**ALVERDISCOTT & HUNTSHAW PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on**

**Wednesday 11th January 2023 at Huntshaw Parish Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs G.White (chairman), Ley, J.White, Lewis, Bolton, Ross, Meaney,

 County Cllr Hellyer, 2 members of public

53**. Apologies:** Cllrs. Hardwicke, A.White, Dist Cllr Lock.

54. **Questions from the Public** -A question as to why the Gammaton Road to Bideford was apparently being surveyed. County Cllr Hellyer said she would enquire of the Highways Officer and report back.

55. **Minutes of previous meeting** - were unanimously agreed, and signed by the chairman.

56. **Matters arising** – Item 51 – clearance of Mr.Staines land. Cllr.J.White had contacted the Enforcement Officer, who had visited the site on 22nd December. His report had been sent to the Legal Department for further action, as the site had not been cleared by the required deadline.

57. **Co-option of new councillors** – One attendee stated his willingness to stand as councillor for Alverdiscott ward, Mr.Paul Matthews. Following his brief presentation, it was agreed unanimously to co-opt Mr.Matthews on to the council with immediate effect. The meeting then continued with the participation of the new councillor.

58. **Delegation of Procedures** – The chairman, having noted that the council was at its full complement, asked Cllr.Meaney if she would consider taking on the role of Parish Clerk, as no response had been forthcoming from the advertisements for this post. After some discussion, this was agreed to, together with the post of Responsible Financial Officer. Cllr J.White was then asked if he would stand as Chairman of the Planning sub-committee, to which he agreed. Cllrs. Bolton and Ross also agreed to be members of the sub-committee. Cllr.Bolton suggested that Torridge DC be asked for details of any training availability for the planning members, as there seemed to be none on the DALC course lists. Cllr.Bolton agreed to enquire on behalf of the council.

59. **County Councillor’s Report** – Councillor Hellyer gave her report, shorter than normal because of illness. DCC needs to save £75m of which £50m has been found. This may well mean cutbacks in services and staff. The Council has however received additional funding for children’s services and adult social care, which will alleviate the situation to an extent. Full Council meets on 16th February to agree the new budget.

60. **District Councillors Report** – No report from Dist Cllr Lock this month.

61. **Outstanding Payments and Financial Situation** – The chairman reported that there were three items to be paid, being a DALC webinar, the 2023-4 insurance, and the new parish clerk laptop, in all amounting to £1589.62. Approximately £160 of this amount, being VAT on non-business activities, should be able to be reclaimed from HMRC. The situation regarding the snow warden, and the snow plough, was discussed. Cllr.Ley noted that to the best of his knowledge, no-one in the area had a front attachment for the plough if Mr.Staines was not willing to continue. Cllr.J.White asked if this work could be place with a contractor. The problem here being that if such help were needed, then the contractor would be overloaded with calls for assistance. The chairman would again attempt to contact Mr.Staines regarding these matters. It was noted by Cllrs. Bolton and J.White that there had in the past been problems with the satisfactory completion of the year end AGAR forms. The chairman agreed to include a review of the forms in the agenda for the next meeting.

62. **Budgeted Precept for 2023-24** – A final review of the proposed precept was undertaken, prior to submission. The new contract for external audit had now been confirmed, as had the next year’s premium for insurance. The annual salary for the parish clerk, which had not been reviewed for some years, was agreed to be increased to £2000. To mitigate some of this additional cost, council agreed to reduce the election reserve to £180 from £240.

Cllr.J.White noted that election procedures needed to be examined and if necessary completed in the near future. The chairman agreed to revisit these in case there was anything to be completed. It was noted that in light of the current situation, it was unlikely that any election would be required.

The meeting also agreed to reduce the training costs to £150, with any overspend on this item coming from the council reserves. The overall effect of these changes was to give a total precept of £5245, an increase of 7.48% over the previous year. Council agreed unanimously that this figure be submitted to Torridge DC.

63. **Planning Matters** – Only the one application had been made since the last meeting, that being 1/1190/2022/FUL, which was a resubmission of previous applications for replacement of a barn with two houses at Bulworthy Farm. The chairman told the meeting that this differed only in detail of the proposed houses, and that the underlying problems associated with the application were unchanged. He had therefore submitted an objection based on the previous one.

The Xlinks proposal for the Gammaton converter station was discussed at some length, including the response from Torridge DC following an FOI request. The meeting decided that there was no further course of action to be taken at this stage without updated information coming from Sir Geoffrey Cox, National Grid or Xlinks.

64. **Correspondence** – none this month

65. **Items at the discretion of the Chairman** – Cllr.J.White raised the subject of the proposed waste facility at Gammaton Road – 1/1141/2022/LA. This has received a large number of objections, but is outside the scope of this parish council as it is outside our boundary. It is therefore difficult to see how this council can comment, apart from objecting to the potential additional traffic passing through Gammaton. The deadline for consultee comment has in any case already passed. Individuals are of course entitled to submit their own comments.

66. The chairman closed the meeting at 9:25pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th March 2023 at 7:30pm, in Alverdiscott Hall.

Signed.............................................Chairman

Dated..............................................