

**Minutes of the Yarcombe Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting**

Meeting held in the Jubilee Hall, Monday 15th May 2023 at 8.00 pm

In Attendance:

Cllrs M Tomkinson (Chair), S Horner, L Myhill, T Long, C Ford, D Barnes, S Vining, K Thompson,
A Billington D Frost (clerk) Councillor Colin Brown

Members of the Public present – 10

1. Firstly Cllr Tomkinson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Yehudi Levine

3. Minutes

Cllr Tomkinson asked if everyone was agreeable that the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th May 2022 could be signed as a correct record the minutes of the meeting and everyone said yes.

4. Police Report

No report received.

5. Retiring Chairman's Report – Cllr Horner

This has not been an easy year for the whole Parish Council, as you may know in August, we were suddenly hit with a series of complex and demanding requests under the Freedom of Information Act requiring us to produce information some of which dated back to 1974.

The basis of these request we believe were related to the placement of impediments which blocked Rag Lane, this of course was not a matter for the Parish Council but for the Highways department of Devon County Council who have subsequently issued a notice to the landowner that these impediments must be removed. Not only were we remorselessly pursued for more and more information but the basis of some of our meetings was challenged for minor administrative slip ups.

All this additional work was costly both in time and funds and it is thanks to the whole Council who displayed a highly professional approach to understanding the basis in law that we overcame this onslaught and remained firm and united in our resolve.

My thanks must also go to our wonderful Clerk Diane Frost who commenced her duties on 1st May last year and was almost immediately involved in very detailed matters of procedure-a baptism of fire one might say.

Many of you may now that we have purchased small cottage near to Henley on Thames where our two sons live, this is very much a down-sizing operation so we can adequately set up for our old age.

We are saddened to be leaving Woodhayne and the community of Yarcombe where we have lived for the past 35 years and in Bishopswood for 8 years prior to moving across the border into Devon.

I have agreed to stay on as Deputy Vice Chairman to aid and assist Matthew and Alistair with the handover of office and to help wherever necessary during this summer when I know both have other commitments, so you haven't got rid of me yet!

6. Planning Report – Cllr T Long

We have processed 24 applications.

This has been largely dominated by agricultural large buildings for the farmers to try and clean their dirty effluents up for the dirty water regulations.

We try and encourage the farmers to build their buildings to tone in as much as possible, and prompting EDDC to enforce this in conditions of permission. This isn't easy for the buildings to tone in mainly due to their size but its ongoing work. We also try and intertwine our neighbour and other applications parish plan in with such buildings.

Of the 24 applications we have had

15 full (FUL) applications

1 CPL Certificate of Lawfulness

1 CPE Commercial Storage

2 VAR Variations of Permission already granted

1 ADV advertising hoarding

4 LBC Listed Building Consent

15 went on to be approved

6 are awaiting decisions

3 withdrawn

2 have gone to appeal from previous year which were unsuccessful and CLT application for Marsh.

7. Roads Report – Cllr D Barnes

He reported that the roads are in worse condition than last year. It is difficult to get anybody out to see them especially Dave Ashford our direct contact from Devon County Council. The A roads are as bad as the local roads. He will try to encourage Dave to come out to see the roads as a picture does not always tell the full story. They will only fill potholes which meet their criteria on sizing even if there is one nearby which needs filling but is smaller at the moment. He will try to get help from our District and County Councillors.

8 Parish Paths Report – Cllr S Vining

He reported that there is a problem with vegetation on some footpaths which need cuttings back. This is only done by EDDC once a year. People are not happy with the steel pedestrian gate but these have been provided by DCC. They have a large gap at the bottom. He will contact Ros Davies at Devon County Council to discuss these issues. He will advertise in the voices about setting up a group to walk all the footpaths and encourage the public to inform the parish council if there are problems with any footpaths.

9. Yarcombe Community Land Trust – Cllr S Horner

By way of background the Parish of Yarcombe is in desperate need of at least six affordable homes, our Community Land Trust was formed in 2016 to deliver these houses. We identified the site which lies south of the Flintlock Inn in June 2017, which is owned by Jonathan Price. After preparing all the necessary documents and reports our planning application was validated On 23rd October 2020. Since that date our application has been held in limbo due to delays in agreeing a section 106 agreement and more recently the advisory letter from Natural England concerning phosphate pollution in the river Axe catchment area. It beggars' belief that such delays have been encountered when there is a national shortage of homes.

We have realised for some months that there are several options to satisfy the requirement to offset the residual phosphates produced by the on-site waste water treatment plant, for example a reed bed, tree planting on a river bank or upgrade of an existing septic tank which discharged into the same river catchment area. It became obvious that given the shortage of land suitable for set aside and the cost thereof that the least expensive option would be to find an owner of a septic tank who would be prepared to permit the upgrade of their own system with all the attendant construction works and general disruption to their garden and premises. After six unsuccessful negotiations with local householders, we have obtained the agreement in principle from the owner of a property in Yarcombe to upgrade his system. We now have a report from RMA report is specific to this upgrade, which clearly states that this upgrade will recover more than enough phosphates to offset the residual phosphates produced by our own wastewater treatment plant on site. Thus, we will achieve Nutrient Neutrality.

The RMA report, together with the porosity test results will be delivered to EDDC by our architects Bailey Partnership in the coming week; in turn the ecologist at the council will prepare a Habitats Regulation Assessment to ensure the septic tank upgrade are like for like or better in terms of discharge to groundwater. This HRA will be signed off by Natural England, and then EDDC will prepare an Appropriate Assessment indicating their agreement with our proposal

We are now working with our lawyers AC Collins to gather estimates to cover the legal fees of the owner of the land in Yarcombe and those of the other participants in order to make the necessary changes to the already agreed draft section 106 agreement.

Once we have a final agreed section 106 agreement we hope and pray that our planning application will be complete and then duly approved by EDDC; given the present fair following wind we have recently encountered this process may be completed by this autumn

10. Charity Report Longcroft Meadow – D Frost clerk

Members of the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council met in June 2022. Here they agreed to pay a student grant of £75.00 to the only applicant. An advert was placed in the Yarcombe Voices asking if anyone would like to apply for a Student Grant in 2023 and we had two applicants who will be discussed at a meeting to be arranged shortly.

The Charity balance stands at £3,504.

11. District and County Councillor Reports

Councillor Colin Brown stated that that some people in EDDC are still working from home and that Blackdown House Office is closed most afternoons. He had been advised by Councillor Iain Chubb that there is more money available to repair the roads. They will start on main potholes.

12. Chair – Cllr M Tomkinson

Had nothing to report.

13. Residents Forum and Open Discusssion

There is concern about potholes not being filled or how when this work is carried out.

The parish council were thanked for underwriting some expenses for the coronation. There will be a small amount to be returned in due course when all expenses were paid.

14. John Salter Award

All 9 nominees were read out. The winner was George Pidgeon. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the meeting so it was collected from Barbara Salter by Steve Horner on his behalf. He had won it for all the work he does tirelessly and quietly behind the scenes. This particularly relates to many years helping at terrier racing and being a very useful member of the hall committee. Everybody agreed he was a very worthy winner.

Cllr Tomkinson called the meeting to a close at 8.50pm.

Tea and coffee were then served by the councillors.



13 MAY 24