

COMBE MARTIN PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the meeting of Combe Martin Parish Council held at the Community Centre on Monday 9 December 2019 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Peter James (Chairman), Ian Lawton (Vice Chair), David Woodbury, Chris Wyer, Celia Withers, Katherine Armitage, Andy Forgan, Helen Mallinder, Martin Worth, Keith Wyer, and Lee Lethaby.

In attendance: County Cllr Andrea Davis, District Cllr Yvette Gubb, Steve Russell (Combe Martin Water Watch Group), nine parishioners, John Andrews (temporary Finance Clerk) and the Parish Clerk (minute taker).

Cllr Peter James welcomed Councillors and attendees to the meeting and introduced Steve Russell from the Combe Martin Water Watch Group (CMWWG) who gave a presentation on the recent sand moving on Combe Martin beach and the theory behind it.

Combe Martin Water Watch Group Presentation

On 25 November 2019 with the necessary permissions in place, CMWWG dug a channel in the sand on the landward side of the breakwater to enable the River UMBER to flow directly out to sea. At the same time, the CMWWG undertook a survey of the breakwater to ascertain the depth of the silt build-up (on the landward side) and check for signs of damage.

Combe Martin risks losing its designated bathing water status if its bathing water quality does not improve within the next two years. The River UMBER flows directly into the bathing water testing area and its movement, restricted by the breakwater, makes dispersal and sanitisation slow. This has a direct impact on bathing water quality sampling when tides are low and after periods of heavy rainfall when river levels are high. In these conditions, a water sample taken by the Environment Agency is likely to contain a higher quantity of freshwater than seawater. The water sample is tested for bacteria that indicate whether there is poo in the water. Combe Martin bathing water has been found to contain poo bacteria from humans, dogs, cows and sheep.

The sand movement exercise was exploratory to test the bathing water and establish the longevity of the temporary channel. The channel lasted for approximately two weeks in the winter conditions and made a real difference to the beach as sediment from the river was able to flow away instead of getting trapped inside the breakwater.

The CMWWG suggest that sand re-profiling on the beach should be carried out at least two to three times a year until a permanent solution can be found.

261/19 To receive, and reply to, matters raised by parishioners

The first parishioner to speak repeated her concerns about the river wall along Bowling Green Lane; its current condition and its structural integrity to withhold flood

water. The parishioner has been raising these matters for the last twenty-two months.

The second parishioner to speak raised his objection to the Parish Council's recent resolution to investigate moving the Parish Council office to the Community Centre. The parishioner felt that the office should remain at the sea front. Cllr James explained that the current office is not fit for purpose and that the Community Centre is not being maximised and is a drain on resources. The Parish Council has investigated several options for the Community Centre, but none have generated much interest.

The Chairwoman of the Village Hall Community Group, Mrs Tracey Seldon, requested an update about the parking issue behind the Village Hall. The Clerk informed Mrs Seldon that the Parish Council has instructed a solicitor to deal with the matter.

The fourth parishioner to speak raised his concern about the particulars relating to the sale of the public conveniences at The Parade. Cllr James reassured the parishioner that proper process had been followed and it is hoped that the sale will be completed shortly.

Cllr James said that any parishioner wishing to speak about planning applications would be invited to do so when the meeting reached that part of the agenda.

The public session closed at 7.33pm

262/19 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr John Hales.

263/19 **Declarations of Interest**

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Andy Forgan declared an interest in planning application no. 70816.

Cllr (Brian) Lee Lethaby declared an interest in his planning appeal, ref: APP/X1118/C/19/3233186.

Any other declarations were dealt with per agenda item.

264/19 **To consider any requests for dispensations**

Prior to the meeting, the Chairman and Clerk agreed to grant Cllr Forgan's request for dispensation to speak on planning application no. 70816, but not vote.

265/19 **Finance:**

a) **To consider the reports on the monthly balances**

The Finance Officer circulated month end reports for October 2019 and provisional month end reports for November 2019 to Council members prior to this meeting.

RESOLVED: The month end reports for October 2019 were approved.

One parishioner left the meeting at 7.40pm.

b) To consider budget proposals to take forward the Parish Council's updated Strategic Plan

Prior to the meeting, the temporary Finance Clerk, John Andrews, circulated a note on the draft budget proposals, including an analysis and forecast, to Council members. Mr Andrews has identified a potential deficit in this year's budget and his note proposes solutions for addressing it.

Mr Andrews answered questions from Councillors on project spend and deferral, Reserves, capital income and revenue income, and zero-based budgets.

Cllr James asked Council members to consider the budget proposal to raise the price of the concession that allows the two local kayak businesses to use Combe Martin beach for commercial purposes to launch their kayaks.

Cllr Helen Mallinder declared an interest in this proposal and left the room while the discussion took place.

It was agreed that the tendering process and costs for using the beach by businesses should be considered as part of the review of the Beach Policy. A timeline of January/February 2020 was set to complete the review.

County Cllr Andrea Davis left the meeting at 8.07pm.

c) To consider the Precept for 2020/21 and decide on a provisional figure

It was noted that the Council Tax Support Grant, an additional payment to the precept, and the Parish Grant which together amounted to just over £4000 for the Parish Council last year has now ended.

RESOLVED: To provisionally increase the current precept figure by 2.5%.

d) To consider an appropriate amount to reimburse local resident for use of their electricity supply to light up the Christmas tree on Adams Hay.

RESOLVED: To pay the local resident £40.00 for the use of their electricity to light up the Christmas tree at Adams Hay.

266/19 **County and District Councillors' reports**

Devon County Council

County Cllr Davis sent her report in advance of this meeting. District Cllr Yvette Gubb read out highlights from the report.

Free Trees- two schemes from DCC

Devon County Council has teamed up with the Woodland Trust and the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum to encourage communities and landowners to plant more trees.

Devon County Council, in association with the UK's leading woodland conservation charity the Woodland Trust, is offering a limited number of packs of 45 sapling trees to give away to landowners who may be interested in establishing a small copse or planting-up a field corner. The packs contain a mix of native oak, rowan and birch – 15 of each. Spiral guards and canes are provided to protect against damage and planting instructions are also included.

Stocks are limited this winter, so those interested should apply early. However, future extension of the scheme should ensure opportunity for all to participate.

Applications need to be made online via the Devon Ash Dieback website by Monday 6 January 2020 and applicants will be notified if they have been successful before the end of January. Planting must be carried out by Easter 2020.

Winter month preparation for Parishes

Devon County Council and other organisations continue to invest in new and improved flood defences to help protect those locations most at risk of flooding. But heavy and sustained rainfall or other severe weather events can result in unexpected problems almost anywhere in Devon. This means self-help is a vital approach to protecting homes, property and communities.

Practical advice and financial support are available to help local communities be better equipped to deal with an emergency, such as flooding. The Devon Community Resilience Forum offers two complementary grant schemes, funded by Devon County Council and the South West Regional Flood & Coastal Committee.

Town and parish councils and community groups can bid up to £250 for this funding to help form their own Community Emergency Planning Group and produce Community Emergency Plans. They can also bid for up to £1,500 to improve their own resilience with equipment or one-off small-scale work, which can range from the provision of sandbag stores, flood protection equipment, road signs, tools, and protective equipment.

Devon County Council also offers a Property Flood Resilience Funding Scheme for those households at risk of repeated flooding, but who are unlikely to be protected by a community-wide flood scheme.

Flooding to roads or blocked drains should be reported via Devon County Council's Roads and Transport "report a problem" page.

In the event of a flood, in particular the flooding of properties, people are being urged to record it online via the SWIM (Severe Weather Information Management) system.

This enables members of the public, flood wardens and flood risk management authorities to enter details about property flooding.

While this won't generate an immediate response for assistance during or after an event, it helps inform the flood investigations of local authorities to help prioritise action plans for future investment in flood improvements.

For information on who to contact in a flood event visit Devon County Council's Flood risk management webpages.

Devon County Council seeking views on 5G as part of spotlight review

The County Council's Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee is investigating 5G as part of a spotlight review.

Devon County Council has no current plans to make use of 5G in its ICT and is not involved with planning applications for mobile infrastructure; it is running an investigation in response to local concern and wants to hear from people to help inform its findings.

An online questionnaire is now available, inviting members of the public to express their views and provide evidence or information that they feel the County Council should consider in reviewing the technology. It also asks how informed people feel about the technology and if they feel enough awareness has been raised about the use of 5G.

Devon County Council wants to hear from as many people as possible across Devon regarding 5G technology. The information shared will be used in the County Council's Councillor-led spotlight review. While Scrutiny can only make recommendations, this work is planned to help to inform Council policy on 5G technology.

Anyone who fills in the questionnaire will have the opportunity to be invited to take part in a discussion with the scrutiny group at a later date. Feedback must be submitted by Wednesday 1st January 2020.

North Devon Council

No report.

267/19 **Vandalism and Police Report**

The Police newsletter for December 2019 was received after the meeting.

Crimes reported in November 2019 were as follows:

Combe Martin

Violence without Injury	1
Criminal Damage	2
Public Order Offences	2

Berrynarbor

Criminal Damage 1
Other Offence 1

East Down

None

268/19 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 November 2019

RESOLVED: To approve as a correct record, the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 11 November 2019.

269/19 Planning

a. Applications:

REFERENCE 70610: VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 (APPROVED PLANS) ATTACHED TO PLANNING PERMISSION 66895 TO ALLOW FOR VARIOUS AMENDMENTS AT LAND AT SPURWAY GARDENS COMBE MARTIN
Applicant: Mr Ley

Mr Ley was present at the meeting. He apologised for the mud on the main road and explained the reason for applying to make various amendments (due to the amount of excavation required) to his original planning application.

RESOLVED: To inform the planning authority that this Council support the application and makes the following observations:

- Less soil excavation and transportation would mean less mud on the roads.
- The new design seems to greatly increase the overlooking between neighbouring houses. This needs to be seriously addressed, perhaps with the use of obscured glass screens.

Mr Ley left the meeting at 8.35pm.

REFERENCE 70816: VARIATION OF CONDITION 4 (CLOSURE OF ORIGINAL VEHICULAR ACCESS) ATTACHED TO PLANNING PERMISSION 61823 (ERECTION OF BRIDGE TO PROVIDE NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS) AT SEA VISTA ROSEA BRIDGE LANE COMBE MARTIN
Applicants: Mr & Mrs Scott

Cllr Forgan's declaration and dispensation were dealt with earlier in this meeting.

RESOLVED: To inform the planning authority that this Council support the application and makes the following request:

That the proposed wall be set far enough back so that it provides minimum obstruction to vehicles negotiating the bend in the very narrow lane.

REFERENCE 62/19/19/008: PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO TWO HOLIDAY LETS. COLLINGS BALL, SHUTE LANE, COMBE MARTIN

Applicants: Mr & Mrs Turner

RESOLVED: To inform the planning authority that this Council does not support the application and makes the following observations:

This proposal would vastly improve the current site. However, the development is likely to increase traffic flow at the junction of Shute lane and High Street/Kings Street and falls outside the village development boundary. If, against the Parish Council's recommendation, the proposal were to go ahead we would strongly recommend the installation of solar panels and rainwater harvesting systems.

270/19 Planning Correspondence

62/19/19/007 – Planning permission granted.

70617 – Planning permission granted.

271/19 Planning Appeal

APP/X1118/C/19/3233186

Appellant's name – Mr Brian Lee Lethaby

Cllrs (Brian) Lee Lethaby, Martin Worth, and Peter James declared interests in this appeal and left the room while the discussion took place.

The Vice Chair, Cllr Ian Lawton chaired this matter.

RESOLVED: To inform the Planning Inspectorate that this Council opposes the appeal.

Cllrs Lethaby, Worth, and James returned to the meeting. Cllr James took back the chair.

272/19 Reports by Representatives to Outside Bodies

There were no reports.

273/19 Correspondence:

1. Kayak Centre – email about bathing water quality. The Parish Council will seek advice on the issues raised.
2. Parishioner – email about bathing water quality and sewerage connections. It was agreed to contact South West Water. District Cllr Gubb said that she would also raise the parishioner's concerns with the Environment Agency.
3. Parishioner – email about the UN Agenda 21. Noted.

274/19 **To confirm proposed dates for future meetings**

RESOLVED: To hold the next Parish Council Meeting on Monday 13 January 2020 at 7pm at the Community Centre.

275/19 **Office**

It was noted that the Parish Council office will be closed for the festive period from Monday 23 December 2019 until Friday 3 January 2020.

276/19 **Combe Martin Football Club**

The report on the recent verti-draining work on the football pitch was noted.

The draft Joint Parish Council and Combe Martin Football Club response to the First Review of the North Devon and Torridge Playing Pitch Strategy 2017-2031 was endorsed by full Council. There was a short time-frame to respond to this review. Responses had to be submitted by 9 December 2019.

RESOLVED: To approve Combe Martin Football Club's proposal to astro-turf and fence off the grassed area where the basket-ball nets are to create an all-weather, all seasons playing facility.

The Combe Martin Football Club's draft Growth Strategy and Legacy Plan 2019 was noted.

District Cllr Gubb left the meeting at 9.15pm.

277/19 **Bathing Water Conference 2019**

Cllr Katherine Armitage provided a report on the 2019 Bathing Water Conference in Belfast. She said that the bathing water sample results for Combe Martin seem to be consistently inconsistent and she suggested that the community should have access to carry out its own testing.

Cllr James thanked Cllr Armitage for attending the conference on the Parish Council's behalf.

One parishioner left the meeting at 9.25pm.

278/19 **Review of Strategic Plan**

Climate Preparedness Committee – Flood meeting and drain clearing

To consider holding a public meeting to discuss flood issues in the village early next year.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should write to the Environment Agency and request a meeting with senior officials to resolve issues that it has actively been pursuing for the last two years and longer.

To consider asking Devon County Council Highways to liaise with the Parish Council just before it carries out drain clearing in the village so that arrangements can be made for Parish Council staff to erect signs and/or clear away any obstructions near or on drain surfaces.

RESOLVED: To ask Devon County Council Highways to liaise with the Parish Council just before it carries out drain clearing in the village so that arrangements can be made for Parish Council staff to erect signs and/or clear away any obstructions near or on drain surfaces.

Office Relocation

To invite members to sit on the working party to investigate relocating the Parish Council office to the Community Centre.

Cllrs Ian Lawton, Martin Worth, and David Woodbury agreed to sit on the working party. Cllr James to write a briefing paper of the discussion he had with the Conservation Officer for the working party.

279/19 **5G Awareness Campaign**

Cllr Katherine Armitage highlighted Devon County Council's spotlight review on 5G. See minute ref: 266/19.

280/19 **Parks and Open Spaces**

To consider the damage to the wall at Adams Hay and options to address it.

RESOLVED: To ask the Council workmen to investigate options for making the wall shorter in length.

281/19 **Footpaths**

None.

282/19 **Health and Safety**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

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Chairman