**ALVERDISCOTT & HUNTSHAW PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on**

**Wednesday 8th March 2023 at Huntshaw Parish Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs G.White (chairman), Hardwicke, Matthews, Lewis, Bolton, Ross, Meaney,

 County Cllr Hellyer, 12 members of public

67. Due to the inclement weather, it had been decided earlier in the day that in view of her potential travelling problems, Helen Smith would postpone her presentation to the council until a later mutually agreed date.

68. **Apologies for absence** Cllrs. J.White, A.White, Ley, Dist Cllr Lock

69. **Questions from the Public** – Member asked if the planning presentation would take place, and was referred back to the initial announcement.

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

71. **Matters arising not referred to in the meeting** – Cllr Meaney enquired as to whether a parish meeting would be held. It was noted that this was in fact held annually, prior to the parish council meeting

72. **Parish Clerk** - Two candidates had applied since the previous meeting. Both had been interviewed by the chairman, one being offered the post and accepting, but a few days later had to decline the job as he had been diagnosed with a serious illness and would be out of commission for several months. The second candidate was then contacted, and agreed to take on the post for a trial period of six months. Alan Mattewman is currently clerk for High Bickington and wishes to take on a second parish. The council will have to reconsider its meeting dates, as the current timetable clashes with the High Bickington meetings. This means that Cllr Meaney’s previous offer of taking the post in the absence of an independent clerk (minute 58) can be declined; this would in any case have potentially led to possible problems.

73. **County Councillor’s Report** – Councillor Hellyer gave her report, summarising the DCC budget situation and the current works on highways. The full report is attached below.

74. **District Councillors Report** – Councillor Lock reports on the latest on the Xlinks project, and notes on the upcoming elections and the parish council. The full report is again attached below.

75. **Planning Matters** – Four applications had been received since the last meeting. The council had submitted to TDC, stating no objections to 1/0112/2023/FUL (Rose Cottage, Alverdiscott extension) and 1/0037/2023/FUL (National Grid Alverdiscott roof replacement). The third, 1/1313/2021/FUL (Higher kingdom Barn), had been amended to Historic England’s satisfaction, and accordingly the council submitted no further objection. The fourth, 1/0132/2023/FUL (replacement of caravan with house, Twitchen) was still being considered. Further clearance of the Staines Trailers site had been carried out, and an update from the TDC Enforcement Officer was awaited. Cllr J White’s full report had been submitted to members, and is available on request. Cllr. Lock’s report referring to the Xlinks project (minute 74 and below) was noted.

76. **Outstanding Payments & Financial Situation** – No transactions had taken place since the last meeting, the council’s bank balance standing at £6362. A claim had been submitted to HMRC for reimbursement of VAT relating to the clerk’s new laptop. A request was made by the chairman for permission to purchase additional paper and printer ink for the clerk’s use. This was approved and signed accordingly.

77. **CPRE Membership** – Bearing in mind the probable upcoming Xlinks application, and the other assistance available from the CPRE, it was proposed that the council should join this organisation. Approved unanimously; the chairman would submit the membership form without delay.

78. **Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** – Cllr Meaney had put in a great amount of time and effort in reviewing Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment. These had been based on the National Model, and as such had a number of items which were not relevant to this council, and others which were not specific enough. These revised documents were summarised to the meeting by Cllr Meaney, and would be distributed to members for approval before formal adoption. She stated that she would continue working on revision of Standing Orders in order to have these completed shortly.

During the review of risk, it had been queried whether the council should be registered with the Data Protection Agency. This had been investigated by the chairman, and although he had established that the council was exempt from paying any fee, it remained to be resolved as to whether it was in fact already registered. If not this would be addressed without delay. \*\*The chairman has since ascertained from ICO that as the parish council is exempt, there is no requirement to register.

The chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr Meaney for her work. The 2022-23 AGAR would be distributed to members so that they could cross refer this to the revised documentation.

79 **Correspondence** – At the request of the chairman, Mr K Ford has sent a copy of an email he had received from LightSource, the developers of Gammaton Moor Solar Farm). This informed Mr Ford that ownership of the project had been transferred to another company, Sonnedix. They would be contacted to ascertain their position regarding arrangements agreed and already put in place with LightSource.

80. **Items at the discretion of the Chairman** – The latest edition of the DALC newsletter gave details of the Road Warden scheme, whereby volunteers could assist with minor maintenance of roads, verges, etc., after suitable training. Further details would be sought, with a view to ascertaining if there was any interest from residents in joining the scheme.

81. The chairman closed the meeting at 9:15pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th May at Alverdiscott Hall. This would be preceded by the annual Parish Meeting, and would be dependant also on any potential clash with the elections on 4th May.

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

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



rapid deterioration in the condition of the network highlighting the fragility of the asset following decades of under investment. Since April 2022 our inspection team have assessed over 27,000 reports of potholes from members of the public. Over 10,000 reports were assessed in January alone, we were receiving as many as 500 reports per day. The team have been working hard to get on top of the backlog with a focus on the safety of the travelling public. Milestone, our term maintenance contractor, has increased their resources which has seen weekend working and over forty gangs working across the county. At the beginning of February there was 3,000 potholes waiting to be repaired, this had reduced to approximately 2,000 by the end of the month.

Following a quiet November, in which we saw very little in the way of gritting treatment, the extended cold snaps in December and January has seen DCC use over 15,000 tonnes of salt across 2,094 runs (the equivalent to 55 full, Countywide treatments on our Primary Salting Network). The average across the last four winters for the same period has been 8,919 tonnes and 1,597 runs.

This additional work has a knock-on effect with the planned improvement works. Gritter drivers are limited in how many hours they can works which often means planned improvement works have to be deferred. In addition, with the safety of the network taking priority, several the patching gangs have been redeployed on to pothole repairs. Again, this means planned improvements will have been deferred. Neighbourhood Officers will be in contact with Elected Members that have works impacted in their area.

 After potholes, the most common question I get asked at my parish council meetings is about drainage. The resolution of drainage assets referred for additional maintenance has slowed in the last few months to support the corporate financial challenge. However, over 10,000 defects have been addressed so far this financial year which clearly demonstrates the benefits of funding a focused programme of drainage asset defect identification. In Devon, we still have over 14,000 outstanding drainage asset defects across the county and works are continuing to resolve them.

The Traffic Team are reviewing the requests for new 20mph speed limits. To help determine which schemes are prioritised and to ensure consistency they will consider the new requests by applying the same scoring matrix agreed at Cabinet.

 The new Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan is nearing completion. This document is important as it sets the future maintenance standards and strategies the County adopts. Officers are planning to bring it to Cabinet in April for Member comments. Currently, councillors and neighbourhood highways officers are asked to submit 5-10 schemes a year of road improvements. Asset management go through them, and for each area the worst roads get done first. Works are often planned 12-18th months ahead as contractors and quarries have to be booked well in advance

Routine matters such as potholes, drainage matters, overgrown vegetation etc can be reported online. If you google Devon County council report a problem, a page comes up with icons. Click on the appropriate icon e.g., potholes and follow the simple instructions.

Alternatively, you can telephone the Customer Care centre.

0345 155 1015

Out of hours Highways for EMERGENCIES only: -

01392 380380

0345 155 1008

 I am always happy for residents to contact me.

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