**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTH MOLTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12th April, 2017 IN THE VICTORY HALL**

**Present:** Councillor Bulled (Chairman); Councillor Dunn (Vice Chairman); Councillor Geen; Councillor Kelland (left meeting at 10.05 pm); Councillor Milne (left meeting at 8.43 pm); Councillor O’Brien (left meeting at 10.05 pm); Councillor Palfreyman; Councillor Peek; Councillor Platt; Councillor Procter; Councillor Smaldon; County Councillor Yabsley (left meeting at 10.10 pm) and the Parish Clerk, Noel Brooks

**046/04/17 1. Apologies:** District Councillor Edgell - agreed unanimously.

**047/04/17 2. Declaration of Interests:** Cllr Geen: 1) as a trustee of a field involved in the Heasley Mill Culvert issue; and, 2) as Chairman of the Feoffees in respect of a grant being requested by the Church for restoration/maintenance of its clock.

**048/04/17 3. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary:** No representative was present and no report had been submitted. The Clerk had requested a new police liaison officer and regular monthly reports in view of PCSO Bray’s maternity leave, but a response was still awaited.

**049/04/17 4. Representations From The Public:** Vice Chairman Dunn expressed concern about the new street lighting in East street which was not lighting the pavement sufficiently on the opposite side of the road where there were no street lights. The previous lighting had provided sufficient light for both sides of the street. **Action:** The Clerk is to log the issue on DCC’s Highways internet reporting facility.

Vice Chairman Dunn had noted the recent written communication sent by NDC to householders about the withdrawal of the ‘free’ green bin service for garden waste. There was concern that this might lead to fly-tipping in hedgerows and more garden waste going via the grey/black bins to landfill. **Action:** The Clerk is to invite Ricky McCormack of NDC to the next meeting on 17th May in order for him to provide a fuller explanation of the District Council’s new policy on waste disposal.

Vice Chairman Dunn raised the issue of the on-going traffic lights in Station Road, South Molton where a wall was being re-built by the developer. **Action:** The Clerk is to obtain a timescale for completion of the works from Elan Homes Limited.

Cllr Smaldon had received a request for an update on the re-painting of the disabled markings in East Street outside the property known as ‘Two Gables’, the issue of which had been covered in the Minutes of 8th February, 2017. **Action:** Cllr Procter is to provide the owners of the property with a verbal update.

Cllr Smaldon had received a representation whilst at the general meeting of the Old School Hall Committee concerning certain residents’ difficulty in reading the Agendas/Minutes on the main Parish Council Notice Board. **Action:** In future, the Clerk is to provide a copy of the Minutes to the Old School Hall and Victory Hall for perusal by residents attending the respective coffee mornings and lunchtime meetings.

Cllrs Palfreyman & Kelland raised the issue of blocked drains at the bottom of Broad Close and in Heasley Mill just below the Telephone Exchange, respectively. **Action:** The Clerk is to write to Highways and copy-in County Cllr Yabsley regarding these issues. In any event, the problems would be tackled in the round by the Parish Council’s Highways Committee, subject to its agreed list of drainage priorities for the parish.

Cllr Procter raised the issue of drains being blocked on the Old Road at the entrance to the Sports Club by grass-cuttings from the bank. Cllr Kelland had received representations regarding roadside rubbish in the same area. **Action:** Chairman Bulled is to take such matters up with the Sports Club.

Cllrs Smaldon & Geen cited examples of alleged inefficiency by DCC Highways’ latest outsource contract company, Skanska, involving work on potholes, and, in particular, on the Old Road where a group of three of four potholes had been filled but where two vans and five employees had been killing time whilst awaiting a
call and decision from their boss as to whether or not they should fill the fourth pothole or move on to fill potholes in Georgham, instead. Cllrs were concerned not only about the quality of the work delivered but also by the apparent inefficiency in Skansa’s organisation, working schedules and practices. Action: The Clerk is to write to Meg Booth, who is Head of DCC’s Highways Operation, expressing the Parish Council’s concern over the apparent inefficiency in the allocation of precious public resources.

050/04/17 5. Planning

Planning Applications For Consideration Received Since Last Parish Council Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Ref</th>
<th>Proposal &amp; Address</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>61588</td>
<td>Upper Heasley, Heasley Mill, South Molton EX36 3LE</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extension to Existing General Purpose Agricultural Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62258</td>
<td>Lower Poole Barns, Fore Street, North Molton EX36 3HL</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62420</td>
<td>Top Cottage, The Square, North Molton, Devon EX36 3HP</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siting Of Floating Porch/Canopy Above Front Door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62447</td>
<td>1-4 Meadow View, East Street, North Molton, Devon EX36 3HX</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Installation of Minus 7 Communal Heating System Including Recovery Unit To Replace Concrete Roof Tiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62513</td>
<td>Land AJ Poltimore Inn, East Street, North Molton EX36 3HR</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline Application For The Erection Of Four Detached One-Bedroom Units To Provide Ancillary Accommodation For Inn Some Matters Reserved (Appearance Layout)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62538</td>
<td>South Bank, Back Lane, North Molton</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erection Of Garage Together With Conversion Of Loft To Form Additional Living Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62549</td>
<td>Land Off Bendle Lane, North Molton EX36 3JL</td>
<td>Prior Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Building Works Prior Notification For Extension To Existing Steel Framed Building For Additional Fodder Storage</td>
<td>Details Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62605</td>
<td>Top Cottage, The Square, North Molton</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listed Building Application For Siting Of Floating Porch/Canopy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

051/04/17 6. Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on 23rd February, 2017 (Special Meeting) and 8th March, 2017 - approved unanimously.
052/04/17  7. Clerk’s Report on 8th March, 2017 Minutes

Raised Manhole Cover Damaging Vehicles in Old Road, Lower Poole - On 9th March, Paul Young of Highways had e-mailed the Clerk to the effect that it would be premature of DCC to carry out works which might be further damaged by construction vehicles. Additionally, current financial constraints gave impetus to securing completion of such works by the developer, which was the Planning Authority’s remit. County Cllr Yabsley expressed the view that NDC was still hopeful of completing this work under the S.106 Agreement appertaining to the Roberts Field Development, particularly as three of the properties on the site remained unsold. Action: The Clerk is to continue to chase NDC’s Legal Dept in this regard.

Slippery Road Surface For Horses Descending The Hill From Roberts Field On The Newly-surfaced Part Of The Old Road, North Molton - The Clerk was in liaison with the BHS’s Director of Access, Mark Weston on this issue - Mr Weston had logged the issue with Highways and a response was awaited.

Memorial On New Road - On chasing Barnstaple Police Sergeant Rob Kelland on this issue, the Clerk had learnt that he had been on annual leave - the Clerk would continue to pursue the matter.

Application To Join The Snow Warden Scheme - Cllr Geen reported that Highways had initiated the application process via e-mail by offering on-line training - it was envisaged that salt supplies should be in place for the forthcoming winter.

Community Enhancement Fund - The Clerk reported that the necessary credit form had been completed and sent to DCC, if, albeit, late on 4th April due to DCC’s late request for this entering the Parish Council’s e-mail SPAM folder. Notwithstanding this, Highways’ Regional Manager, Tom Vaughan had reassured County Cllr Yabsley that the funding would be honoured via the current year’s budget and that the Parish Council could also make another separate funding application in the current year. Action: As the Parish Council had still not received the funds, County Cllr Yabsley agreed to chase Tom Vaughan on the issue.

North Molton Victory Hall - Action For Clerk To Send a Letter to The Committee With the Parish Council’s Response - the Clerk had spoken with Hall Committee member Michelle Bourne who would be submitting a report on the Hall’s affairs for reading out at the Meeting of the Parish of North Molton on 10th May.

Letter of Commendation for South Molton Town Council in respect of Weed-spraying work - The Clerk had spoken with Mr Coates, the Town Clerk for South Molton - a letter of commendation was required as part of NDC’s funding requirements for which there would be positive knock-on effects for North Molton, i.e., free weed-spraying - there was a tight timescale (24 hrs) so the Clerk had duly provided an immediate letter of commendation without referral to the full Parish Council.

053/04/17 8. Matters Arising From The 8th March, 2017 Minutes Not On This Agenda - None

054/04/17 9. Items For Discussion

Highways Project Team Update - Cllr Milne reported that the team had met on 5th April. Three days’ work on clearing the drainage between North Molton and Heasley Mill under the 2016/7 TAP Funding had already been undertaken by the contractor. Under such fund, a day’s work for one person was still available and this resource would be utilised on work scheduled in accordance with the Parish Council’s Roads Priorities List.

Cllrs discussed the issue of the on-going potential for flooding in Heasley Mill, considered to be causeable by the frequent natural blocking by plant/foliage debris of the opening to the privately-owned culvert behind the village hall - rain water in such instances, naturally flowed through the village hall’s car park and flooded the lower part of the village. The matter was complicated by potential legal ambiguity. The culvert lay on land which was for sale by trustees.
Generally, the landowner was thought to be responsible for drainage issues although the legal position was clouded by a combination of DCC and NDC having installed the culvert in the past, after which time various laws either may or may not have absolved it of any future responsibility. There were three landowners potentially involved in the issue: the private landowner of the field in which the opening to the culvert lay; the village hall's trustees in respect of the drainage underneath the hall and DCC in respect of the road and potentially for the equipment it had originally installed in collaboration with NDC. Cllr Smaldon advised clirs that the landowner could seek advice on the issue from DCC for a fee of £50.00. Cllr Geen, one of the field's trustees, was making enquiries on the legal position and would revert with information at the Parish Council’s next meeting. Clirs were keen to clarify and resolve the issue but agreed to hold any decision-making in abeyance.

Clirs agreed for Chairman Bulled to instruct South Molton Town Council’s weed-spraying contractor to commence such work in North Molton as soon as possible.

**Appointment of 2016/7 Internal Auditor**

Clirs agreed, unanimously, for the Clerk to appoint Mrs Chugg, of Phoenix Book-keeping in Chulmleigh to carry out the internal audit.

**Consideration of A Scheme Towards Which S.106 Open Space Funds Of £2,330.48 Relating to Planning Application: 53512, (Litchaton Farm), Could Be Utilised**

**Action:** Clirs agreed, unanimously for the Clerk to invite the village halls and the Sports Club to bid for funding at the Annual Meeting of The Parish of North Molton on 10th May, 2017.

**Consideration Of The Annual Inspection Report By RoSPA On Laurels Playground**

**Action:** Following RoSpa’s comment that the litter-bin should be positioned at least 2m away from seating and 3m away from an entrance, clirs agreed unanimously for the existing litter-bin to be removed from the playground and for Clirs Kelland & Procter to monitor the situation.

**Decision To Be Made On The Way Forwards Vis-a-Vis The Current ‘No Dogs Allowed’ Sign in Laurels Playground**

After careful consideration, clirs agreed by a majority to continue to exclude all dogs, including, guide dogs on the grounds of Health & Safety - there was one abstention.

**Consideration Of How The Adopted BT Phone Box In The Square Is To Be Utilised**

Although no actual vote was taken, clirs agreed, broadly, that the phone-box could be used as an information facility which could incorporate a past and forthcoming events diary, historical information and a map showing the location of local footpaths. **Action:** As History Society Representative, Cllr Dunn was asked to seek ideas from the History Society at its forthcoming meeting and revert.

**Consideration of Quotes Supplied By All Saints Church In Respect Of The Restoration Of The Church Tower Clock With A View To The Parish Council Providing A Grant Towards Such Costs**

**Action:** After a considered debate, clirs eligible to vote, (Cllr Geen was excluded from the vote due to his declaration of interest), agreed unanimously for the Clerk to confirm the Parish Council’s commitment of a 50% grant towards the first annual maintenance cost subject to a review of the situation thereafter.
Consideration Of The Parish Council Organising A Parish Litter Pick

The Clerk informed cllrs of the insurer’s extensive requirements to ensure sustained cover should the Parish Council organise a litter-pick in its own name. After a considered debate, cllrs agreed not to organise such an event due to the bureaucracy involved and the perception that the issue was, in any event, under control.

055/04/17 10. Chairman’s Report/Urgent Matters Brought Forward by The Chairman - The Chairman reported that Reverend Baker had intimated that he would appreciate a letter of support from the Parish Council in respect of an application by All Saints Church for Heritage Lottery Funding - he would not have the full details of where and to whom to write until May. **Action:** The Clerk is to include this issue on the May Agenda.

Chairman Bulled informed cllrs of the recent difficulties encountered by those dropping off and picking up their children at the Primary School due to OFSTED’s concerns over security with such body recommending a Health & Safety Inspection which had concluded that the main school gates should be shut at all times which had, effectively, barred cars from the turning circle and forced them to use the main road instead. The school had complied with Health & Safety’s requirements in order to pass the OFSTED Inspection but governors had overturned the decision, later, with the result that the main gates were now open to cars mornings and evenings for forty-five minutes. Security at the school was to be improved with the introduction of additional fencing and electronic gates which would be triggered to open automatically in the event of fire.

Sheila Coe, the *Footpath Warden* had reported a damaged and possibly vandalised gate on the footpath at Dure Lane to DCC.

Chairman Bulled was mindful of the new cllrs who had joined and the lack of any further introductory training courses in North Devon for the remainder of the year. She had contacted DALC which would be happy to provide a course outside its normal schedule for £250.00+ VAT - it would only be financially feasible with ten or more participants. **Action:** Following interest by some cllrs in attending such a course, cllrs agreed for Chairman Bulled to contact other local councils with a view to her securing additional delegates and making the necessary arrangements.

Chairman Bulled welcomed Miles Platt to the Parish Council.

056/04/17 11. Finance

Barclays Community Account  
Balance as at 31st March, 2017: £2,613.38

Barclays Business Premium Account  
Balance as at 31st March, 2017: £5,853.36

i) Receipts:  
a) 13th March, 2017 - NDC 2015/6 TAP Fund - £261.00;  
b) 20th March, 2017 - NDC 2016/7 TAP Fund - £961.40.

ii) Payments:  
a) **Clerk’s Net Monthly Pay & Expenses - £314.79** - Net pay: £282.24 plus contribution to telephone & office costs of £15.00 and travel expenses of £17.55.  
b) **HMRC - £211.68** - PAYE due for the period: Jan. - Mar., 2017;  
c) **DALC - £30.00** - (Training) - Attendance of Cllr Kelland on Planning Course;  
d) **TNMWD Citizens Advice - £30.00** - Grant agreed in November 2016 Minutes.

iii) Any other accounts received after preparation of agenda:

*Playsafety Ltd - £79.80* - RoSPA - Laurels Playground Inspection;  
**DALC - £30.00** - Attendance of Cllr Kelland on cllrs introductory course;  
**DALC - £243.33** - Annual Subscription; and,
Unanimously, cllrs agreed to pay the above sums.

057/04/17 12. Correspondence - None

058/04/17 13. Reports

Laurel’s Playground - Cllr Procter reported that the leaves had been cleared away.

Exmoor National Park - Parish Forum - Chairman Bulled reported that there had been a heated debate concerning the provision/maintenance of cast-iron traditional signposts - cllrs verified that the Parish of North Molton no longer had such sign-posting. Exmoor Young Voices had contributed some good points at the meeting including their observation that the national one-size-fits-all approach of 90 sq. m. of space for affordable housing was not practical for extended farming families accommodating the extra equipment and clothing involved in their line of work. Other issues included: broadband provision; woody material found in the local rivers; dog-worrying on the moor and planning issues relating to plastic windows.

059/04/17 14. Matters Brought Forward by District Councillor & County Councillor - None

Date and Time of Next Meetings:

Wednesday 10th May, 2017 at 7.30 pm - Annual Meeting Of The Parish Of North Molton & Annual Meeting Of North Molton Parish Council;


The Meeting closed at 10.25 p.m.