

NORTH HUISH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd May 2017 at St James Church, Avonwick

Mr. Richard Hoskings, a candidate for the forthcoming County Council Elections, introduced himself to the Council and answered Councillors' questions.

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PRESENT: Councillors Bell, Gabriel, Hunt, Luscombe, Seager-Berry and District and Parish Councillor Steer.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Grevatt

ELECTION: The clerk called for nominees to take the chair for the year ahead. Councillor Gabriel was proposed by Councillor Hunt seconded by Seager-Berry. There being no other nominees Councillor Gabriel was elected. The Chairman called for nominees for Vice Chairman. Councillor Seager-Berry was proposed by Councillor Steer seconded by Councillor Luscombe. There being no other nominees Councillor Seager-Berry was elected.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Chairman's Report: Councillor Gabriel reported on the progress of the Parish over the preceding twelve months. He stated that in a year beset by elections and referenda we have been mercifully free of one. However we still had to pay from the precept the electoral expenses from 2015.

Councillor Gabriel reported that we were pleased to receive £1000 from SHDC for road maintenance: clearing buddle holes: cleaning of road signs etc. We have appointed John Widdicombe to undertake this work as he has all the necessary qualifications: certificates etc. We have been very pleased with the quality of his work and speed of response to requests for work to be done and extend our thanks for this.

Unfortunately this £1000 was a one-off payment. All grants of this nature for the current year have been siphoned off for projects in Totnes which seems rather inequitable.

As maintenance of the Parish byways is an important responsibility we have taken the unusual step of increasing the precept to continue this work and again we have asked Mr Widdicombe to carry out this work. This is something of a departure for North Huish as we are very reluctant to increase the precept and with it our element of the local Council Tax.

Maintenance of the play park has been something of a thorny issue as successive health and safety inspections bring up a series of minor problems that we are required to address in order to keep the park open. Unfortunately advice as to how to rectify problems is often contradictory. With this in mind it was decided to contract the work to SHDC and let them sort it out themselves.

Ground maintenance of the park has been carried out by RCN Landscapes (Rob Northmore) who have done an excellent job at highly competitive rates. This contract as, therefore, been re-allocated to RCN Landscapes.

Councillor Gabriel noted that once again we had permitted the use of the play park for the annual Apple Pie Fair in support of the Community Hall Project. As before this event was deemed a great success.

The new revamped Parish Council website has been performing very well thanks to the efforts of Councillors Grevatt and Bell. Meetings are now routinely recorded and these recordings are available to the public.

Thanks to the efforts of the clerk we have been able to secure funds for the acquisition of a computer laptop and associated software for use on Parish Council business.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Gabriel wished to thank the clerk for his continued work on behalf of the Council. Councillor Gabriel also wished to thank Mrs Seager-Berry for allowing us the continued use of the church for our meetings and he thanked the Councillors for their voluntary, unpaid and sometimes thankless efforts on behalf of the Council.

Feoffees Report. Councillor Seager-Berry reported that the trustees of North Huish Feoffees, Bowden and Perring Charity – Mr John Hall Chairman, Mrs Janet Cousins Secretary/Treasurer, Mr Mike Bradley, Mrs Maggie Luscombe, Cmdr. Andrew Mitchell, Mrs Valerie Pearse and Mrs Marigold Seager-Berry met twice in 2016. In June and December prior to Christmas 2016. At this meeting the Trustees allocated £400 (£100 to each of four families) and £50 to a couple who live in the Parish and had had their house flooded after a severe rain fall. This left a balance which the trustees agreed could be allocated if there was anyone in need during the coming year.

The rent from the field known as Mary Park provides the funds to distribute in the Parish.

Janet Cousins resigned from the Trust and as the treasurer. Jonathan Bell has been appointed as a Trustee and is to become the new treasurer.

Flowers were given to Janet in acknowledgment of her work for the trust.

The Chairman of the Avonwick and North Huish Community Hall Project, Mr P Tyler, submitted the following report:

The last 12 months have been a challenging time for the Project and whilst some progress has been made the challenges of lack of volunteers for Committee and for the Apple Pie Fair have led to committee members taking a well earned rest from November till April.

During the year the conclusions of the Feasibility Study were drawn together.

In addition to the Community Survey previously reported to the Parish Council, the remainder of the work related to a Capital Funding Plan (a Sustainable Revenue Plan awaits in the next stage of Grant Funding application requirements, see below) and to site suitability for development.

It appears that the site for a community hall offered by the developers of Higher Moor to secure their permission was not tested by South Hams District Council for suitability before being accepted. In particular no advice was sought at that time from the Highway Authority who, it now transpires, require a larger site to accommodate their parking requirements.

Discussions with the Landowner are ongoing but another site, and a whole new feasibility study, may be required if these cannot be concluded successfully.

If no site is available the project will be unable to proceed and will leave the parish without this community facility which so many had hoped for.

Assuming the site issue can be resolved the Committee will then face the next stage of Grant Funding requirements, a major task of investigating whether there is a sustainable future for a Community Hall in the Parish. The tests for this next stage are rigorous, as they should be, and a large volume of evidence will be required. No advancement to the next stage of application for funding can take place until this is satisfied. Clearly, if there is insufficient evidence of a sustainable income to support the Hall there would be no point in proceeding as any Hall would quickly become a 'white elephant', which no one would want to happen.

On a more positive note, last September saw another successful Apple Pie Fair attracting more than 300 people and raising more than £1400 for the work of the project.

With monies raised from previous years a new marquee was purchased for the event which proved very successful and gave a larger amount of undercover space for the event. The marquee will now be available for future community events without further cost.

However, plans are on hold for another Apple Pie Fair this year as the project's future is uncertain until community hall site issues are resolved. Assuming the project proceeds then a date of 24th September has been set for the event.

Whilst this is a tremendous community event run for 3 years now, unfortunately, last year the whole event was carried by a committee of just 6 people and on the day there were only 10 manning the stalls and running the whole event. This is a huge burden on so few and is unsustainable. It will require more help this year if it is to be possible to run the event again.

We welcome the endorsement from the Parish Council for the work so far achieved by the Project and we look forward to further progress in the year ahead.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

OPEN FORUM:

There were no members of the public present. The unlawful cutting of the roadside hedge bordering the solar farm near Blue Post was noted. This is receiving the attention of the District Council. Concern was raised over the lack of advance notice of the cycle race through Avonwick on 29th April Attn Clerk. Concern was also raised over the lack of notice by Western Power over the recent work carried out along the Brent road from Avonwick. The clerk was asked to remind Devon Highways of the need to deal with the street name sign at Church Walk in Avonwick. The Council was asked what help it was giving to the defibrillator appeal in Avonwick. As yet the Council has not been asked for help. The Council was informed of a recent road traffic accident outside the church in Avonwick. Damage had been caused to the church gate which needs to be repaired.

The **MINUTES** of the meeting held on 4th April 2017 were confirmed and signed. Proposed Councillor Bell seconded Councillor Steer.

MATTERS ARISING:

The knotweed on the Brent road has been treated even though the clerk had been informed that Devon Highways would take no action until it had penetrated the adjoining fields. The clerk has been informed that the Parish does qualify for New Homes Bonus money and an application would be considered when the cash is next on offer.

REPORTS: There was no report from County Councillor Vint. District Councillor Steer reported that planning applications were up by 25% and that this seems to result from people making improvements to homes rather than moving house. Cllr Steer informed the Council

that at the next District Council meeting the election of the new Chairman and Vice Chairman would take place.

FINANCE:

This balance is made up as follows:

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| Balance c/f | £ 8176.89 | P3 Money | £ 149.40 |
| Income (interest) | £ 0.36 | Council funds | £ 8722.36 |
| Trans code grant | £ 709.50 | | |
| Expenditure (website) | <u>£ 14.99</u> | | |
| Balance c/f | <u>£ 8871.66</u> | Total | <u>£ 8871.66</u> |

The Council agreed to purchase a Laptop Computer, a case, a mouse and software. The Council also agreed to pay the Annual Insurance. The clerk would confirm the cost of this once it had been agreed with the insurers. It was expected that the cost would be less than last year. The Council agreed to pay an hourly rate of £20 for necessary road maintenance work.

The Council considered approved and signed the Annual Governance Statement.

The Council then considered, approved and signed the Accounting Statement for 2016/17

HIGHWAY MATTERS: The state of the entrance to Cobbly Walk (Totnes road end) has been brought to the attention of Devon Highways. Their response was that there was no money available to deal with it.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS: Purchase of a scanner

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 6th June 2017 at 7.30pm at St James Church, Avonwick.