**Meeting Minutes for 14th December 2023 7:30pm at Umberleigh Village Hall**

**Those Present:** Cllr M Jones (Chair), Cllr N Murch (Vice Chair), Cllr F Pawley MBE, Cllr A Beauregard, Cllr C Blyther, Cllr Z Nicklin, Cllr M Craze, and Faye Davies (parish clerk).

**Also present:** District Cllr Sue Whitehead, Cllr Paul Henderson, and five members of the public.

**Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Seatherton, Wheaton and Mullinger send their apologies. No declarations of interest.

**Approval and signing of minutes of the last Parish Council meeting 18/10/23 as a true account.**

All signed and agreed.

**Clerks report**

The tree planting scheme was unsuccessful, due to the large number of applicants and a spreading disease within fir trees. There is now a snow warden for Umberleigh, though currently no applicants or interest for the rest of the Parish. There is an issue regarding the insurance for the snow warden, as the Devon County Council website states that there is only cover for third parties and the snow warden themselves would not be covered, Cllr Henderson advised we check our own insurance to see if there would be cover. The salt bin in Umberleigh is being moved to the village hall, so far nowhere has been found to store the road salt.

Devon and Cornwall Police were contacted regarding the speeding within Umberleigh and surrounding areas, currently no response has been had. Cllr Henderson informed that he would send a couple of contact emails over for the South Molton police station.

The British Heart Foundation Defibrillator grant was unsuccessful; however, the London Hearts grant was successful. The Bell have kindly offered to fund the defibrillator cost difference alongside the grant.

£117.50 grant towards the play area equipment has also been accepted.

Some waste has been left at stocks/pound, the probationary team were contacted, and it is green bin waste that can go out as normal for council to collect.

**Co-option of new Parish Councillor**

Paula Alford was the only applicant for the Parish Councillor position and so has been co-opted in.

**Statement of accounts and payments for approval**

£100 website domain payment due, all councillors voted in favour of keeping the website and paying this invoice.

**No statement of account available due to the recent finance committee changes, however nothing has changed since the prior statement of accounts.**

**Members of the public open session.**

Cllr Henderson informed the public that Umberleigh bridge will be repaired very soon (within the next two weeks). Broadband is still an ongoing issue, but Cllr Whitehead asked for details as she has a direct line to Selaine Saxby’s office.

**Finance committee update - Approval of 23/24 precept presented by Cllr Pawley**

The budget has been increased from £12,635 to £14,700. It is recommended that 3-5 months of the budget is put into general reserves. Cllr Henderson did advise to check with financial officers as he believed there was a 5% cap on budget increases, however the next day Cllr Henderson did inform that he had checked this, and the cap did not apply to Parish Councils. A separate report will be circulated explaining the detailed budget and the differences in expenditure.

**County Councillors Report and Highways Updates**

Please see the attached report.

**District Councillors Report**

Richard Slaney contacted Cllr Whitehead, roughly 11k will be available for use within the village due to 77488 planning application, this has the potential to be used within Chittlehampton Parish Council projects. The money must be used for a new project and not refurbishment. The Chairman did ask for clarity as he believes that this falls under Bishops Tawton and not Chittlehampton.

**Playing Field Committee update – conducted by Cllr Craze**

A Terms of Reference is needed to link the play area and the playing field committees together which will then need to be approved. Cllr Craze would like to set up a volunteer group for the grass cutting of the playing field, Cllr Pawley did inform that there are grants available that can cover 70% of the cost of purchasing grass cutting machinery. A cost analysis is needed regarding creating a sports facility of some kind within the village. Cllr Craze and Cllr Pawley informed they will be updating the asset register which will be done after Christmas.

**Play Area Committee Update - conducted by Vice Chairwoman Cllr Murch**

Phase one budget consisted of £24,507, of which £23,612 was spent on the play area equipment, leaving it £895 under budget. £2,000 is also available due to no money being spent on emergency access and signage. There are no upcoming events before Christmas and further events will be posted after the New Year. There is currently £9,984.08 available in the account with more donations still left to go in.

A full council vote is needed for phase two or an amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Play Area Committee due to phase one being set up by the full council. Cllr Henderson confirmed that a sub-committee can have spending powers, which will be determined by the committee.

Cllr Nicklin has also resigned from the Play Area Committee; she was thanked for her hard work and assistance.

**Vehicles and Structures on land near Winson Cross - conducted by Cllr Pawley**

Planning Officers had issued another deadline to the plot holders, which expired on 11/12/23, Cllr Pawley contacted Planning Officers regarding this who have informed that they will be visiting the site and will discuss what needs to be done regarding those structures that still remain on the site.

**Amendment to T.O.R for Cobbaton Road Project Sub – Committee**

Voting by the full Parish Council is needed to amend the Terms of Reference to fall in line with DALC recommendations for best practice of sub-committees being elected from the committee and not the full council, the amendments were sent out to all the councillors by the clerk. The standing orders for the Parish Council do not have anything written on committees and sub-committees and so this is being amended to allow for committees and sub-committees to be formed. All present Cllrs approved this, and Cllr Wheaton wrote to the Chairman also approving this.

Terms of reference were then discussed, with some arguments against there being a Cobbaton Road sub-committee with requests it be a working group instead. It was agreed this would be discussed further in private between the parties and left to vote upon until another meeting.

**Items for consideration**

Cllr Wheaton has informed that the seat at the top of Deptford Hill needs the slats replacing, the access to the seat is also being eroded by tractors driving over the bank.

The speed limit (30mph) from Townsend to Deptford is being exceeded daily, especially during early morning.

The Cobbaton sign by the coronation seat needs the posts replacing.

**Date of next meeting**

10/01/2024

 Faye Davies Chittlehampton Parish Clerk chittlehamptonclerk@gmail.com

**These minutes are a draft copy until they are agreed and signed as a true account.**

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**Cllr Hendersons report**

“NEW ROADS FUNDING WILL HELP TACKLE REPAIR BACKLOG

We’ve welcomed the Government’s announcement of an £8.3 billion investment for road maintenance over the next 11 years. We’re receiving an extra £6.663 million this financial year, from the funding redirected from the scrapped HS2 rail line extension to Manchester. It will be followed by the same amount next year, and then there will be a minimum of £208.6 million between now and 2033/34. We will be using some of the money to carry out patching work and other repairs before potholes deteriorate further this winter due to wet and freezing conditions of the season. Most of the funding for this financial year will enable us to bring forward resurfacing schemes earmarked within its future works programme.

GOVERNMENT IN ADVANCED DISCUSSIONS TO AGREE A DEVOLUTION DEAL WITH DEVON AND TORBAY

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt has announced that the Government is close to finalising a ground-breaking Devolution Deal that will transfer a range of new powers and funding from Whitehall to Devon and Torbay. Levelling Up Minister, Jacob Young, wrote to Leaders of Devon County Council and Torbay Council last week, confirming the Government’s commitment to continuing negotiations, and praising the councils on their ‘constructive leadership on the devolution agenda’. And in his Autumn Statement today, Mr Hunt reiterated the government’s commitment to devolving powers to county areas, with the Chancellor confirming that it is in advanced discussions to agree a Level 2 non-mayoral deal with Devon and Torbay.

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE TO CEASE

Devon County Council has made the decision that the Mobiles will sadly be closing at the end of February 2024.

FAMILY HUBS TO REPLACE CHILDRENS CENTRES

Children in Devon and their families will see a new model of support services, in line with national Government guidance. Since first introduced in the late 1990s in response to the Government-led Sure Start initiative, Children’s Centres in Devon have supported thousands of young children and their parents, with targeted early years support and other services. But last year, the Government proposed a new initiative, and now the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care are working with local authorities across the UK to roll out their ‘Start for Life’ programme and develop Family Hub programmes in accordance with local need. DCC have announced that they want to start a transition from Children’s Centres to Family Hubs in Devon. This would include working with partners and stakeholders to shape the model, which is likely to take 12 months, with a view to developing a county-wide Family Hubs programme to begin in 2025. The Government says that Family Hubs will improve families’ access to services, describing them as “…a local innovation, developed to meet local needs and better support families.””

There is still some dispute over the lack of fencing between the bridge and the train station, it is believed the landowner is responsible for the fencing.