

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of Winsford Parish Council Held on Monday 25 July 2022, at 7.30pm in Winsford Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors: Colin Wilkins (CW) – Chair, Kevin Connell (KC), Mel Mileham (MM), Mike Hillier (MH), Ian Brooks (IB), Bryany Neal (BN) and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY). Frances Nicholson SCC Councillor (FN) Steven Pugsley (SP) SW&T Councillor and Mr Thomas Thurlow (TT) ENPA joined part way through the meeting.

Also in attendance was Mr Steve Line.

This meeting was recorded for the benefit of the clerk. The recording will be destroyed on production of the minutes.

CW opened the meeting at 19.31pm.

54.1 Public Question Time - none

54.2 Apologies for non-attendance – Sarah Little

54.3 Declaration of Interests – Mr Hillier re item 7a

54.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meetings held 18th May and 27th June and the Extra-Ordinary meeting held on 4th July and any outstanding actions

- Minutes of 18th May approved – proposed by KC, seconded by MM
- Minutes of 27 June approved – proposed by BN, seconded by KC
- Minutes of 4th July approved – proposed by KC, seconded by BN

54.10 To discuss the proposed designation of Winsford as a conservation area.

Mr Thomas Thurlow the Historic Buildings Officer from the Exmoor National Park Authority attended the meeting to put forward his proposal that the centre of Winsford could become a conservation area. This had previously been discussed by the village in 2005 – 2007 but a decision had never been reached. Reservations at the time appeared to centre around the war memorial and the bridge to the Green. Mr Thurlow had revisited the previous proposals and drawn up further notes. He feels that Winsford meets the criteria with it being an area of architectural and/or historical merit which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, a central Village Green and some of the buildings being listed, and some issues which having conservation status would help to address. It would change the relationship of the village with the National Park, with restrictions and rights for planning (permitted development rights) being slightly different, but this would be limited as the village is in the National Park so the main impact would be on demolition of structures, works to trees (written notification would need to be sent into ENPA 6 weeks prior to works) and removal of walls, fences and gates which abut the highway. The main impact of the status would be re highways and ‘streetscape’, and if funding was to become available the village would be more likely to be beneficial. Designation as a conservation area would help to protect the character of the village.

Mr Thurlow would like to put this out to a 6 week consultation with the village at the end of August, with all villagers receiving a letter and being given the opportunity to ask questions. He would be happy to come and give a talk in the village hall, and perhaps attend one of the village coffee mornings to meet members of the village

community. Following the feedback received from the consultation the National Park Authority would consider whether to progress the process further. MM asked about alterations to the old village hall, both internal and external. TT responded that listed status can limit such changes both internally and externally, more so than conservation status, and the user class/type would not change. CW mentioned that the car park belongs to SCC and there are problems with potholes, it needs 'edging' and it would benefit from improvements. TT responded that ENPA could potentially support with this, particularly if the village is in a conservation area, but as funding is from SCC any final decisions re improvements would be with them.

TT mentioned that tree planting schemes can support replacement of damaged or removed trees in the centre of the village.

KC raised the issue of the previous discussions in the village on this topic and that he was aware that in the past oppositions to conservation status had been raised re the limitations of works, or controls regarding works to trees and TT did agree that this would need to be considered when reaching a decision. IB raised concerns re waiting six weeks if a tree has been damaged in a storm and TT said in that case more urgency can be applied to their response.

IB asked if conservation status would limit access to improvements such as solar panels and electric vehicle charging points. TT stated that the rights to add these would not be affected.

TT mentioned 'Article Four' which would be part of the agreement and could give more control over external building features such as windows and doors. However, this would only apply in certain cases and his work prior to the meeting had not highlighted any buildings where this would apply. ENPA would always encourage and prefer sustainable materials to be used but couldn't prevent choices such as recycled plastic benches or metal swings being placed on the Village Green if that was considered in the future.

The outcome of the consultation would result in either 'support', 'oppose' or 'no objection' to guide Mr Thurlow in taking this forward further to the National Park Authority. Councillors supported him in moving forward with the consultation and gathering wider views from members of the village community.

54.7 Finance:

- a. **To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due** – this was approved, proposed by KC, seconded by IB.
- b. **Further points** - JY needs minuted approval to remove Mr Watts-Mabbut as a signatory on all accounts as he is no longer a councillor. This was unanimously agreed, proposed CW and seconded IB. The difficulty of sending cheques was also discussed as two were recently lost in the post. It was agreed to explore the option of putting some of the regular commitments eg insurance onto a direct debit agreement. It was noted that it is good practice for the reserve account to contain an amount which is approximately half of the precept.

54.8 To discuss the Ann Le Bas Bequest

- a. **Action needed with solicitor to sign over gifted field** – JY will contact Hunters re next steps.

b. Archive – update re Exmoor Society – MM has been having difficulty getting a response from the Exmoor Society, it is known that they are having changes of personnel. It was agreed to postpone this until the next meeting.

c. Remainder of prints and plan to clear – Mr Raynor has been away and MM will be in touch with him on his return.

54.9 To receive an update re bus shelter repairs – IB has been in contact with the District council with regard to this. He reported that three bodies are involved with bus shelters so there are limits on our choice when replacing the current shelter. First Group organise the timetables, the District council help with maintenance (although not currently due to staffing need) and the Highways department issue the licence.

FN and SP arrived at 20.51

The District council are no longer supplying shelters. It was discussed whether one was needed due to the prohibitive cost, reduction in services and school children rarely using it, however it was agreed there is a need and to pursue getting costings and potential suppliers. FN suggested contacting Selworthy Parish Council who have recently replaced their shelter at Tivington re supplier/costings.

54.5 Reports from County and District Councillors – A consultation has opened re unifying council taxes for the lower paid across the authority from the four separate arrangements currently in place.

Parish Council training is being offered through the district councils re the unification and other areas, and this can be accessed via Amy Tregallas

The new Highway Steward Rich Gay is now in post and those parishes who have had contact with him have been pleased with his work so far, SP recommended contacting him to visit the parish. The small 'pot' of money made available re the pilot local community network scheme is still available and SP recommends making applications for small works via that. It is not yet known what the formal 20 local community network scheme areas are to be in the new unified council and that should be decided in the next few weeks. FN shared that due to the small roads, high ground and large area it is hoped that the current network is maintained.

Brown signs for Halse are not yet in place which are needed to prevent large vehicles/caravans using unsuitable roads.

CW enquired re progress re the mobile phone mast. SP will ask Dean Kinsella for an update. It was suggested that the base which has been put down has to 'settle' for an extended period of up to a year.

MM mentioned the upgrades happening with Western Power currently resulting in repeated power cuts (four days so far). Concern was raised re the safety issues of having no phone service, and the potential of bad weather causing further problems in the autumn/winter. IB reported that when the power is out and the phones are not operational while there is no mobile network there is no way of getting help in difficulty, eg problems with sewage pumps not operating, not able to get the defibrillator if needed etc. MM has raised this issue in an email to the local MP. SP agreed to support her by also writing to him and MM will write again as she had not

had a response re getting back up systems and for BT to put the system back on until the mast is functional.

- 54.6 To consider Highways Matters** – CW reported that the village was very pleased with the three recent resurfacing works. Further works are to be carried out near the stables with the road being closed for 8-12 days. FN suggested that Mr Gay can be contacted re dirty/overgrown signs, clearing drains and gulleys etc, whereas potholes and other issues he couldn't deal with should be reported in the same way as previously. IB and CW will be the contact for Mr Gay.

FN & SP left the meeting at 21.25

- 54.11 To discuss a plan to welcome new residents, holiday home and rental visitors to the village** – It was recognised that this could be beneficial but could perhaps need a further committee to be put together including arrangements for volunteers. The proposals were positively received but need to be costed and the parish council would not be able to fund this. It was suggested that it would be helpful for Mr Luscott to be invited to the next meeting so it could be clarified how this could best be supported by the council and clarify responsibilities in how to take this forward.

- 54.12 Correspondence and Emails received** - none

- 54.13 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended** – BN had attended an online SALC training event.

- 54.14 Items for Next Agenda** – 1. Transfer of funds to reserve account 2. Proposal for new village committee re welcoming visitors and new residents to the village/invite Mr Luscott 3. CW to arrange a daytime meeting with Mr Gay, to meet with councillors to discuss his role.

- 54.15 Date of Next meeting – Monday 26th September 2022 at 7.30 in Winsford Village Hall**

There being no further business CW closed the meeting at 21.36