

Chair: Kevin Smith

**Action**

**23/469 Present**

Cllr Sheila Churchward (SC), Cllr John Goodey (JG), Cllr Sarah Ladyman (SL), Cllr Lisa May (LM), Cllr Charles Nuttall (CN), Cllr Kevin Smith (KS), Cllr Lorne Smyth (LS), Cllr Gary Wheatley (GW), Cllr Adrian Wood (AW).

Clerk: Mrs Jill Daw (JD)

Deputy Clerk: Mrs Helen Hibbins (HH)

Teignbridge District Councillor: Charles Nuttall (CN)

Public: 1

**23/470 Apologies received from**

Cllr Nicola Guagliardo (NG) – personal reasons

**23/471 Declaration of interest on Agenda Items**

Cllr Wood declared an interest in item 23/482 and would not speak or vote on the item.

Cllr Smith mentioned that he was a member of the Twinning Association (23/483).

**23/472 Dispensation requests regarding Code of Conduct**

None received.

**23/473 Public open session (maximum 10 minutes)**

Comments:

1. Overgrown vegetation was encroaching on the bus stop outside Spurfield House. The Clerk would contact the owner.

JD

**23/474 To confirm the Draft Minutes of the EPC Meeting held on 2 October 2023 are an accurate record**

Resolved.

**23/475 Clerk's Report**

1. Regarding the land that was formerly Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space at Sentry's Orchard – Teignbridge District Council (TDC) had written to Vistry informing them that if the field was kept open, a strategy needed to be put forward for management of the dog bins.

**Action**

2. A letter from a resident regarding the Parish Council's use of pesticides for weed killing was circulated in hard copy. The resident had requested that the full Parish Council was made aware of the questions raised and awaited answers. Discussion on the item suggested that the environmental benefits of banning pesticides should be focussed on rather than the effect on human health; some "expert" advice was required but it might be difficult to source unbiased advice; could other local authorities who had become pesticide free be asked; had the local authorities who had gone pesticide free consulted with residents? It was agreed that the Clerk, Cllrs Wheatley and Smith would consider a response and bring it back as an agenda item.
3. An email had been received from a resident whose property backed onto the Wilderness asking for a tree to be trimmed.
4. An anonymous letter and supporting documents had been received reporting a potential planning infringement. Cllr Churchward had investigated the issue. The planning application had been refused but work had gone ahead, allegedly by permitted development due to a reduction in floor area. Cllr Churchward's findings would be relayed to the Clerk.
5. The Tennis Court and MUGA had been cleaned and relined.
6. An addendum to the TDC Local Plan 2020-2040 would be discussed at the TDC Council meeting on Tuesday 17 October. If approved, a six-week consultation period would follow. Cllr Nuttall would be at the meeting and would send the information through to the Clerk.

JD/KS/  
GW

The Chair advised that items 488 and 490 were withdrawn as they were incorrectly stated on the agenda.

**23/476 To note receipt of the monthly Police report**

Noted.

**23/477 To finalise arrangements for the Remembrance Day service**

The service would take place on Sunday 12 November in the Victory Hall at 10:45, proceeding to the Church after the two minutes silence.

Cllr Churchward would reading the Psalm during the Church service and a suitable poem at the Victory Hall service.

Cllr May would read the Roll of Honour.

Cllr Smith would lay the wreath.

All Councillors are invited to attend.

SC/LM/  
KS

**23/478 To update Council on a forum held at Teignbridge District Council offices aimed at fostering a stronger and more collaborative relationship between them and the district, attended by Cllrs Churchward and Goodey.**

**Action**

Cllrs Churchward and Goodey reported on the meeting highlighting the following points:

- Over 40 parishes were represented.
- There was currently a backlog of 200 planning applications per month, despite some of the work being outsourced to Capita.
- Planning fees were not covering the costs of running the department.
- A more collaborative approach between TDC and parish/town councils was required with some responsibilities that were not exclusive to District Councils being transferred to those councils. These would be outlined in TDC's strategy review that is due for completion in June 2024, although it is likely that some of the information would be available in Spring 2024 when a further meeting of this group will be arranged by Devon Association of Local Councils.
- The assistance sought by TDC from the parishes would have an impact on the Parish Council's budget and precept.
- The reintroduction of Teignbridge Association of Local Councils (TALC) was mentioned as a conduit, but TDC officers did not appear enthusiastic about this.

**23/479 To confirm arrangements for the annual Staff Performance Review – Chairman**

An email would be sent to all Councillors inviting input on staffing matters. The anonymous feedback would be incorporated into the review process.

Another Councillor was required to assist the Chair with the review meetings. KS/ALL

**PROPERTY & AMENITIES MATTERS**

**23/480 To agree a quote of £2280 + VAT to replace the picket fence at the boundary of the under 8 play area and the pétanque terrain**

Three quotations had been sought.

It was resolved to appoint Premier Fencing and Astro Ltd to undertake the work. JD

It was noted that the work could be funded from the sinking fund or with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

**23/481 To agree the replacement of the basket swing seat in Deepway Green in the sum of £984.90 + VAT**

Resolved.

The work would be carried out by the Parish Council's regular playground contractor, Ministry of Play. HH

It was noted that this work could be funded by CIL.

**Action**

**23/482 To consider whether to seek a second opinion on work recommended to named trees on Council land as per minute 23/433, in the sum of £180 + VAT**

Two companies had been asked for a cost to look at the 8 trees on which work was proposed in the annual tree survey.

It was resolved to appoint Advanced Arboriculture to undertake assessment of the proposed work.

Questions were raised about who would carry out any work identified in the survey. It was agreed that it would be done by the existing contractor (Riviera Tree Care).

JD

**23/483 To consider a request from Exminster Twinning association to use Deepway car park as a car washing area to raise funds.**

It was confirmed that the Deepway Centre Trust were aware of the proposed event to take place on Saturday 21 October.

It was resolved to approve the request.

JD

**FINANCE MATTERS**

**23/484 RFO's report**

1. Direct Debits during September 2023

	£
NatWest Bankline	7.20
Utility Warehouse	-64.45
EE	35.98
NEST	184.12

2. The Government's Digital Service had announced that the requirement on all public bodies' websites was likely to change from WCAG2.1AA level to WCAG2.2AA compliance from October 2024. The Parish Council's existing contract with Aubergine would ensure that the correct compliance level was maintained.

3. Following a training session, it was suggested that a sector specific IT provider was asked to look at the Parish Council's requirements for MS office and email.

Council agreed that this was a good idea to be researched further.

HH

**23/485 Accounts for Approval**

It was resolved to approve payments in the sum of £11,419.59.

HH

**23/486 Draft accounts for September 2023**

1. **Budget Comparison Report**

Noted.

**Action**

**2. Balance Sheet**

Noted.

**23/487 To appoint an Internal Auditor for 2023-24 Financial Year**

The Parish Council's Internal Auditor had advised that she would not be carrying out year-end audits for 2023-24. It was also good practice for the Parish Council to change Internal Auditor periodically.

A report with three quotations had been circulated. All Auditors were members of the Internal Audit Forum and would carry out the audit remotely to keep costs down.

It was resolved to appoint Paul Russell as the Internal Auditor in the sum of £295 plus VAT.

HH

**23/488 To agree the following – Chairman**

This item was withdrawn.

- 1. To set up a Finance Working Party**
- 2. If the above is resolved to dissolve the Budget Working Party**

**23/489 To receive nominations for the role of Finance Lead Councillor**

Cllr Wood expressed an interest in the role subject to a Finance Working Party being formed with suitable Terms of Reference.

**23/490 If item 23/488.1 above is agreed:**

This item was withdrawn.

- 1. To approve its Terms of Reference**
- 2. To accept nominations to the Finance Working Party**

**PLANNING MATTERS**

**23/491 Planning Applications**

- 1. 23/01708/HOU, 8 Berrybrook Meadow, - Single storey side extension including realignment of existing 1.8m high masonry screen wall**

Cllr Churchward explained the application.

It was resolved to support the application with the following comments:

- A Traffic Management Plan should be given to the contractor/s to make them aware of and be understanding of residents accessing their homes in the cul-de-sac during development.

**Action**

- It is suggested that the developer works Mon-Fri 8-5 and Sat 8-12 for the amenity of neighbours.
- Exminster Parish Council request that all development within the Parish includes biodiversity enhancement measures such as bat, bee, bird, hedgehog and insect habitats.

HH

**23/492 Planning Decisions**

1. **20/00291/MAJ, Land Off Chudleigh Road, Alphington - 45 residential apartments (Build for Rent) and associated car parking (Revised description) – Informed by Teignbridge District Council that this application will now NOT be considered by their next Planning Committee.**

Cllr Churchward had received an update to this item since the agenda had been issued stating that the application would go to the Full Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday 24 October for consideration. Unfortunately, there was no-one available from the Parish Council to speak at the meeting.

**23/493 With reference to the current planning applications for the Electricity sub-station and Lower Brenton Farm Landfill site:**

**It is proposed by Councillors Goodey, Wheatley and Wood that further letters are sent by EPC to Teignbridge District Council and (DCC) (draft letters attached)**

Cllr Wheatley explained that the proposed letters were follow-ups to the letter sent to DCC regarding the electricity substation and the landfill site and also the Community Centre. [The original letter was not sent by the Parish Council, but by Cllrs Goodey, Wheatley and Wood, however the letter and the response had been circulated to all Councillors].

Cllr Wood outlined the issues with the substation:

- Why was the location of the substation not confirmed before the Matford Home Farm planning application was granted outline permission in November 2020?
- It was unclear exactly when the electricity upgrade was required – before the 2500 new homes were completed, triggered by the West Exe Park employment park or something else?
- There were potential financial implications for the Parish, due to delayed sales within the neighbouring Cavanna development and a reduction (or possibly a complete stop) to housing development at Matford Home Farm. This would impact on rental income for the Community Centre, lower CIL (circa £1M) and precept (£18K per annum) receipts.

None of the above had been acknowledged by DCC to date.

**Action**

It was noted that rather sending as a letter, this could be used when a representative from the Parish Council spoke at the TDC Planning Committee Meeting when the application was discussed. It was clarified that the letter would reassure residents that the Parish Council continued to pursue the issue forcefully.

It was noted that the finances mentioned above were not explicit in the draft letter, and Cllr Wood stated this was deliberate. It was also noted that the Parish Council's robust objection to the application was not mentioned.

It was suggested that the letter could say that the Parish Council would encourage the substation to be built at Peamore as it was realised that it was needed for the West Exe Park industrial estate.

Cllr Goodey spoke regarding the environmental concerns of the Lower Brenton Farm Landfill planning application. It was important to make DCC and TDC aware of the potential detriment to the environment through pollution of the Berrybrook that ran on into the Exe estuary.

It was clarified that the DCC officers mentioned in the last paragraph were environment officers. It was suggested that this was made explicit in the letter and also to reference the report and the fact that the Parish Council objected to the application.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was agreed to amend the letters as follows:

- encouraging that the substation was located at Peamore
- referencing the Parish Council's objections to the applications
- clarifying DCC's environment officers in the last paragraph regarding the landfill site

AW/JD

It was resolved that once amended the Clerk would send the letters on behalf of the Parish Council.

**23/494 To note any planning matters regarding the Matford development**

Cllr Nuttall left the meeting.

**1. Planning**

No update.

**2. Community Centre**

A meeting had taken place with representatives from DCC and the NHS on Monday 9 October.

- DCC had confirmed the conditions allocated to the Parish Council's acceptance of ownership of the building.
- A mini competition with 4 contractors had already taken place. A preferred contractor had been chosen with a deadline to deliver the tender by mid-December.

**Action**

- Work would start on site in January 2024 with completion in January 2025.
- It was expected that the land would be transferred from Vistry directly to the NHS and Parish Council. Legal advice needed to be sought on this and the Deputy Clerk would contact Tozers in the first instance.
- DCC would require a licence to build on the land as they would not own it. This would either be granted by NHS/Parish Council or Vistry – depending when the land was transferred.
- It was likely that the adjacent land (that could potentially be a car park) would be offered at the same time. DCC would ask the architect how many spaces could be achieved and how it could be accessed.
- The level of support that DCC could provide until handover was discussed. The Parish Council would need specialist help in project management/procurement.

Two Matford Working Party meetings would take place this week. On the agenda was:

- The quotation and specification for the Community Enabler.
- Car Park.
- Obtaining specialist support
- A name for the building.

It was resolved to bring item 23/496 forward.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN MATTERS**

**23/496 Update on Progress with the Neighbourhood Development Plan**

1. **Notification that the Working Party have agreed to adopt the Cirl Bunting (photo attached) as its emblem for the Neighbourhood Development Plan and a proposal from Councillor Wood that EPC considers doing the same for its website**

Cllr Churchward and the RFO were thanked for putting the logo together.

It was resolved that the Cirl Bunting photograph should be published on the home page of the Parish Council website but should not form part of the Parish Council's logo and not used on other material.

HH

2. **Update on the total number of completed short-form questionnaires received split between paper and online**



**Action**

Over 200 questionnaires had been received (online and in hard copy).

At least a further 100 were required. TDC would be advised of all the events that had been attended and efforts made to promote participation.

Additional Councillors were required to help with the event in the village centre on 28 October and Councillors were encouraged to ask neighbours and friends to fill in questionnaires.

ALL

Cllr Smith would take copies of the questionnaire to the Twinning Association Car Wash event at Deepway on 21 October.

KS

**3. Proposal from Councillors Goodey and Wood that a contract (see draft attached) is awarded to Devon Communities Together to cover support for the ENDP until February 2024**

The Contract was broadly in line with the figures used in the Locality grant. The work needed to be completed by February/March 2024.

Cllr Wood outlined the deadlines that needed to be met:

Before Christmas

- obtain sufficient completed short form questionnaires
- agree the questions for the household questionnaire and gain approval from TDC
- print the questionnaire and make arrangements for distribution in January
- deliver and collect the questionnaires
- pass questionnaires to DCT for analysis

Cllr Wood explained the make up of the household questionnaire that would be in 3 parts; demographics, questions and housing needs. With experience from the process at Kenn, it was anticipated that the total questionnaire would be 12 A4 pages. This would reduce print and analysis costs compared with the original 16-page quotation. It was likely that with help from TDC and DCT, generic housing needs questions could be generated for use by Kenn and Exminster. It was possible that further costs may be incurred from DCT for this of approximately £2,000. Kenn would not be asked for a contribution towards this due to the level of support received in applying for the Locality Grant etc.

The following questions were raised:

- Why were two questionnaires proposed; one for Matford and one for Exminster?

**Action**

It was explained that this was not set in stone and that the questionnaire would need the approval of the Full Parish Council but there would be differing needs for Matford from Exminster.

- Why was no online questionnaire proposed?

From past experience, it would be easier to chase non-responders and drive a better return rate and it encouraged buy in for the referendum.

- Should the contract be looked at by a solicitor?

This was a standard form contract and Cllr Wood stated this was not necessary.

It was resolved to approve the contract with DCT subject to a satisfactory outcome on the housing needs questions costing no more than an additional £2,000 plus VAT in excess of the quoted figure of £11,350 plus VAT.

AW

Standing orders were suspended to allow completion of business after 9pm.

**Environmental Matters**

**23/495 To propose blocking access between the oak trees in Crockwell's Meadow and relocating the two benches to an alternative location within the meadow – Cllr Ladyman**

Cllr Ladyman referenced her report and invited questions.

Questions were raised that the effect of the proposal would negate the resolution made on the 21 August, to reverse a resolution within 6 months required actions as per Standing Orders. Cllr Ladyman stated that it was not her intention to reverse the resolution and in her view this was a different proposal.

It was clarified that there was now a TPO on the trees and work could not take place to them until permission had been granted by TDC but once permission had been granted it would continue.

Questions were raised about the implications if the area was deemed unsafe for seating, whether the whole area would then need to be made inaccessible.

The advice from the Arboricultural consultants was that the area was low risk as long as the trees were maintained as recommended and could still be accessed by members of the public.

There were no costings provided for removal and reinstallation of the benches. The proposal was withdrawn.

The meeting closed at 21:24

Date of next meeting: Monday 6 November 2023 at 19:00 in the Victory Hall

Signed:...Kevin Smith..... Date:...6 November 2023...