MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH MOLTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th October 2013
IN THE VICTORY HALL

Present Councilor White, Councilor Dunn, Councilor Gammon, Councilor Procter, , Councilor Stanley, Councilor Bulled, Councilor O’Brien, District Councilor Edgell and the Clerk

430/10/13 1. Apologies None,

430/10/13 2. Declaration of Interests None.

431/10/13 3. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary A dispute between neighbours had resulted in a public order offence regarding language and behaviour. There had been an instance of bad driving on the A361 at the North Molton junction. Police had been called to a domestic argument. Thirteen sheep had been reported missing, possibly stolen, from a field over a three week period. Not clear whether these had been stolen or escaped.

County Councillor Yabsley arrived at 7.40.

432/10/13 4. Representations from the public Roses were hanging over the footpath below the Old Post Office: Agreed: the clerk to write to the relevant householder.

A resident near the Laurels Playground had complained of youths drinking and smoking in the playground and throwing empty beer cans into his garden:

Cllr Bulled reported that traffic was driving too fast up the new road leading to the Sports Club. Part of the road had been widened in the new housing development, but as the rest of the road was still a narrow lane used by pedestrians as well as vehicles, the increased speed of vehicles was dangerous. Various options for slowing the traffic were discussed. County Councillor Yabsley undertook to ensure that the 30mph limit signs were reinstated.

Cllr Bulled reported concerns that nothing further had been heard about the PC’s response to the NDC’s Local Plan which identified which areas of the village could become available for future development. As another housing development was being planned, there was a danger of the views of the villagers, as expressed in the PC’s response to the plan, not being taken into account in the decision process. Cllr Yabsley replied that the arrangements for reviewing the Local Plan had been delayed, but that the views expressed would influence the planning authorities. He added that a recent meeting of the Parish Forum, in which the responses of all parishes to the Local Plan were discussed, had revealed that there had been “Significantly more public engagement” in North Molton than in the vast majority of parishes. The North Molton response had been highly thought of and reflected well upon the hard work put in by the chairman and clerk of the PC.

433/10/13 5. Approval of the minutes of the Meeting of North Molton Parish Council held on Wednesday 11th September 2013 The minutes, as amended, were accepted.

434/10/13 6. Clerk’s Report Clerk reported that all instructions about contacting people with regard to representations from the public received at the last meeting had been carried out. Cllr Gammon reported that one area of overgrown vegetation at the junction of the two roads leading from the village to the moor had not been cut back and was still causing a problem. Agreed: that the clerk contact the landowner again and clarify which area needed cutting.

435/10/13 7. Matters arising from these minutes not on Agenda Cllr Dunn gave his regrets and stated that he had been unable to produce the financial forecast spreadsheet in time for the meeting but would do so in time for the next meeting at which the Parish Council budget was due to be set.

Cllr Procter reminded councillors of their undertaking to update the North Molton “Who’s Who”.
The clerk read out a short list of the bylaws affecting North Molton, which had been obtained following an enquiry at the last meeting.

436/10/13. 8. Items for Discussion

i) Conservation Plan

Mr Bate, Strategic Conservation officer of North Devon Council, presented proposed amendments to the Conservation Plan for North Molton. This was in response to a statutory obligation to ensure the Conservation Plan was up to date (it had been created in 1974) and was intended to help planning officers in their duty to address the historic character of the village in their decision-making process. The plan as proposed would take in an area to the southwest of the village not presently included and would address some anomalies in which the boundary of the plan did not follow those of properties.

All owners of properties in the area in the proposed extension to the plan would be written to by NDC.

It was agreed that he would attend the next Parish Council meeting which would take place during the time allotted for public consultation of the plan, and that the proposed extension to the plan would be advertised by the clerk.

ii) Heasly Mill Village Hall.

The need for a Parish Councillor to sit on the HMVH management committee was discussed. Due to the increased workload on Parish Councillors following two recent resignations, which left the parish with only eight of its required eleven councillors, all were reluctant to take on more commitments. Agreed: that the clerk ascertain how many meetings per year were held by NMVH. Also, that the clerk research the insurance situation of the NMVH. The chairman stressed the need to reach a conclusion on the matter.

iii). Laurels Playground.

The combination goal had been erected. Cllr Gammon had been in touch with Mr Holden who was researching donations of paint. Agreed that the remaining paint work would have to be done next year, also that Cllr Gammon should remain in touch with Mr Holden and others interested in helping paint the playground. It was agreed that councillors would not get involved in supervising children or young people in any painting. It was to be hoped that interested parents would encourage and supervise their children to help. Cllr Edgell reported that £1462.00 was available to support the Parish Council expenditure on the playground and that a decision on this would be made shortly.

iv) Christmas lights.

It was agreed that the lights provided last year did not make a good impression. Unfortunately, the use of bigger bulbs meant more expense. They had also been vandalised when last used. Cllr Gammon undertook to research a new type and source of lighting. Cllr White undertook to source a tree.

v). Financial forecast.

Cllr Dunn undertook to email this to members.

vi) North Molton Village Hall Committee.

The absence of a PC representative was noted, but due to depleted numbers it was agreed that for the time being no parish councillor would sit on this committee.
437/10/13 9. Chairmans Report/Urgent matters brought forward by the Chairman

In response to a representation from the public raised at the last meeting, the chairman apologised for causing annoyance to neighbours with a bonfire. He had intended to light it only when the wind direction meant that no smoke would inconvenience his neighbours but had been caught out by a change of wind direction.

438/10/13 10. Planning

Planning approved: None.

Planning declined: None.

Applications received for consideration:

Forestry Commission Consultation EWGS 33978 application to fell trees on the North Molton Estate. Agreed: that the PC had no comment to make upon this application.

38/10/13 11. Finance

Balance of Community account stood at £5,127.76 as at 30th September.

Balance of Business saver account stood at £4,794.78 as at 30th September.

i) Receipts – Notification of payment of the Parish Precept of £1,885.50 and Parish Grant of £880.50 plus grant assistance of £158.69 (total £2924.19), was received on 2nd October.

ii) Payments –

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

b) £30 to Royal British Legion for Remembrance Day wreath.

c) £500 to PCC for the burial ground

d) £100 to North Molton Village Hall

e) £100 to Heasley Mill Village Hall.

Agreed: that all the above be paid.

438/10/13 12. Correspondence

a) DALC, new model standing orders had been drawn up. Agreed: that these be adopted and copies sent to all councillors.

b) Mr Sables, NDC Highways. Requesting details of where lengthsmans visits were required. Agreed, councillors to contact the clerk who would pass on the details, together with a request that a copy of the map used by the lengthsmen be provided so as to ensure the accurate description of locations. Also that the proposed visits be advertised in Heasly Mill.

c) Planning for winter. An invitation to this event had been received. Agreed: that the clerk attend, in furtherance of the preparation of an emergency plan for North Molton.

438/10/13 13. Reports

After discussion, it was agreed that the clerk should contact the Parish Church for confirmation of rumours about the graveyard capacity.
Cllr Dunn and Cllr Edgell reported on the Parish Forum which took place last week. Long term, serious cuts in public funding will continue for the foreseeable future with the NDC budget being cut by £100 million in the next year. NDC had stated that they could not guarantee to protect all services. It was being proposed that only one road into and out of any village would be maintained. Devon contains eight thousand miles of road which need £64 million per year to adequately maintain. At present just over £30 million per year is available.

Cllr Dunn reported that NDC will learn what funds are available for their budget in late November and so the Parish Council would be unable to set it’s budget in the meeting that month, as was usual.

Cllr Bulled reported on the Devon Highways conference she had attended. Although 93 per cent of bridges in the county were in good repair, money had to be saved by cutting back on repairing roads. Plans were being made to de-classify roads throughout the county.

439/10/12 14.Matters brought forward by District or County Councillor

Councillor Edgell expanded upon the warnings given by Cllrs Dunn and Bulled about the size of cuts facing council services.

Date and Time of Next meeting 13th November 2013 Old School Hall, 7.30pm

Meeting closed 9.50.