MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH MOLTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9th September 2015 IN THE VICTORY HALL

Present: Councillor Bulled (Chairman); Councillor Dunn; Councillor Gammon; Councillor Procter; Councillor O’Brien; Councillor Wallis; Councillor Geen; Councillor Palfreyman; District Councillor Edgell; County Councillor Yabsley and the Clerk.

577/15 1. Apologies: Cllr Peek and Cllr Kelland - Accepted, unanimously.

578/15 2. Declaration of Interests: None

579/15 3. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary: No police representative was present and no report had been received. Cllr Yabsley informed those present that P.C.S.O. job roles might be dispensed with in the next round of public-spending cuts. Action: The Clerk agreed to investigate and establish the delivery of electronic local policing updates for the Parish Council.

580/15 4. Representations From The Public: Cllr Procter had received a request from a member of the public for bird droppings on the bus shelter seating to be cleaned and for the area to be protected sufficiently with wiring in order to prevent future nesting. Cllrs considered fixing a board underneath where the birds had been nesting in order to resolve the problem in the longer term, but no final decision was made on any action in this regard. Whilst cllrs were unsure about preventing future nesting, they agreed that the seating should be cleaned as soon as possible. Action: Cllr Palfreyman offered and agreed to clean the seating.

Cllr Procter showed cllrs a design for a ‘Clean it Up’ poster in respect of the on-going issue of dog excrement in the parish. Cllrs agreed that the posters could be utilised in the Parish Council’s name.

Cllr Dunn had been informed that there had been an accident between a car and cyclist at the bottom of East Street which was part of a cycle route. The cyclist had admitted to speeding, causing considerable damage to the car. Cllr Dunn had been asked whether or not a warning sign regarding the steepness of the hill could be erected. The danger was compounded by access onto East Street from the left and the right. Also, speeding cyclists represented a danger to pedestrians crossing the road. Action: The Clerk is to write to Richard Sables at Highways in order to ascertain the most appropriate form and positioning of signage and to request its implementation. The Clerk is to request an exploration of the funding options as special funding might be available in respect of the cycle route.

Cllr Procter had been informed by lorry drivers of the difficulty of turning at the top of Back Lane in order to drive to Heasly Mill. They considered the problem to be due to cars parked outside Bakery Cottage. Cllrs agreed to hold this matter in abeyance.

Mr Darley asked whether or not the Parish Council could opt out of Devon County Council’s hedge-cutting regime and receive the money for its own initiatives. He was of the opinion that County had only just acted and, specifically in New Road, and that this was too late in the season when the hedgerows were dying back anyway and farmers were involved in any event. The money could be spent by the parish on other matters such as weed-spraying in the village. Cllr Yabsley informed the meeting that County was only trimming in respect of visibility displays and safety, as necessary. There were no regulations regarding the frequency or timing. The work in New Road may have been carried out by another agency such as: the District Council; North Devon Homes or a landowner. The funding situation for County was likely to deteriorate.
Following on from this, the Clerk reported on his attendance at a meeting on grass-cutting, hedgerow-trimming and weed-spraying led by Barnstaple Town Council on 20th August. Some of the following details on funding were clarified by Cllr Yabsley. Devon County Council was shrinking its operations due to less available funding. Safety and Emergency work, only, was being undertaken. District Councils were taking on the work, gradually. TAP funds have been available to parishes for this type of work and other projects, but have had to involve at least one other parish with a proviso that subsequent projects had to be of a different nature although there were legitimate workarounds. The application timescales were considered to be too tight, currently, for most parishes with the next deadline for applications being 30th September. TAP funds were being phased out to be replaced by the North Devon Community Fund. There is an additional residual fund of £15k which is available to parishes but also additionally to charities. Other options were: volunteer registers; sponsorship schemes; economies of scale through working with other councils and councillor-led Facebook community groups. Regulations regarding using qualified staff for weed-killing and qualified supervision of staff working on the highways would need to be considered. Cllr Yabsley stated that landowners were responsible for hedge-trimming and should be contacted accordingly.

Cllrs thanked Mr Darley and his team for clearing up the short cut - it would be beneficial if North Devon Homes were to encourage its tenants to cut their overhanging foliage. Cllr Yabsley provided the Clerk with a contact at North Devon Homes to facilitate such purpose.

581/9/15 Consideration of Co-opting Mr Gareth Clark to North Molton Parish Council.

Cllrs agreed, unanimously, for Mr Gareth Clark to join North Molton Parish Council as a Member.

582/9/15 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of North Molton Parish Council held on 12th August 2015

Cllr Bulle requested that the Clerk amend the minutes to show in the Chairman’s Report that she had given a presentation to the previous clerk and that she had thanked him for the work that he had done.

Cllr Wallis referred to the Special Meeting held on 30th July where the overwhelming opinion of the public had not been mirrored by the subsequent Parish Council vote where there had been two abstentions. He had intimated his disagreement with the two abstentions at the Parish Council Meeting on 12th August and wanted this fact recorded in those minutes. A debate on local democracy ensued along with the querying of whether or not the majority opinion demonstrated by a show of hands by the public at the Special Public Meeting called by the Parish Council for 30th July was binding or merely a guide for a subsequent debate and separate vote on the same issue by parish councillors. Cllr Geen queried whether or not the Parish Council could vote at all on the issue following the public show of hands on 30th July. Action: The Clerk would seek clarification from DALC on this point for future reference.

Cllrs agreed that the Clerk would include within the August minutes that Cllr Wallis had queried why there had been two abstentions at the meeting. He has been provided, since, with the answer that the abstainers had been within their democratic rights to abstain.

Approved as amended.

583/9/15 Clerks Report Re: 12th August, 2015 Meeting

As requested, the Clerk has written to All Saints Church regarding the defective fencing bordering Laurel’s Playground - no reply had been received to date.
The Clerk provided clrs with a ball-park quote for installing and maintaining dog-poo bins. The estimate for the capital cost and fixings for six sixty litre bins totalled £1,548.00. The on-going bin collection costs were £12 per six bins with a recommendation of two collections per month. Clrs agreed, unanimously, not to proceed with this idea and to rely on an initial poster campaign.

Cllr Bulle reported that the overhanging vegetation at Highbullen was being followed up by Richard Sables at County.

Cllr Yabsley reported on the road at Roberts Field. The County Council and planners accepted that the developer was unable to carry out further works until the remainder of the development was sold; the Bond would not be released until the works had been fully completed.

Cllr Geen raised his concern for the need for fully gritted roads this winter in the light of the increasing emphasis on health-care being provided in the community. Cllr Yabsley had raised this issue in public with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the North Devon Healthcare Trust. He had been told that they had the ability to get to anyone, anywhere and at any time and that this was not an issue. The County Council would not carry out any gritting other than that provided for on the current schedule.

584/9/15 8. Matters Arising From These Minutes Not on This Agenda

None

585/9/15 9. Planning

Applications For Consideration

| Planning Applications For Consideration Received Since Last Parish Council Meeting |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Case Ref: | Address | Comment |
| 59740 | Barn adjacent to Oakford House, Stoneybridge Hill, Change of Use of Agricultural Building to Dwelling (Class QA) | Approved |
| | | subject to review of left-turn towards bridge. |
| Case Ref | Address | Comment |
| 59793 | Higher Poole Farm, Fore Street, North Molton Erection of One Agricultural Building | Approved |
Planning Applications Advised Since Last Parish Council Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Ref:</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59343</td>
<td>Barton Pitts, North Molton Erection of Agricultural Livestock Building</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58829</td>
<td>Cross Lane, Yard Road, From Bampfylde Cross, North Molton</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erection of One Rural Enterprise Dwelling (Amended Description)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59574</td>
<td>Riverside Caravan and Camping Park, North Molton</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of Marquee &amp; Erection of Restaurant &amp; Kitchen With Recreation Rooms Over</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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586/9/15 10. Items for Discussion

i) TAP Fund - Cllr Bulled confirmed the application cut-off date of 30th September, 2015. Cllrs agreed to apply for a Village Enhancement Programme which would provide flexibility in the use of funds. Actions: Cllr Bulled would contact Brayford PC. Cllr O’Brien would contact Twitchen PC. Cllr O’Brien offered to project-lead the TAP Fund Application and would enlist Cllr Peek’s assistance.

ii) A Road Safety Issue in Fore Street by Higher Poole was raised by Cllr Palfreyman. Action: Clerk to request Richard Sables of Highways to consider painting a ‘Give Way’ sign on the road in order to improve road safety.

iii) The Clerk proposed changes to the production and dissemination of parish minutes with a view to providing greater transparency and a better service for the public. Proposed changes included: production of draft minutes by the Clerk, say within a week; draft minutes to be sent to all councillors by e-mail; members to respond to the Clerk with any obvious amendments, errors or omissions within, say, three days (this would not represent the final approval of minutes); draft minutes to be published immediately thereafter on the website and attached to the notice-boards - minutes to then be approved and signed off at the next council meeting subject to any final amendments. Cllrs agreed, unanimously, for the adoption of these new procedures, forthwith.

iv) Covered earlier under 581/9/15 5.
v) Cllrs agreed to pay the Clerk’s expenses under Provision 10 of his Contract of Employment to include: mileage on parish business at the DALK rate (currently £0.45 per mile) but excluding driving to put up papers on the parish notice-boards which would be handled by the Chairman. The payment of car-parking expenses was also agreed - all subject to individual and itemised approval at parish meetings.

587/9/15 11. Chairman’s Report/Urgent matters brought forward by the Chairman

Cllr Bulled reported that the Outline Planning Application: 59487 in respect of Old House Barns had been granted today at North Devon Planning. District Cllr Edgell commented that the application had been handled in a very thorough manner and that government policy had been followed. Cllr Wallis questioned why the District Council had turned the application down the first time and proffered that the District Council had back-tracked in order to avoid an Appeal. Cllr Edgell commented that a precedent had been set on a similar case at Chulmeigh where the District had lost an Appeal. With councils strapped for cash, it was necessary to follow due process and bear in mind, government policy, in order to avoid unnecessary costs. Cllr Wallis was unhappy with the decision and left the meeting at 9.17 pm. He said that he would be considering his position on the Parish Council.

Cllr Clark questioned how one could prevent any further building. Cllr Edgell explained that until the Local Plan was approved, then the interim measures under the National Planning Policy Framework would be applied where, if there were a sustainable development and no good planning reasons for turning the case down, then the case would be passed.

Cllr Bulled reported that the village notice-board outside the shop required repair and painting.

**Action:** Cllr Palfreyman offered to carry out the repairs free of charge.

588/9/15 12. Finance

Balance of Community account stands at £2,523.83 as at 31st August, 2015.

Balance of Business Saver account stands at £5,374.24 as at 31st August, 2015.

i) Receipts – none

ii) Payments:

   a) Clerk’s net monthly salary for August of £103.30 plus expenses of £26.40 totalling £129.70

The Clerk proposed that the accounts for the current financial year be transferred from a paper system to Microsoft Excel for ease of operation.

The Clerk proposed that his hours of work and salary be reviewed at his three month review.

Motion passed to pay these sums and follow these proposals. All agreed.

589/9/15 13. Correspondence

None

590/9/15 14. Reports
**Action:** Cllrs agreed that Cllr Dunn and a representative of the church would meet and decide on the way forwards with regard to the security and safety issues involved in respect of the fencing between the Church and Laurel’s Playground. Cllr Bullel suggested that cable ties might resolve the issue on the parish’s side.

**Action:** Cllr Clark agreed to remove the more unstable part of the fencing on the Parish’s side.

**591/9/15 15. Matters Brought Forward by District or County Councillor** Cllr Edgell reported that in addition to the £1m being made available by Devon County Council for improvements to the North Devon Link Road, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be providing a further £1.5m.

**Date and Time of Next meeting:** 14th October, 2015 at 7.30pm in North Molton Victory Hall

The Meeting closed at 9.52 pm.