

Chair: Kevin Smith

Action

24/57 Present

Cllr Sheila Churchward (SC), Cllr John Goodey (JG), Cllr Nicola Guagliardo (NG), Cllr Sarah Ladyman (SL), Cllr Lisa May (LM), Cllr Kevin Smith (KS), Cllr Lorne Smyth (LS), Cllr Adrian Wood (AW).

Deputy Clerk: Mrs Helen Hibbins (HH)

Devon County Councillor: Alan Connett (AC)

Teignbridge District Councillor: Kevin Andrew Lake (KAL)

Public: 4

24/58 Apologies received from

Cllr Charles Nuttall (CN) – personal reasons

Cllr Gary Wheatley (GW) – work commitment

24/59 Declaration of interest on Agenda Items

None declared.

24/60 Dispensation requests regarding Code of Conduct

None received.

24/61 Public open session (maximum 10 minutes)

No comments.

24/62 To confirm the Draft Minutes of the EPC Meeting held on the 15 January 2024 are an accurate record

Resolved.

24/63 County Councillors Report on items other than those on the agenda

Devon County Councillor Alan Connett reported:

1. Following reports of overgrown vegetation presenting a safety hazard to pedestrians in Deepway Lane, a Highways officer had inspected and deemed that it did not meet the threshold for intervention. Due to the width of the lane, he believed that the threshold requirements were not appropriate and would continue to pursue the matter.

Action

24/64 District Councillors Reports on items other than those on the agenda

Teignbridge District Councillor Kevin Andrew Lake reported:

1. Teignbridge District Council (TDC) had imposed a community order, with a five-month compliance deadline, on a landowner due to an obstruction caused by fly-tipped rubbish in a gateway on Deepway Lane.
2. A response had been received from MP Mel Stride regarding the Matford Brook Academy construction issues. This had been forwarded to the Clerk.
3. Resurfacing was underway on Main Road throughout the village. Reddaway Drive had also been mentioned to Devon County Council (DCC) Highways officers as there were signs of deterioration.
4. There had been numerous reports of dog fouling throughout the village. The TDC Dog Warden would attend to investigate and put up signage.
5. A resident was concerned about access to properties in the roads off Milbury Lane and wanted an alternative route to be opened. DCC Highways had been contacted to ask whether this was feasible, either via Milbury Reach or Crockwells Road. Once a response had been received from Highways, Cllr Lake would commission a survey of residents. It was noted that this was a longstanding matter that had recently been exacerbated by the emergency repairs to the fractured main sewer on the marshes. Cllr May noted that an alternative route through Milbury Reach had been proposed at some point, but that it had been dismissed at a high level.
6. The street lights in Deepway Car park were not working.
7. Residents of Peamore were concerned by the removal of two bus stops on the A379. Stagecoach had been contacted and asked for an explanation.

JD/HH

It was resolved to bring items 24/73 and 24/74 up the agenda to be heard next while Cllr Connett was present.

24/73 Update on Housing Trajectory and projections

Cllr Wood reported that an updated report had been received from Consult QRD.

Based on benchmarks from other projects, the build cost was approximately 50% to 75% higher than might be expected at a more straightforward location. Rather than £4.2 million, a typical cost would be between £2.4 million and £2.8 million. Was DCC getting value for money?

Action

It was queried whether this cost would be a more meaningful baseline from which to calculate running costs.

As expected, with the housing trajectory being pushed back four years, the deficit funding had increased. Using the figures produced that allow for inflation, in the period from 1 April 2025 to the point where 90% of the housing is built, the deficits total £888k compared to £486k, equivalent to an average £71 per annum per household over the ten-year period.

AW/HH

Further work was required and a report comparing this facility with other community buildings was being prepared to for a Parish Council meeting in March.

24/74 To approve the draft letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF)

The letter drafted by Cllrs Goodey, Wheatley and Wood had been circulated.

The letter outlined concerns about items that had been removed from the HIF bid that went against the principle of the funding. A 5-year extension to the funding deadline was sought and it was envisaged that the letter would assist DCC in achieving this.

Discussion about the extent of the Spine Road ensued. Clarification should be sought with DCC about the impact on Chudleigh Road. Cllr Churchward was particularly concerned for the safety of children travelling to and from Matford Brook Academy.

HH

The following amendments to the letter were agreed:

- Para 2 – "...the award of £55.1 million was granted to DCC to facilitate the development of *the infrastructure required to support 2,500 new homes in the South West of Exeter...*"
- Community Building – amend to "...there were concerns raised about the post build cost of running *and maintaining the external features of the building.*"
- Southern Spine Road – add that the delay in connectivity between the sites and Matford Brook Academy would be detrimental to the safety of pupils walking/cycling to school.
- Last para – "...rather than trying to fix *problems* in the future."

It was resolved to send the amended letter to those included on the distribution list.

JG/HH

24/65 Chair's Report

1. The Green Spaces Group was congratulated for the Wassail on Saturday 27 January. It was enjoyed by the large number of people who attended.

Action

24/66 Clerk's Report

1. Items circulated by email: Citizens Advice Q3 report, Notes of the Environment Working Party meeting on 17 January, One Devon (NHS) bulletin, Exminster Outlook (Methodist Church publication).
2. A consultation on street name and numbering by TDC is open until 11 March. The three questions would be circulated and discussed at the next Parish Council meeting to formulate a response. HH
3. DALC is requesting nominations for tickets to the Royal Garden Party 2024. The deadline for applications is 21 February. It was noted that the criteria for nominations had expanded. To be on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting. HH
4. Several reports of overgrown hedges had been received throughout the village, including Deepway Lane, Days Pottles Lane and Main Road opposite the Manor where the high-level growth was causing buses to travel in the middle of the road. All had been reported to DCC using their online facility and followed up by email.
5. A resident had expressed concern about inadequate signage at the Swans Nest Roundabout that they believed contributed to an accident involving a cyclist exiting Station Road. The concerns had been passed on to DCC.
6. Emails had been received regarding the roadworks taking place in the village throughout February. DCC had a dedicated webpage for the works and this had been advertised on Facebook.
7. A resident was concerned about the ongoing challenges of access in and out of Milbury Lane, lack of parking enforcement and no option for an alternative route to reach the properties and roads off it. This was impacting the safety of pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists. This had been exacerbated by the issues with the sewage tankering required because of the fractured main.
8. A tree in the cemetery was leaning at an odd angle. Cllr Ladyman agreed to investigate. It was suggested that the tree was put on the list for the annual survey when the Clerk returned. In the meantime, the Deputy Clerk had delegated authority to engage the services of a tree specialist if it presented a health and safety concern. SL/HH

24/67 Recruitment of an additional member of staff

At its meeting on 15 January 2024, Council agreed to include in the 2024/25 Budget the costs of an additional part-time clerical post.

Discussions had taken place with the Clerks, led by the Chair. Their proposals for a job description, person specification and a job evaluation for the new post

Action

based on the methodology previously used for the Clerks were circulated to the members of the Finance Working Party (FWP).

The FWP meeting held on 24 January 2024 discussed the proposals and with some minor amendments supported:

- The Job description
- The Person specification
- The Job evaluation

The FWP also considered and supported the 'places' that would be used for advertising the role.

- a) **It is proposed that applicants be sought for the new, part-time role of Finance and General Administration Clerk based on the job description, the person specification, the job evaluation, the timetable, and advert circulated.**

HH

Resolved.

- b) **If (a) is resolved, then the Clerks are authorised to spend up to £1,000 (plus VAT if applicable) in total on printing, stationery, postage, and any other associated cost including room hire for the interviews.**

24/68 To discuss the format and content of Parish Council meeting minutes

Cllr Ladyman explained why she had asked for this item to be on the agenda: Agreeing draft minutes had become a protracted process due to discussion about discrepancies about conversations that had taken place. Should consideration be given to recording resolutions only without summarising discussion?

Discussion on the pros and cons ensued. It was suggested that the audio recording of meetings would be an alternative to summarising discussions,

It was agreed that the audio recording of meetings should be explored further. Confirmation of the legalities should be sought, alongside practice of other authorities, consideration of retention times and capital outlay.

HH

24/69 To receive a progress update on Highways Issues

Cllr Nuttall's update had been circulated by email.

DCC did not wish to install a 20mph speed limit that would not be complied with.

A further meeting with Richard Kingsley-Smith (DCC Highways) would take place when the speed data for Lower Duck Street and Reddaway Drive was available.

	Action
Cllr Churchward raised concerns about the delays in moving this project forward and would progress the matter in Cllr Nuttall's absence.	SC
24/70 <u>Code of Conduct, Social Media and Communications reminder</u>	
Cllr May explained that she, the Chair and the Deputy Clerk would be reviewing and updating the Parish Council's Media Relations Policy with specific emphasis on conduct on Social Media, being a key factor in community engagement.	KS/LM/ HH
Reference was made to the Code of Conduct.	
Councillors were directed to sources of information, advice and training through DALC, the Local Government Association and the Good Councillors Guide 2018.	ALL
24/71 <u>To approve a variance of the Officers' contracts of employment to allow annual leave in excess of one week to be carried forward to the next financial year, from this current financial year only, with the agreement of the staff</u>	
Resolved.	JD
FINANCE MATTERS	
24/72 <u>Payments for Approval</u>	
It was resolved to approve payments in the sum of £1050.30.	HH
24/75 <u>The Finance Working Party recommends adoption of the following revised policies:</u>	
1. Investment Strategy for the 2024/25 Financial Year	
Cllr Wood explained that both the policies were reviewed taking into account the latest advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks and many examples from town councils.	
Town councils were chosen as the issues for Exminster were similar. The Parish Council's deposits are not guaranteed by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme as the annual income exceeds the limit, the cash balances are large and significant development is taking place within the parish increasing the population to that usually supported by a town council.	
Cllr Churchward was concerned at the lack of an ethical statement in the policy and cited the ethical statement from Unity Trust bank as being appropriate.	

Action

It was noted that none of the policies that had been considered included one and that there were strict Government imposed constraints about investments and providers.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was agreed to add e) to the policy objectives (section 3) as follows:

“e) If the criteria outlined in a) – d) are satisfied then the most ethical option will be taken.”

Resolved.

HH

2. Reserves Policy

Cllr Churchward was concerned about the lack of an ethical statement in the policy.

It was considered that this was not appropriate or relevant in this particular policy.

It was resolved to approve the Reserves Policy without amendment.

HH

It was agreed to seek clarity of the responsibilities of a Parish Council as a legal entity.

HH

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) MATTERS

24/76 To receive an update on NDP matters

845 questionnaires had been delivered to Devon Communities Together (DCT) for processing, equating to 38% of households. DCT considers 35-40% a good return.

All zones, treating postal as one zone, were above the statistically significant level of 17%. Questionnaires could be tracked almost down to street level for most of Exminster village. Out of 34 locations, only two of them were below 17%. To balance them, thirteen were 50% or more with the highest three being 73%, 85% and 87.5%.

Additional volunteer resources needed to be sought in less engaged locations.

Cllr Wood was thanked for organising the well-attended “Thank-you” drop-in Tea Party for volunteers on 29 January.

24/77 To approve the Update to Residents publication

It was explained that The Update built on the ‘Coming soon’ leaflet, adding more detail on what happens next and why.

Cllr May requested an amendment to the circulated version: deletion of *“This is considered a very positive response to this kind of exercise.”*

Cllr Ladyman believed that mentioning that the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party had no authority other than to make recommendations to the Parish Council, when it was comprised exclusively of Parish Councillors

Action

(unlike the Environment Working Party and Green Spaces Group) was misleading.

It was resolved to approve the Update to Residents publication with Cllr May's amendment.

HH

The update would be published on notice boards around the village, hand delivered to Matford (alongside the job advertisement) and posted to zone K residents (alongside the job advertisement), thereby incurring no additional cost.

HH

PLANNING MATTERS

24/78 Planning Applications

1. 23/02307/MAJ | Demolition of existing industrial building and erection of 44 apartments with associated landscaping and parking | Land Off Chudleigh Road Alphington Exeter EX2 9SQ

There had been many objections to the previous iteration of this application. The new proposal was a larger building, considered ugly and challenging to build because of the need for extensive foundations due to the Breccia that it would be built on.

It was resolved to object to the application for the following reasons:

HH

- The building was out of proportion and out of character with the landscape
- There was no on-site affordable housing provision

A copy of the document containing all comments, as circulated with the summons would be included with the objection.

2. 23/02300/LBC | Glazed walkway canopy, three external escape/access/egress doors and localised render repair to exposed brickwork to part rear wall at ground level | Spurfield House Main Road Exminster Devon EX6 8BU

Some concerns had been raised about overnight lighting being a nuisance to neighbouring properties. There were also queries about the location of a gas main.

It was resolved to support the application subject to

HH

- Wales and West Utilities being satisfied with the proposal.
- suitable arrangements for overnight lighting.

3. 23/02299/LBC | A walkway opening in historic cob wall | Spurfield House Main Road Exminster Devon EX6 8BU

It was noted that the proposal did not reflect the title on the planning application. The Design and Access Statement was for two modular

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buildings and a change to the cob wall. It was not clear whether there had been a change of plans as drawings for both the modular buildings had been withdrawn.

The modular buildings would increase capacity for patients.

It was resolved to object to this application due to

HH

- uncertainty about additional demand upon Westbank Surgery
- loss of privacy for residents in the Old Police House and Moles Cottages
- the installation of modular buildings in the front garden does not conserve or enhance the rural nature, existing visual landscape quality, wildlife and heritage value of the open countryside of the Parish, contrary to both EXM02 and EXM03.

4. 24/00035/FUL | Replacement dwelling | Deepway Point Exminster Devon EX6 8BQ

Cllr Churchward outlined the history of applications at this site.

It was resolved to comment on the application as follows:

HH

- The applicant should ensure that the large array of solar panels is unobtrusive in colour to meet both EXM02 and EN2A.
- Minimise the amount of waste produced and promote sustainable methods of waste management in accordance with Policy W4 of the Devon Waste Plan and the Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. Therefore, the Parish Council request that the planning officer makes a pre-commencement condition to ensure that all waste material is dealt with in a sustainable way from the outset of the development including any groundworks, demolition, construction and operation.
- Deepway Lane/Old Matford Lane is very narrow from its junction in Exminster village to the roundabout at the Devon Hotel, as is Coffin Hill. Therefore, a traffic management plan would be useful during demolition, preparation, building and finishing-off processes to reduce the impact on other users of the lanes.
- Assuming that the biodiversity issues noted in the Ecological Assessment Report are deemed suitable by the Biodiversity Officer, it would be complementary to consider Exminster Parish Council's request that all development within the Parish includes biodiversity enhancement measures such as bat, bee, bird, hedgehog and insect habitats.

5. 23/02273/MAJ | Demolition of existing dwelling, residential development of 14 dwellings (Class C3); vehicular access from Dawlish Road, pedestrian and cycle access to neighbouring site to

Action

the north; public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure | Land Off Dawlish Road Exminster Devon EX2 8XW

It was explained that the site would use the facilities of the Vistry development neighbouring it as it would infill between that and a site in the Exeter City Council boundary.

It was resolved to support the application and submit the comments document as circulated.

HH

It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue until 21:15.

24/79 Planning Decisions

Deferred.

24/80 To note any planning matters regarding the Matford development

1. Planning

No matters to report.

2. Community Centre

- a. A valuation of the additional land had been carried by Vickery Holman. The report was awaited.
- b. Notes of the Matford Working Party meeting on 31 January would be circulated.

24/81 To consider obtaining any additional legal advice regarding DCC's request to sign the licence to allow contractors to build on the land at Matford designated in the S106 agreement for the Community Centre currently in the ownership of Vistry

It was resolved to approve a budget of £1000 to obtain the necessary legal advice.

HH

PROPERTY & AMENITIES MATTERS

24/82 To update Council on matters relating to the following Trusts – Chair

1. Victory Hall Trust

2. Deepway Centre Trust

Deferred.

HH

24/83 Councillors Reports – for information only

Action

1. Cllr Churchward asked for an agenda item in March to discuss the SLCC draft response for Town and Parish Councils on biodiversity. HH

24/84 Public Open Session – (Maximum 10 minutes)

1. The volume of traffic using Milbury Lane for access had significantly increased in recent years. Commercial vehicles were parking at the junction of Milbury Lane and Milbury Close reducing visibility. There had been a lack of liaison between DCC and SWW over the recent sewer pipe fracture. Temporary lights should have been put in place to allow safe movements of the tankers. There was a high risk of accidents occurring, especially close to the zebra crossing at the top of the lane – at school drop-off/pick-up times. The lane was dangerous for pedestrians and parents should use an alternative, safer route to walk children to and from school. An alternative access route should be made.

The meeting closed at 21:15

Date of next meeting: Monday 19 February at 19:00 in the Victory Hall Annexe

Signed:...Lisa May..... Date:...19 February 2024.....