MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH MOLTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY
14TH JANUARY 2015 IN THE NORTH MOLTON VICTORY HALL

Present Councillor Dunn (Chairman), Councillor Bulled, Councillor Procter, Councillor
Gammon, Councillor Peek, County Councillor Yabsley, District Councillor Edgell and the Clerk

632/1/15 Apologies Absent, Cllr O’Brien, no apologies. Also absent Councillor Stanley,
chairman. The clerk read out a letter from Mr Stanley in which he resigned from the Parish
Council. The letter read, in part, “There have clearly been agendas within the Parish Council
and outside which have been vigorously and vindictively pursued by people to further their
own interests and those of others. I am no longer prepared to tolerate personal abuse and
innuendo both outside and inside Council meetings by people who have scant regard for the
truth or indeed democracy”. The clerk went on to say that having worked closely with Mr
Stanley over the past few months he knew that Mr Stanley had had no axes to grind and
was not beholden to anyone in North Molton. He had merely been trying to reflect the
views of the village as expressed to the Parish Council. He believed Mr Stanley felt that he
had not recently had the support, help and advice a chairman could reasonably expect. The
clerk felt it a great shame that recent planning applications had led, not to discussion to try
and find common ground, but a culture of confrontation and ambush. He felt that some
people in North Molton needed to try and at least consider the possibility that not everyone
who disagreed with them was either deluded or evil.

The chairman, Cllr Dunn, asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Stanley. In the
circumstances he was prepared to act as Chairman until May, but not longer.

633/1/15 Declaration of Interests Cllr Yabsley and Cllr Edgell re planning application
ENP 62/49/14/005. Both were members of the ENP Planning Committee.

634/1/15 Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

The clerk read an email from the local police. Two cars had had fuel stolen from them on
the 15th December, with the fuel line under the car being cut. Similar crimes had occurred in
Avon and Somerset area and was still happening within the Devon and Cornwall area. Three
other crimes had been reported in the local area over the past month, but no details were
provided.

635/1/15 Representations from the public None.

636/1/15 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of North Molton Parish Council held
on Wednesday 10th December 2014 Agreed as amended with one abstention.

Consideration of the minutes of the special meeting of 17th December was held over until
the next Parish Council meeting, in order to allow the clerk to include the contribution made
by Mr Graham White.

637/1/15 Clerks Report The usual second letter from NDC had been received asking the
council to submit the Parish Precept. Agreed, unanimously, that the sum agreed at the last
meeting be submitted. The clerk apologised for not having yet contacted a landowner about overgrown hedges.

As instructed, the clerk had contacted NDC Planning and Bell Cornwall (Town Planners) for clarification of the issue of financial contributions for recreational facilities in connection with the development of land to the west of the Primary School. Both agreed that any application of similar size would be required to make a contribution (in this case £2,626.80 per Open Market Dwelling) direct to North Devon Council. In this case, the money will then, subject to approval by NDC’s Executive and Full Council, be spent “towards the provision of off site pitch/recreation provision at North Molton Sport Club”.

638/1/15 7. Matters arising from these minutes not on Agenda

None.

639/1/15 8. Items for Discussion

i) Code of Conduct. The clerk reported that the question of publishing draft minutes had arisen at the last meeting. In researching the guidance, and pros and cons of this, he had had to look at a range of documents and it may be opportune to summarise these for the information of councillors. The NALC Code of Conduct was adopted by the council in July 2012 and dealt mainly with the need for all councillors to declare any financial interests.

ii) NALC Standing Orders. These had been emailed to all councillors. Agreed: that councillors study the document prior to the next meeting at which the various discretionary elements of the document would be completed.

iii) Publication of draft minutes. Earlier guidance on this, quoted at the previous meeting by Cllr Bulled, had been drawn from a “Toolkit” document drawn up to assist Parish Councillors in 2009. Although the document had been supported by NALC and other organisations at the time, it was purely advisory. NALC had made the point to the clerk that the document had been overtaken by legislation and that one of it’s supporting organisations no longer existed. The clerk made the point that having been threatened with legal action by Cllr Bulled over a mistake in the minutes he felt justified in arguing strongly against publishing minutes that had not been approved by the council as true and accurate records of meetings. Agreed: That draft minutes be circulated to councillors within ten days of the meeting, and that draft minutes not be published. 3 for, 1 against.

iv) Clerks contract. Although it had been agreed that the clerk be employed within the terms of the NALC model contract, no contract had in fact been signed. In view of the behaviour of a councillor, the clerk was no longer happy with this informal arrangement. Before the council and clerk signed the contract it would be necessary to identify where exactly on the scale of payments he had been placed, when starting the job in 2012. He would report back on this.

v) Laurels Playground. Cllr Gammon declared an interest and left the meeting. After discussion of the various quotes for replacing the gate, it was agreed that the work be given to Mr Baldwin. Clerk to arrange. Cllr Gammon rejoined the meeting.
**640/1/15  9.Chairmans Report/Urgent matters brought forward by the Chairman**

None.

**641/1/15  10.Planning**

Applications approved - None

Applications refused – none.

Applications withdrawn – none.

Applications considered:   NDDC 58482 . Change to floor plans. Conversion of barn to form one dwelling at Higher Poole Farm, Fore Street.  Approved, unanimously.

ENP 62/49/14/005 Tabor Hill, construction of a manège.  Approved, unanimously.

NDDC 58501  It was noted that the person shown as the applicant had died two days after the original application was submitted, and before the revised application, dated 11.12.14 was received. There was concern that as the identity of the present applicant was unknown, members of the Parish Council, and District Council, were unable to know whether they should declare an interest.

Additionally, there were objections that the proposed building did not blend in with the street scene and adjoining houses. That it was too close to an adjacent listed building. That the entrance was directly opposite that of the Miners Arms, which was still functioning as a pub. This gave rise to access concerns.  Agreed, unanimously, to object to the application on the above grounds.

**642/1/15  11.Finance**

Balance of Community account was £4,001.74 as at 31st December 2014

Balance of Business Saver account was £5,172.93  as at 31st December 2014

i) Payments

a) Clerks salary £142.78 plus contribution to telephone costs, £10. Total £152.78, and PAYE of £107.00 to HMRC. Total £259.78.

b) Village website, £23.76 reimbursement to the clerk for the web-hosting fee. Up to £75 to Tekline for managing the site.

c) Reimburse Mrs Lee for acting as clerk on 17.12.15.  £25.00.

d) Reimburse Cllr Gammon £55.67 for Christmas lights. Reimburse Mr Loosemore, £15 for supplying electricity for the lights.
All the above were agreed unanimously, together with a vote of thanks to Mr Loosemore, and to Mr McCarthy and Cllr Gammon, for their help with erecting and decorating the tree.

It was agreed that the tree had made a good display this year.

Agreed, with one abstention, that Mr Stanley be allowed to continue as a co-signatory on Parish Council cheques until the next meeting.

643/1/15 12. Correspondence

Councillors had been invited to a meeting of Exmoor Parish Councils on 28th January at Exford to consider the process for the forthcoming election of Parish Members to Exmoor National Park Authority. The chairman would try to attend.

The Tour of Wessex Historic Car Rally will cross areas of Exmoor National Park from Friday 13 February to 15 February.

The North Devon Motor Club Exmoor Trial will cross areas of ENP on Sunday 25 January.

The See Hear Centre mobile equipment and loans service will be in the Square, North Molton from 10am - 11.30 am on 25 February, 22 April, 24 June, 26 August, 28 October and 23 December offer advice and equipment to people with seeing and/or hearing disabilities.

A letter from Mr Peter Stucley responding to rumours about funds from the sale of properties on land to the west of the Primary School being directed to the Sports and Social Club was produced by Cllr Bulled. She asked that it be entered in the correspondence of the Parish Council.

644/1/15 13. Reports  Councillor Procter had a string of 60 watt bulbs, previously used some years ago on the Christmas tree, for disposal. It was agreed that these should be donated to the Victory Hall.

Cllr Peek reported that quotes had been obtained for gulley clearing to be carried out, funded by the TAP fund. The short period of time remaining for submission of the relevant forms was noted and it was agreed that the two councillors should progress this before the next meeting, with copies of the application being sent by them to all councillors.

It was agreed that the road report submitted by Cllr Bulled on behalf of the PC should go on the village website. Also, that Cllr Yabsley be contacted about the council’s concerns about mooted cuts in road maintenance and gritting around North Molton.

Cllr Procter undertook to carry out the monthly checks on the Laurels Playground.

645/1/15 14. Matters brought forward by District or County Councillor

This was brought forward in the agenda and dealt with after item 4. Cllr Yabsley reported that further severe cuts in central government funding meant that, inevitably, NDC would be looking at continuing to reduce the services it provided. He was thanked by Cllr Edgell for taking on his workload during his recent illness. Cllr Yabsley left at 7.45pm.
**Date and Time of Next meeting** Wednesday 11th February 2015 North Molton Victory Hall
7.30pm.  Meeting closed 10.00pm