

Chair: Kevin Smith

**Action**

**24/193 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).

Clerk: Mrs Jill Daw (JD)

Deputy Clerk: Mrs Helen Hibbins (HH)

Public: 4

**24/194 Apologies received from**

Devon County Councillor Alan Connett

Teignbridge District Councillor Kevin Lake

Cllr Gary Wheatley (GW) – work commitment

Cllr Charles Nuttall (CN) – personal commitment

**24/195 Declaration of interest on Agenda Items**

None declared.

**24/196 Dispensation requests regarding Code of Conduct**

None received.

**24/197 Public open session (maximum 10 minutes)**

1. Councillors were asked to speak-up as the acoustics were poor in the hall.
2. The owners of Matford Home Farm thanked the Parish Council for objecting to the electricity substation application.
3. There was an item on the agenda regarding disbanding the Matford Working Party (MWP). Was this the time to do this when there were many outstanding issues with the development?

**24/198 To confirm the Draft Minutes of the EPC Meeting held on 2 April 2024 are an accurate record**

Resolved.

**Action**

**24/199 To confirm the Draft Minutes of the Extraordinary EPC Meeting held on 8 April 2024 are an accurate record**

Resolved.

**24/200 Clerk's Report**

1. Milbury Lane will be closed on Tuesday 25 June for a maximum of 5 days during roadworks.
2. A response from Tamsin Cook, Teignbridge District Council (TDC) planning support manager, had been received regarding the lack of notification received by the Parish Council regarding the TDC planning committee meeting on Tuesday 16 April. This was due to the database only being able to accept one call-in entry per application. Procedures had been updated accordingly to address this.
3. An email had been received from resident regarding transport arrangements for pupils attending Matford Brook Academy.
4. An email had been received from a resident complaining about the conduct of a contractor whilst strimming the grass. It would be considered by the Property and Amenities Councillor.
5. Cllr Connett had followed up on a request regarding the removal of traffic restrictions outside the Victory Hall for the Mobile Library Van that was no longer in service. It would be added to the next Highways and Traffic Order Committee (HATOC) list.

JD

GW

**24/201 To agree to suspend standing orders to allow a presentation from Ed Whitelaw of the Real Ideas Organisation, Nature and Neighbourhood Unit, on a proposal for Exminster Parish relating to community engagement**

Standing orders were suspended for the duration of this item.

Cllr Churchward introduced Ed Whitelaw and gave an overview of the work that had been carried out over the last 18 months to source assistance with community engagement.

The presentation explained that Real Ideas was a South West based organisation that had several different elements. The Nature and Neighbourhood Unit was involved with economic and sustainable development and community voice and power.

Local projects were outlined including Sherford Community Land Trust that was similar to Matford in that it was a new town with a large Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS).

Opportunities and challenges for Matford were suggested.

**Action**

The three elements of the proposal were outlined: community engagement, community building consultation and stakeholder engagement.

The Chair thanked Mr Whitelaw for the presentation, who stayed at the meeting to answer questions on the proposal.

**24/202 To note receipt of the monthly Police report**

Noted.

**24/203 To consider if support be given to Councillor Connett to apply for an ‘in principle’ request to Highways for consideration to extend double yellow lines along Milbury Lane in order to maintain access.**

In the absence of Cllr Connett, the Deputy Clerk reported that recent experience of tractors and tankers not being able to pass through Milbury Lane had generated the request. Cars parked legally in non-restricted areas had caused an issue. This was concerning as emergency vehicles may also have difficulty with access.

The intention was that Devon County Council (DCC) Highways would be asked to review the parking restrictions and, if appropriate, make new proposals to extend the double yellow lines.

Consultation would take place in the normal way and the Parish Council would also be able to make formal comments and respond.

Council agreed to support the request.

JD

**SOUTH WEST EXETER DEVELOPMENT**

**24/204 To discuss matters relating to the outcome of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on 8 April and identify avenues and issues that need to be resolved satisfactorily before proceeding.**

- **HIF extension update**

To date, there had been no response to the Parish Council’s letter to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP.

It was understood from Cllrs Connett and Lake that Mel Stride MP had highlighted the issue to Michael Gove and further correspondence was sent to Mel Stride following the Extraordinary meeting on 8 April outlining the Parish Council’s concerns.

- **Expectations for financial performance from community centres / comparisons, and what are the true costs of running the centre as designed**

Cllr Wood clarified his response to a question on maintenance costs at the Extraordinary meeting: The comparison was based on cost per square metre of rentable space. The Matford community building had a

**Action**

lower percentage of rentable space compared to Newcourt. If Matford had the same percentage of rentable space, then the gap would close slightly.

However, Newcourt was not responsible for external maintenance. Using the sinking fund as a proxy for the outside of the building and the same 0.7% of insured cost then the revised cost per rentable square metre would be £118 for both Matford and Newcourt.

The sinking fund needed to be clarified and would be added to the "Thoughts and Issues" list alongside the costs of rates, insurance and utilities that would enable the difference between Matford and Newcourt to be reconciled.

- **Timing of housing delivery and risks associated with delay / early delivery of community centre**

Cllr Wood explained the risk associated with an early delivery of a community building: If the centre was delivered close to the time housing was completed then there was less of a risk of housing being further delayed or, worse case, ceasing for an extended period.

- **Clarification of ENDP (Exminster Neighbourhood Development Plan) 2013-2033 Policy EXM1**

Cllr Wood explained that when the ENDP was prepared in 2013/14, consideration of sites for sports facilities concluded that there was not a suitable site in Exminster village or its immediate surroundings. Therefore, it would be best located in Matford if the community building(s) mentioned in the TDC Framework could be enhanced to provide adequate sports facilities for the whole Parish. Accordingly, a policy was written for the provision of sports and community facilities (EXM1).

At the Parish Council meeting on 15 August 2022, it was resolved that the Parish Council should pursue the provision of a community focussed building with DCC comprising of function rooms for general community use.

The Parish Council then objected to DCC's planning application for a community centre and GP Surgery for several reasons including: The proposal did not accord with the Neighbourhood Development Plan policy EXM1.

- **Can the Parish Council be bankrupted?**

Cllr Wood highlighted reasons why a parish council should not become bankrupted.

An appropriate level of liquid reserves should be held to ensure that bills could be paid when due (to prevent insolvency).

**Action**

Unlike County, District and Borough Councils, parish councils are not capped on any Precept increase. However, if a parish council were to put through a large increase, it may be subject to protest from residents, especially if there was no mandate from them.

If a parish council spends money according to the budgets, powers and mandates all should be well. However, if a parish council decided to act outside of its powers or ignore risks then the RFO and any chartered accountant on the council would need to blow the whistle, as authorities would consider them to have the skills to keep a parish council financially safe.

Councillors could be held personally liable if they acted without the necessary powers or ignored warnings.

While on the topic of funding, a question about the availability of funds for ENDP projects should be added to the Thoughts and Issues list because until the status of the community building was settled, there was no way of knowing what funds would be available.

- **Building construction and mutual dependencies between buildings**
- **Additional car park**
- **'Level and preformed land' / TDC as 'main alternative'**
- **What could be done to improve the revenue of the centre and to obtain other funding and grants**
- **Thoughts and ideas from Councillors received since publication of the agenda**

Cllrs Goody, Wheatley and Wood had put together a document that was circulated in hard copy at the meeting for information.

A brief discussion on the way forward ensued. It was agreed that the matter warranted urgent attention so it would be discussed before the ENDP Working Party meeting on Monday 22 April. It was noted that since it is a five Monday month, if necessary, the ENDP meeting could be moved to the 29 April.

Cllr Churchward was unavailable for the meeting on 22 April and offered apologies.

**24/205 To agree a recommendation from the Matford Working Party that it is dissolved with immediate effect – Cllr Smith**

The Working Party met on Tuesday 9 April.

There were three major areas that the Working Party had been involved in: Matford major planning applications, community enabler provision and the community building.

**Action**

Planning applications were now being dealt with by the Parish Council's standard process, the community enabler provision was being championed by Cllrs Churchward and May and the community building was interrelated with other Matford issues and decisions were being taken at full Council.

For these reasons it was concluded that the business should be dealt with at Council level.

It was resolved to dissolve the Matford Working Party.

Brian Aird was thanked for his service as a community member on the Working Party.

JD

**24/206 To accept the proposal by Real Ideas Nature and Neighbourhoods for community engagement, community building and stakeholder engagement in the sum of £15,787 plus VAT – Cllrs Churchward and May**

The proposal had three elements: community engagement, community building consultation and stakeholder engagement.

As matters relating to the community building were currently unclear (and the proposal had been prepared and received prior to recent discussions and the Extraordinary meeting) it was suggested that the community building and stakeholder engagement elements were not taken up at this time.

Standing orders were suspended to ask Ed Whitelaw whether this was possible. Mr Whitelaw confirmed that it could be done and suggested that having heard the discussion in 24/204, Real Ideas may be able to assist. It was agreed that Council would consider how to move forward with this.

Standing orders were reinstated.

It was proposed to accept the contract management and mobilisation and community engagement parts of Real Ideas proposal in the sum of £6275.00 plus VAT.

Resolved.

**24/207 To note that planning application 23/00936/MAJ - Construction of an electricity Substation at Matford - (deferred from TDC planning committee meeting on 20 February) is on the agenda for the TDC planning committee meeting on 16 April and that Cllr Wood will represent the Parish Council accompanied by Cllr Goodey as per item 24/101**

Noted.

Mead Realisations, agents for Matford Home Farm, were unable to register to speak in objection at the planning committee meeting. The Parish Council had been approached to ask whether it would be prepared to read the statement on their behalf.

**Action**

It was agreed that Cllr Wood would read the statement on behalf of Mead Realisations.

**FINANCE**

**24/208 RFO's report**

1. The Asset Register noted at the meeting on 4 March would need amending with a rebuild value for the Deepway Centre as it had been confirmed that the Parish Council owned it prior to the year end. Therefore, the figure in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) would need to reflect the change. Accordingly, publication of the list on the website would be delayed until the information was received.
2. Direct Debits during March

	£
NatWest Bankline	7.20
Utility Warehouse	1022.79
EE	35.98
Royal Mail	396.00
Communicate Better	409.54
NEST	233.28

3. AGAR papers had been received for the 2023/24 Financial Year and the requirements had also been sent by the Internal Auditor.

**24/209 Accounts for Approval**

It was resolved to approve payments in the sum of £6,550.47.

HH

**24/210 Draft accounts for March 2024**

The virements in 24/211 needed to be made prior to sending these draft figures, as the year-end summary, to the Internal Auditor. The year-end balance sheet and income and expenditure account would be approved at next Parish Council meeting.

**1. Budget Comparison Report**

Cllr Churchward asked for more information on the variances on the Budget Comparison Report.

HH

**2. Balance Sheet**

Noted.

**24/211 Virements**



Action

1. To approve a transfer from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund to the General fund in the sum of £13344.30 to cover CIL eligible expenditure on existing asset maintenance during 2023-24.

Resolved.

2. To approve a transfer from the CIL fund to the General Fund in the sum of £3581.00 to cover CIL eligible expenditure on staff time spent on the Matford Community Centre project during 2023-24.

Resolved.

HH

- 24/212 **To agree to pay Working from Home allowance of £6 per week to all clerical staff in accordance with HMRC arrangements, backdated to 1 April 2024.**

Resolved.

HH

- 24/213 **To agree to extend the arrangements regarding an overtime allowance for the Clerk of 3 hours per week and the Deputy Clerk of 4 hours per week respectively for extra hours worked from 1 April 2024 for a maximum six-month period.**

Resolved.

It was explained that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk were still working more hours than contracted and that this agenda item was only an interim solution. The Finance Working Party had asked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to put together a proposal to address it.

Additionally, an issue regarding the Deputy Clerk's authorised carried-over leave had been identified that would result in operational difficulties in the current financial year. A further proposal had been requested from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to address this.

JD/HH

Both proposals would be considered by the Finance Working Party and a recommendation brought to Council in due course.

- 24/214 **To agree a recommendation from the Finance Working Party that the Community Small Grants process and criteria are reviewed by September 2024 and that no grants received in the current financial year are considered until the review has been completed.**

Resolved.

Cllr Wood explained that the small grants scheme had not been reviewed for quite some and may no longer be meeting Exminster's requirements.



**Action**

Although Exminster was generally considered a well-off parish, there were residents struggling because of the cost of living and rising rents. The need for affordable housing was clearly identified in the ENDP results.

Cllr Churchward asked what was wrong with the existing process and what would happen to applications already received. It was explained that it was easier to pause the process at the beginning of the financial year to ensure that all grants were considered using the same criteria for fairness.

**PLANNING**

**24/215 Planning Applications**

**1. 24/00509/HOU | Single storey side extension | Hill Cottage  
Exminster Hill Exminster Devon EX6 8DW ([teignbridge.gov.uk](http://teignbridge.gov.uk))**

The extension was the conversion of an existing conservatory into a bricked building with a toilet. The design was sympathetic to the original dwelling. There were no comments on the planning portal.

It was resolved to support the application and to comment that the recommendations of the biodiversity officer should be adhered to and to complement these it would be appropriate 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.

**2. 24/00434/MAJ | Reserved matters details for layout, scale,  
landscaping and appearance, in respect of a proposal for 101  
dwellings (Parcel 13 & 14) and associated infrastructure and open  
space associated with the outline element of hybrid application  
15/00708/MAJ | Land At South West Exeter NGR 292209 89124  
Matford Devon ([teignbridge.gov.uk](http://teignbridge.gov.uk))**

Cllr Churchward had circulated a comprehensive report on observations on the application.

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

- The application sought to increase the number of dwellings from 98 to 101. This was believed to be contrary to the material consideration "overlooking and loss of privacy" and would be detrimental to the amenity of residents.
- There was inadequate visitor parking across the parcel.
- In addition to the lack of visitor parking, roads were narrow and the inevitable parked vehicles would make access for large vehicles difficult.
- Polluting toxic surface water run off from the development (other than at the NE corner of the site) would be drained into Matford

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Brook and onward through the Marshes to the river Exe. This was contrary to TDC LP policy s11.

- Road safety was considered an issue due to the speed limit and rural nature of Dawlish Road. There was no pavement on Dawlish Road and it was unclear how many junctions there would be. Site access to the development was also of concern.

HH

**24/216 Planning Decisions**

1. **15/00708/COND21 | Partial discharge of condition 11 (landscape and ecology management plan - Barrow Gardens POS), 18 (lighting - Parcels 13/14) & 20 (ground investigation report - Matford Valley Park) on planning permission 15/00708/MAJ Land At South West Exeter NGR 291652 89142 Markham Lane Shillingford Abbot Devon (teignbridge.gov.uk) - Discharged with conditions**
2. **24/00292/TPO | (T1) Lawson Cypress - Crown lift to 2m over the adjacent carparking area (T0017) Oak - Crown lift over adjacent lawn (T0018) Oak - Crown lift over adjacent drive (T0019) Sycamore - Crown lift over adjacent drive, (T0012) evergreen Oak - Crown lift over adjacent drive | Sannerville Chase Road From Wracombe Farm To Glebelands Exminster Devon EX6 8AT (teignbridge.gov.uk) - Approved**
3. **19/01319/AMD2 | Non-material amendment (amend scheme layout) to permission 19/01319/MAJ for approval of reserved matters details (layout, scale, landscaping and appearance) for 101 dwellings (Parcel 15), associated infrastructure and open space associated with the outline element of hybrid planning permission 15/00708/MAJ | Land At South West Exeter NGR 291652 89142 Markham Lane Shillingford Abbot Devon (teignbridge.gov.uk) - Approved**
4. **24/00331/HOU | Two storey side and rear extension | 53 Old Quarry Drive Exminster Devon EX6 8FJ (teignbridge.gov.uk) – Granted**
5. **23/00978/VAR | Variation of condition 2 on planning permission 21/01816/FUL (Retention of detached visitor meeting pod until 30th June 2023) to retain detached visitor meeting pod until 30th June 2024 | The Manor Main Road Exminster Devon EX6 8AP (teignbridge.gov.uk) - Refused**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Action**

**24/217 To review a report following the publication of the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (DCIoS) Climate Adaptation Strategy and agree recommended actions – Cllr Churchward**

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Council had submitted comments on the strategy last summer. The strategy was published in November and a question was included in the ENDP Household Questionnaire asking whether the Parish Council should adopt it. 83% were in favour.

Discussion how this would be managed at Parish level took place. There was already a Community Resilience Plan and it was agreed that the flood risk and planning could be considered as part of this as it was reviewed on an annual basis.

As this was part of the ENDP it was agreed that Cllr Churchward would write an article that would be included in a future Update to Residents publication, following approval by Council.

SC

**24/218 Councillors' Reports – for information only**

1. Cllr Guagliardo explained that he had a proposal regarding signage that would be on the agenda for a future Parish Council meeting.

**24/219 Public Open Session – (Maximum 10 minutes)**

No comments.

Date of next meeting (Annual Council Meeting): Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 19:00 in the Victory Hall Annex

The meeting closed at 21:00

Signed:.....Kevin Smith..... Date:.....15 April 2024.....