issue. Agreed: that the police be asked to look at this issue during a planned visit
in the near future.

Councillor Procter reported a large pothole nearly a foot deep between Green Acres and
High Bullen Farm. The clerk was instructed to report this using the Highways Department
emergency phone number.

The chairman reported that gullies beside the road in Heasley Mill needed clearing and had
contributed to recent flooding which had lifted tarmac from the road. Agreed: that the clerk
report this to NDC Highways Department.

Councillor Gammon reported a problem with road drainage in Bendle Lane. Agreed: clerk to
report this to NDC Highways Department.
Councillor Gammon reported that floral tributes left on the side of the road at the site of a recent fatal car crash were beginning to look unsightly. Agreed: Councillors Henderson and Stanley to remove the paper and plastic wrappings.

The clerk read out a letter from Mr Wallis praising the efforts of the Highways Department in keeping roads clear during the most recent icy conditions, but pointing out that the area around the Square also needed gritting in such weather. If this could not be done, could a salt bin be provided, so that residents could do it themselves, he asked.

Councillor White stated that occupants of Lower Oakford Villas had asked that a salt bin be supplied and positioned near them. Agreed: that the clerk continue correspondence with Highways Department about these two linked issues.

Councillor O’Brien stated that she had seen two distributors of Thompson Directories dumping a large number of directories in the river and had reported this to the firm.

Councillor Yabsley arrived at 7.50.

336/3/13 5. Approval of the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of North Molton Parish Council held on 18th January 2013. These minutes were approved after being amended. Agreed with one abstention, Councillor O’Brien, who had not attended the meeting.

Approval of the minutes of the Meeting of the North Molton Parish Council held on 9th January 2013. These were approved after being amended. Agreed with one abstention, Councillor Gammon, who had not attended that meeting.

337/3/13 6. Clerks Report

a) NDC Highways had replied to the council’s concerns re gritting the Square. Agreed that the clerk continue this correspondence, pointing out that the area not being gritted was a bus route. Dependent upon the outcome of this correspondence, councillors would assess the need for salt bins in the village.

b) NDC Highways had replied to the council’s concerns over the large cracks appearing in the retaining wall at Broad Close. They stated that enquiries were continuing to identify who, if anyone, owned the land in question and was therefore responsible for repairing the wall. Councillor Yabsley suggested involving Building Control and the Environmental Health sections of the District Council as there was a recent precedent for classifying a building as a dangerous structure which may give the District Council the power to demolish and rebuild it. Agreed that the clerk continue this correspondence.

c) Devon and Cornwall police had replied to the council’s concerns about the speed at which some traffic travelled through the village. Police would attend at a time and date agreed with the council to monitor traffic through the village and deal with motorists found to be speeding. Agreed: Clerk to progress this.

d) NDC Highways had also responded to the council’s concerns on the above matter. Their policy was that the speed limit could only be lowered to 20mph when there was a record of injury or accidents. Various options for traffic calming through the village were discussed.
Agreed: Clerk to contact Highways Department and request the erection of speed camera signs on the approaches to the village. The provision of such signs would mean that police could then deploy speed cameras with a view to prosecuting speeding motorists. Also: Clerk to request that the setting of the digital speed display in the village be changed from its present setting of 26mph to 32mph as it was felt that this would have more of an effect upon drivers.

e) Letters of appreciation had been sent to Messrs, Smith, Harris and Luckson for their public-spirited work on the night of the floods. Agreed: that the clerk send a similar letter to Messrs. Jones of Barham Farm, Heasley Mill for their work in removing spoil and debris from a landslip.

338/3/13 7.Matters arising from these minutes not on Agenda

Councillor Stanley reported on a site meeting organised by himself and Councillor O’Brien regarding the retrospective planning application for a fodder store at Lower Poole Farm. All interested parties had attended and he believed that a good compromise had been reached. The present building was going to be demolished and a new planning application submitted for the erection of the building in a different location, which would be considerably less obtrusive. A vote of thanks to councillors Stanley and O’Brien was agreed unanimously.

Councillor Edgell arrived at 8.40.

339/3/13 8.Items for Discussion

a) Flood preparation.

Following discussions on possible responses by the parish council to this issue, it was agreed that efforts should be made to involve those most likely to be affected by any future flooding in planning for and responding to such matters. The clerk reported that two hundred sandbags were now stored in the boiler room of the Victory Hall, to replace those handed out on the night of the flood, he added that NDC would not provide sand, this would have to be purchased. Councillor White offered the use of a patch of land for storing sand. Councillor Edgell stated that the District Council were compiling a report on the flooding and that comments and lessons learned could be forwarded for inclusion in the report. It was agreed that at the next meeting, the basic framework of an emergency plan be constructed which could incorporate any comments or suggestions made at the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

b) Confirming appointment of Parish Clerk

It was agreed that the appointment be confirmed and that the clerk be employed using the standard contract drawn up by Devon Association of Local Councils and paid at the normal, nationally agreed rate.

Councillor O’Brien left at 9pm.

341/3/13 10. Planning

Applications approved – none.
Applications refused – none.
Applications withdrawn – none.
Applications for consideration- none.

342/3/13 11. Finance

Balance of Community account stands at £3,163.31 as at 31st January. This includes £2,000 from Councillor Yabsley’s fund for use in paying for equipment for the Laurels Playground.

Balance of Business saver account stands at £4,593.04 as at 31st January.

Receipts – none.

ii) Payments £10.00 payment to Victory Hall re the extraordinary meeting on 18th January. All agreed.

a) Clerks salary £178.38 contribution to telephone costs £10 total £188.38. All agreed.

343/3/13 12. Correspondence

1. Local plan.

Councillor Edgell outlined the background and procedure to the planning process and stressed that the rural element of the plan had not yet been compiled. A meeting on 20th February at the Civic Centre in Barnstaple would begin work on this element of the plan and provided an opportunity for the Parish Council, and anyone else, to raise issues they felt should be considered in the plan. It was agreed that Councillors Dunn, Stanley and Henderson would attend this meeting, and that the local plan would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting, with the Chairman responding on behalf of the council.

Councillors Proctor and Gammon left the meeting at 9.15pm.

Councillor White raised the point that his intention, announced at a previous council meeting, of seeking planning permission for light industrial units in North Molton at some time in the future might impact upon his perceived impartiality in discussing the local plan. He asked for clarification of the position. After discussion it was agreed that no conflict of interest arose if he were present during general discussion around the local plan and its effects upon the area but that he would absent himself from any detailed discussion.

2. ROSPA risk assessment: Agreed that ROSPA be asked to carry out the annual risk assessment of playground equipment.
3. Laurels Playground. NDC had responded to the clerk’s request for funding for playground equipment. If the playground were open to the public, then funding would be available. The clerk was directed to continue the process of obtaining the funding.

4. The clerk informed the meeting that Councillor Ian Mather had emailed to say that due to pressure of work he was resigning from the Parish Council with immediate effect. He was still willing to help in community matters, however. Agreed: that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Mather for his service and that he be asked to complete the process he had begun in obtaining the equipment for the Laurels playground. Also agreed that the process of recruiting another councillor be begun. Councillor Edgell pointed out the significant financial cost to the Parish Council if any election for a new Parish Councillor were to take place other than on the same date as council elections, i.e. on 2nd May this year.

5. Restorative justice. A request for suggestions for work to be carried out by offenders sentenced to community service was considered. Agreed: that the clerk research likely costs to the council of using this scheme.

Also agreed: that suggestions as to how the offenders could usefully be deployed be discussed at the next meeting.

All newsletters to be placed in green bag.

**344/3/13 13.Reports** Councillor Henderson agreed to take over the role of co-ordinator between the council and South Molton Town Council with regard to using the TAP fund to finance weed control in both areas.

**345/3/13 14.Matters brought forward by District or County Councillor** District Council had made significant cuts in expenditure over recent months in order to comply with reductions in funding from central government. Councillor Edgell submitted details of a scheme for providing rural areas with fast broadband connections. This was included in the newsletters and reports to be circulated among councillors.

**Date and Time of Next meeting** Wednesday 13th March 2013 at 7.30pm in the Victory Hall. The clerk reported that he would have to be absent from this meeting as he would be out of the country.

Meeting closed 9.50pm