WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Winsford Parish Council Held on Monday 29th July 2024, at 19.00pm in Winsford Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors: Colin Wilkins (CW) – Chair, Mel Mileham (MM), Ian Brooks (IB), Mike Hillier (MH), Kevin Connell (KC), Bryany Neal (BN), Sarah Little (SL) and Clerk Jennifer Yates (JY).

Somerset Councillors Frances Nicholson (FN) and Steven Pugsley (SP) attended part of the meeting.

Two members of the public attended the first part of the meeting.

CW opened the meeting at 19.01pm

75.1 Public Question Time: Joshua Smith and Megan Hunt attended the meeting to speak re their planning application (Agenda item 5a). The Council were informed that the plot of land had been in the family for three generations and this application was for this local family to build a forever home and raise their family in the village. The planning has been carefully done with attention paid to keeping costs low once built, particularly with regard to energy costs. When looking at options at windows it was found that wooden windows were up to three times as expensive as UPVC. The latter can now be obtained which do not look 'plastic' and the house will be timber clad and their preferred windows would fit in perfectly, being flush and slimline and similar in style to wooden designs. The windows will not be easily visible from the road. They are aware of other properties in the village which do have UPVC windows, which do need less maintenance, and offer higher security.

75.5 To consider planning matters:

a) 6/40/24/005: Location – Long garden plot above the Council House, Ash Lane, Winsford, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 7JH Proposal: Proposed variation of condition 4 (timber windows and doors) of approved application 6/40/20/114 to allow the installation of uPVC windows and doors.

Discussion took place including mention of a recent application by another parishioner which was refused due to them requesting UPVC windows. It was recognised that while the parish is in the National Park and part of the village now being a Conservation Area there are more restrictions for building work and improvements, and it was noted this property would not be in the Conservation Area. It was appreciated that the cost of wooden windows is a difficult factor for people wishing to build or improve their homes due to cost. Also, that UPVC windows can now be recycled, and designed to look like wood. It was felt that the National Park planners could perhaps review this policy which is prohibitive to people, particularly young families, being able to afford to have good homes in the area. Discussion took place re the sourcing of wood for windows which was likely to be imported and therefore is not environmentally friendly. It was noted that Mr Smith had taken advice from the planning team.

The Parish Council voted to support this application, but recognise that the National Park will make the final decision due to current restrictions. However, it was felt that creating a self build, affordable house should be supported and the huge disparity in cost of materials needs to be considered. The National Park could look more favourably on new high standard materials being used in new affordable self build scenarios.

b) Other Planning applications and matters: None

75.2 Apologies for non-attendance: None

75.3 Declaration of Interests: None

75.6 To discuss the proposal for block tree planting in the parish, including feedback from the ENPA meeting and the consultation meeting. A public meeting was held and was attended by several of the Councillors. IB has spent a lot of time on researching around this and other projects and shared his feedback with the representative from the project team, who seemed unaware of other projects already planned in this area. He has also followed up with exchanging communications with the company running the project, along with other stakeholders. Following the presentation/public meeting it is still felt that this proposal does not fit with, or is appropriate for, the village. However, the final say is with the landowner. It appears that the National Park planners have no involvement with such projects, and it was agreed that it would be helpful to meet with a representative from the Park to learn more about such projects, and have the opportunity to ask questions, in essence a training opportunity. It does feel that there is no 'oversight' by any authority and the bigger picture is not being tracked, which is a concern. The main concern is with the large blocks of trees rather than the smaller clumps. There are already large areas of woodland in the parish. KC and SP fed back from the recent Exmoor National Park meeting that there have been some changes with park legislation, however whilst organisations are required to pay heed to National Park aims landowners can make changes without any consents. Whilst one of the aims/purposes is landscape conservation, and this project will have a notable change to the landscape, there is no opportunity for the Park to comment or intervene. Concerns are centred around food production and the carbon footprint of not growing locally and landscape changes and these are not being addressed, and the longevity of such project being up to 100 years tying up what could be productive land. Several local farms have changed hands over recent years, and there is concern that more and more land is going to be laid down to trees instead of being used for more traditional farming of livestock and produce.

75.9 Update on the Exmoor Trust properties in the parish: There were no updates available.

75.10 Reports from County Councillors: SP mentioned that salt bags and bins and their sites will be discussed at the LCN meeting in September. It is very important that SP and FN have the current locations for that meeting. SL

mentioned that there is one bag at Liscombe cattle grid which may not be on our current map or list.

75.11 To consider Highways Matters:

a) To discuss the arrangements for verge and hedge trimming, and also the storage of possessions/vehicles on verges: CW mentioned that nothing has been heard from the Magna representative re the parking and storage of items on verges. Also, there is an ongoing issue with a parked horse box, however it is not clear about who owns the verge at that point.

b) To discuss the arrangements for road sweeping: SP mentioned that the contract is up for renewal. CW reported dissatisfaction with the service, particularly leaving debris which then blocks gullies and drains.

c) Any other business: Yellowcombe Leat is still leaking, it is likely to collapse but Somerset are still not taking action at this time.

SP and FN left the meeting at 20.20pm

75.4 To agree the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 1st July, and any outstanding actions, and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 10th July: 1st July – 73.6: KC wrote a letter which JY passed on, no response has been received yet. Thanks given to KC. Both sets of minutes approved as accurate.

75.7 Finance:To receive financial report and agree to pay amounts due: Payments approved as follows, Proposed IB, seconded KC

JY Pay and expenses June-July	£331.60
HMRC Tax Dec - March	£61.40
IDVerde dog bin emptying	£599.04
M Hillier (car park maintenance)	£340.48
Total	**£1,341.52**

75.8 To agree the amendments to, and publication of, the donations policy: Approved. JY to replace the copy on the website.

75.12 Winsford Charitable Trust

a) Maintenance of the Village Green: Recent work carried out on the riverbanks removing Hemlock was successful. The next work will be to cut back the rhododendrens on the Green during September and some further work in the river. MM and MH will liaise with him and discuss the mowing going forward, from mid April.

b) Finance Report: The benches for the Green have been ordered and are due to arrive in early August. MH will help move the benches for the WRA. Payments agreed to MH for mowing £360, TDP for benches (from grant) £2,239.20 and Risdon £100.

c) AOB: JY and CW to complete paperwork for Risdon re anti money laundering. JY to approach the Charity Commission re changing the Trust name officially to Winsford Village Green Trust.

75.13 Correspondence and Emails received: CW has been in communication with a resident re a parking issue. Advised that they need to check their deeds re land ownership.

76.14 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended: KC has circulated his report from the informative Exmoor National Park meeting which he and MM attended.

76.15 Any Other Business: None

76.16 Items for Next Agenda: Tree planting scheme, asset register, Village Green maintenance.

76.17 Date of Next meeting – September 30th 2024 at 7.00 in Winsford Village Hall

There being no further business CW closed the meeting at 20.45