

SHEBBEAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held at 7-30 pm on Tuesday August 14th 2007
in the Church Room. Shebbear.

Present: Chairman R. Johns. **Cllrs;** E.Haste. S.Hillier. R.Clark. G.Slade. H.Davis. L.Quance.
N.Jeffers.

District Cllr A.Saywell. 4 Members of the Public.

329 Apologies for Absence. Peter Lomax. (On holiday.) P.C.S.O. Baker. (Off duty.)
R.Gliddon.(Last minute sickness.)

330 Any Declarations of Interest in items on Agenda or Registrations of Interest.

Cllr Hillier said that, due to her absence at the last meeting, when the Planning Application by Shebbear Football Club had been discussed, she had not had the opportunity to mention that she had been asked to become a Football Club trustee on the committee dealing with the proposed new club facilities. As a result she felt she ought to Declare an Interest and it would be best if she withdrew from the Football Club committee.

331 Minutes of Council Meeting, held on Tuesday 10th July 2007, that had been previously circulated, were approved and signed after Cllr Clark asked that the sentence "**Cllr Clark asked the meeting if they would confine their remarks to planning issues.**" be included at the end of paragraph relating to planning for new sports facilities at Dart moor View, Shebbear College in Minute 325(a).

Cllr Jeffers left the meeting at **7-37pm** saying that this meeting is also illegal due to the agenda not being delivered early enough to comply with the law, he produced a guidance booklet which, while stating that "3 clear days" notice was the legal requirement, also contained advice that suggested that weekends were not included. Clerk will seek advice to clarify the issue.

332 Agenda Items for Discussion and matters arising from the Minutes.

(a) Council assets and Risk Assessment. Clerk presented list of items that he had compiled, which councillors discussed, amended and updated where necessary. Clerk to continue work to prepare Risk Assessment and Insurance update for approval.

(b) Clerk reported that Cllr Lomax and himself had inspected Lovacott Bridge on 11th August and found it to be in good condition after repairs.

No update available for footpath P3 although a new footbridge had been noted between Waite Farm and Ruxhill by Cllr Lomax.

(c) Cllr Clark reported that he had attended a Talk on Quality Council Status at Crediton recently and gave councillors an insight into the criteria that needed to be met to achieve Quality Status, any benefits and problems associated with the scheme, which is not mandatory, and whether Shebbear would stand to gain anything from applying. It was left for councillors to think about what they had heard.

(d) Clerk informed Council that B.T. wanted to re-locate the TK from opposite Balkwill Cottages to their favoured location beside Brambles House claiming that they were not aware of any decision to move it to the agreed site outside the village hall, that Highways had raised no objections to the location, and that any problems that may arise at the Brambles House site would be minimal due to the low useage of the kiosk, which according to their records amounted to one call a day on average.

Councillors reiterated their wish that the kiosk be relocated to the village hall as they had had considerable discussions previously which identified the village hall site as being of greater benefit to users and a more favourable situation in general.

Clerk to contact BT and ask them to make a site visit at the village hall as a first step towards

relocating the kiosk there. Also to express councils concern that due to BTs hasty action in disconnecting the existing kiosk the village has been left without a public telephone.

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333 District Councillors Report.

D/Cllr Saywell spoke firstly about Planning, saying that there was some good news as it appears that Torridge were meeting Government targets, as a result there had been a welcome increase in the budget which had gone into the general planning pot. At a recent Full Council meeting, the council voted to adopt a scheme of public participation at planning committee meetings. It was hoped that the scheme would be put into effect in the early autumn and the fine details of what time allocations would be allowed to public and local council contributors were still being worked out. This was seen as an improvement on the present system where councils only had a limited time to make their observations on applications, quite often missing deadlines, or not bothering to submit comments, thereby losing their opportunity to put their views across. Mr Saywell is in the process of reading through the Torridge Local Plan and, although he hasn't yet got through it, having seen how the planning system works and how officers reach their decisions, he is considering it "not fit for purpose". We are at the moment, stuck with it, but, it is hoped that the review of the local development framework will bring about changes, and we will have a better Local Plan as a result with decisions being made which reflect local needs and requirements.

Mr Saywell spoke about finance in general, describing how Torridge only receives about 10% of the total local Council Tax take, and how this is distributed amongst the various services. As to why Torridge seems at present to be constantly short of money when other councils are in better shape, it seemed to go back to Torridge missing the opportunity to sell off their housing stock a few years ago and giving it away, free, recently. Unlike North Devon D.C. who did sell at the time and were able to invest a tidy sum as a result. Despite that, TDC does not have a budget deficit, but it does not have a huge surplus either. It is apparent that the council is working hard to improve efficiency and tighten up procedures to minimise any future budget increases but Mr Saywell is realising that solutions to problems don't come easily and that miracles won't be worked overnight.

Chairman thanked Mr Saywell for his report.

334 Planning.

- (a) 1/0841/2007/AGR. Agricultural shed at East Badworthy Farm was not considered by councillors as the application had been granted on 8th August.
- (b) 1/0884/2007/FUL. Retention of rear porch at 2 Goamans Cottages, Shebbear.
No Objections.
- (c) There were no other applications recently received.
- (d) Council heard the list of adjacent applications and nothing relevant was noted.

335 Finance.

It was proposed by Cllr Hillier and seconded by Cllr Quance with all in favour, that payments for the following be made.

- (a) New Councillors Training. £90-00.
- (b) Grasscutting. £80-00.
- (c) 5 Weeks Clerks wage. £196-15.

336 Correspondence.

Item (g) - A letter from Mr & Mrs Knight of Waycott, New Inn, Shebbear was read to the meeting,

expressing their concern that, in dealing with complaints about activities on land at Waycott, Cllr Hillier and District Cllr Saywell had acted improperly by taking the matter to Torridge D.C on the basis of hearsay and pub gossip, and without authority from the parish council.

336 (g) cont.....

Cllr Hillier denied she had acted improperly and had received direct complaints from parishoners who's identities she was not obliged to reveal. These complaints had been referred to Torridge for the information of the Enforcement Officer in the normal way as he is the officer authorised to act in such cases. Cllr Hillier also pointed out that not all complaints are made in writing but are passed on when councillors are going about their daily business in the village, which is how councillors invariably interact with members of the public.

District Councillor Saywell said that all he had done was to speak to the Enforcement Officer to see if he had any knowledge of the situation, and discovered that the E.O. was already dealing with the matter. Mr Saywell therefore felt that his actions did not amount to improper behaviour, but his duty to follow up concerns brought to his attention.

Chairman spoke to Mr Knight, who was present at the meeting, and assured him that complaints had been received in the past from their neighbours and that the Knights knew who they were.

Cllr Clark drew attention to the points made by the Enforcement Officer, Mr Marshall, as previously reported in Minute 323(d) of July 10th, and reminded councillors that Mr Marshall was keen to hear of any further contributions, either for or against, connected with this topic, and suggested that if anyone did have anything to add they should communicate directly with Mr Marshall at T.D.C.

Cllr Hillier added that she had checked with Torridge and they had received direct complaints about Waycott from persons who felt the parish council weren't doing enough about the situation.

Correspondence items (a) to (f) inclusive and item (h) were included in the Circulation folder for Councillors information.

337. Items for next Meetings Agenda on September 11th and any other Business at the Chairmans Discretion.

- (1) Councillors agreed to place adopting the new Code of Conduct on next months agenda.
- (2) Several Highway related matters were reported as needing bringing to the attention of Devon Highways, a deep pothole outside Balkwill Cottages, verges not properly trimmed along the road through Gidcott, and the poor state of the footway outside The Vicarage and down Back Lane. Clerk to report.
- (3) Councillors suggested that a representative of the Football Club be invited to the next meeting to give details of the progress of the new all-weather pitch project.
- (4) Cllr Hillier asked if any change of use at Endford Engineering had been applied for. Clerk to follow up.
- (5) Clerk reported that he had attended a meeting of the Gt Torrington M.C.T.A at Buckland Filleigh on July 25th.

The Meeting ended at 9-14pm.

Signed..... Dated.....