



A remote meeting of the Parish Council was held via Zoom on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 7:00pm.

Present: Cllrs F Benbow (Chairman), Mrs A Bell, Mrs N Catmore, Mrs L McLean, P Huxtable, Mrs P Kellaway and M Prowse.

In attendance: 5 parishioners, Cllr Mrs Davis (DCC), Parish Clerk.

73. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Shapland.

74. Presentation by Mrs B Given, Chair of Bratton Fleming Village Hall Committee

Mrs Given gave an illustrated presentation on improvements that were being planned by the Village Hall Committee. It had been noted that the hall felt dated when compared to village halls in neighbouring villages.

The work would concentrate on the side room, which would be updated with new seating and modern lighting to make it more usable.

The parish council agreed that no improvement work had been done on the hall for many years, and that it was overdue.

Mrs Given said that the hall had some funds available, but would be looking to the parish council and Composting Group for additional funding to fully finance the work.

It was agreed in principle to make a grant to the hall, but that this would need to be discussed at the next meeting.

75. Public Participation

1. No further progress had been made on uploading the Mary Orchard Collection onto the website. The Chairman noted that work would need to be done to upgrade the website before this could be done.
2. It was not known if Cllr Shapland had made any progress on the issue regarding the Millennium Green barrier strip.
3. Cllr Mrs Davis reported that the Highways Officer had submitted a bid for funding for the repair of defects on Benton Road. This was a bigger job than standard pothole repairs. She had been unable to find any details relating to the problems at Loxhore Cross. The parishioner who had reported the problem was asked to do so again, and to forward the log number to Cllr Mrs Davis.

76. Co-option of Parish Councillor

One expression of interest had been received from a parishioner interested in being co-opted onto the parish council – Mr Richard Given. His application letter had been circulated to councillors.

Cllr Prowse proposed that Mr Given be co-opted. Seconded by Cllr Mrs Catmore. All in agreement.

Cllr given would take his place on the parish council at the next meeting, after he had signed the relevant paperwork.

77. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Huxtable declared an interest in planning application 73907

78. Approval of Minutes of the meeting held 18 August 2021

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed as a true record.

79. Matters Arising from Minutes of meeting held 18 August 2021

Min.58. The Chairman had considered the suggestion the Public Participation be moved to the end of the meeting, but considered that this would be a disadvantage.

Such a move would mean that members of the public would not have the opportunity to voice their views on any item on the agenda, in particular planning applications. Furthermore, any items raised would not be able to be considered until the next meeting.

80. Planning Applications

73907 Two storey rear extension, loft conversion and alterations to bungalow at 4 Treefield Bratton Fleming

Cllr Huxtable declared an interest, and took no part in the discussion.

It was agreed to recommend approval, provided that the planning officer was satisfied that the proposed work did not have any impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties.

73969 Hedgerow removal notice for removal of small section in each hedge and install a 15ft gate with associated wooden rails/wings either side to tie the gateway into the hedge at Great Rapscott Farm Road from Lithcaton Cross to Rapscott Cross East Buckland.

This application referred to the three fields behind the dwellings, between Fairfield and Town Farm.

It was agreed to recommend approval, on condition that there should be no overall loss in biodiversity.

73768 Erection of temporary agricultural workers dwelling and two agricultural buildings and associated works at Land at Grange Hill Bratton Fleming.

It was noted that no Agricultural Appraisal had been carried out, and therefore the application was incomplete as there was no evidence of the need for the dwelling or viability of the venture.

It was agreed to recommend that the application be refused, due to the lack of information.

81. Correspondence

1 DALC Newsletter. Noted.

2 NDC - Date of next Parish Forum 14 October, via zoom at 6.30pm. Noted.

82. Memorial

Cllr Prowse reported that the stone was currently being cleaned, before an area would be flattened to enable a plaque to be attached. He would be contacting Mrs Ridd-Jones to agree suitable wording. It was hoped that the stone would be placed on the Millennium Green within the next few weeks.

83. Highways

No further issues reported.

84. Seats

DCC Highways had determined that the seat at the top of the village was on DCC land, and permission would be needed for the replacement seat. They had suggested that it was moved to the section of verge adjacent to the footpath. Councillors to inspect the present and suggested sites. The seat in Station Road was placed in the hedge, and not on DCC land. Landowner to be approached for permission to repair the seat.

85. Dog Bins

NDC had agreed to empty the bins as soon as they received confirmation that the bins had been fixed, and the location.

It was agreed to place two bins on the Millennium Green, one at each entrance, and one bin in Station Road, near the allotments.

The fourth bin would be placed on the Recreation Ground, near the kissing gate, and the fifth bin in Beara Lane, at the bottom of South View.

86. Reports

1. District Councillor's Report

The report from Cllr Prowse had been circulated to councillors:

Housing

Just a very brief note as the last month has been relatively quiet in terms of formal meetings – save for a couple to deal with procedural issues. Having said that the agenda within local

government and indeed the focus of social media have been dominated by the local housing crisis. The impacts of Covid and the increase in staycations, have led to many landlords cashing in on the thriving holiday trade.

The issue here in North Devon was debated at the Strategy & Resources Committee of the District council last week and have agreed to pull together a panel of ‘experts’ to meet with the Leader, Deputy and lead member for Housing. Out of this will come some urgent actions we can look at locally including bringing back empty homes into use and policies to stop newly built homes becoming second ones!

To be honest - Government policies don’t help the situation with new planning rules meaning no affordable homes being delivered in rural schemes under 10 houses. We are also looking at changing the guidance to seek section 106 financial contributions to deliver social housing directly again. The reality is the present national system relying on private developers to provide affordable homes just isn’t working.

The Leader and I are meeting with the housing crisis campaign organisers tomorrow (Tuesday) to discuss other options to help.

Planning

It now looks as though there are second thoughts on the Govt’s Planning Bill. It is widely rumoured that pressure from Councils, MPs and pressure groups will result in the abandonment of the unpopular planning reforms. Although, the central targets for a 5 year housing land supply are still causing real problems in North Devon. This is allowing ‘hostile’ applications in towns and villages outside of the Local Plan allocations. I am chairing the joint working party with Torridge to bring our planning policies up to date.

We have new planning teams in place with 2 new team leaders – both led by home grown talent – with Jenni Meakins from Shirwell leading in our patch. Please take up Maria Bailey’s offer to join a future meeting as the overall Development Manager, she is very approachable and helpful.

Projects

- New Leisure Centre: works are still on target for opening next April – worth taking a look when you go to the Fair! On time and within budget.
- Looking at help for the tourism/hospitality sectors for future years – establishing marketing links to strengthen the ‘shoulders’ of the season.
- Watersports: local contractors Pearce are well underway down at Larkstone in Ilfracombe.
- Future High Streets: design work has now started on the new look for Boutport Street redevelopment and the Pannier Market.

Finances

As I reported last time the Council are in a pretty stable financial position despite the challenges of Covid and extra monies have been put in reserves to face any new issues that may confront us during the winter months.

Cllr Prowse left the meeting

2. County Councillor’s Report

Cllr Mrs Davis reported that there had been a disappointing response to the call for comments on Peninsula Transport’s vision for transport in the south west. Although Bratton Fleming Parish Council had responded, many had not. Responses were also needed from individuals. It was agreed to circulate the link to councillors and members of the public who had requested it.

There was no further news on the interactive speed sign that Cllr Mrs Davis had offered to finance. The matter was currently with DCC Highways, who would determine where it could be fixed. As soon as Cllr Mrs Davis had the details, she would forward them.

It would be necessary for the parish council to insure the sign, and be responsible for its maintenance.

3. Composting Group

Payment had been received for material taken May-July 2021. This totalled 42.81 tonnes - £1419.57.

The balance stood at £16953.15*

**Note: Subsequently confirmed that this figure includes approximately £8000 which has previously been allocated for a grant and for forthcoming operating costs (below).*

The chipper was currently having the chute being repaired.

It would soon be necessary to replace the blades, at an estimated cost of £1500-£2000. In addition to this it would soon be needing a service. The total cost for this would be in the region of £2.5-£3k, depending if any additional work was needed.

It was agreed that this expenditure was necessary, and the go-ahead was given for the composting group to replace the blades and have the machine serviced.

4. Woodland Group

No report received.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on the UK's standing in the world in relation to the number of covid cases. In view of the continued high number of cases locally, he considered that remote meetings should continue and that face-to-face meetings be only held when absolutely necessary.

It was agreed to hold a meeting in the Village Hall in October to approve next year's budget and other financial matters.

87. Finance

1. Audit Report

Deferred to the next meeting.

2. Payments:

1. Advisio – website hosting (replacement cheque)	£270.00	Cheque No. 1259
2. Clerk's Salary & Expenses	£124.78	Cheque No.1260
3. Information Commissioner's Office	£ 40.00	Cheque No. 1261
4. Mr A Kellaway	£ 22.50	Cheque No.1262

The four accounts were agreed for payment.

88. Items for consideration for the next Agenda.

Audit Report; Setting of 2022/23 Budget; Seats; Memorial; Play Area; Dog Bins; Payments.

89. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20 October 2021

It was agreed to hold a remote meeting on 20 October, to be followed the following week, if possible, by an in-person finance Meeting in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:12pm.