

MINUTES OF CHURCHSTOW PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 14th JANUARY, 2015

Present: Councillors: Roger Hind - Chairman
Geoff Stewart
Yanine Tarr
Paul Williams
John Woodley

Apologies Steve Mammatt
Eddie McLaney

S.Hams District Councillor: Ian Bramble
Devon County Councillor: Rufus Gilbert

1. WELCOME

The Chairman, Cllr. Roger Hind welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. MINUTE S OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12th NOVEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and agreed. These were duly signed by the Chairman Cllr. Hind.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

As we have not received any further offer of help from St. Austell Brewery towards the cost of the defibrillator we will go ahead and purchase this. It was confirmed that they are happy to have the defibrillator at the Church House Inn on the understanding that it is maintained by the Parish Council. They may though help with the electrical installation costs.

Speeding - Cllr Hind had received an email from Adam Keay who stated that there was no intention of doing anything at this moment in time about the speeding in Churchstow and that there were no monies available to move the 30 mile/hour signs. It was agreed that we should continue to push for this as a Council and we would approach Cllr. Gilbert to advise us.

It was suggested that if SHDC have no money to move these signs could we – the Parish do it ourselves or at least help to pay for it.

Cllr Stewart felt we should press Cllr Gilbert to do something about this. He has a lot of sympathy with Tony Puncher. Harbertonford and the Mounts

have a flashing sign reminding people to reduce their speed to 30 miles/hour so why can't Churchstow.

Cllr. Stewart asked about the offer we had been given to train interested parties in the use of Speed Guns. We need to contact the local PSCO regarding this.

Dark Sky Policy – Cllr Hind to write to M D'Alesio regarding his information on turning off the lights on Bantham Cross and Palegate Roundabouts.

Name of New Affordable Housing – The response from our notice regarding a name for the new Housing development came up with a number of suggestions. The one put forward was Dennis Reeves Way. It was suggested that as it was difficult to get a street named by a full name that we go for Reeves Way instead. This was agreed by the committee and will be put forward. Cllr. Hind to write and confirm.

Maintenance of Grass Verges – an email has been sent regarding this but as yet no response.

Cllr. Tarr was concerned about the lack of information with regard to the road closure recently experienced which caused a great deal of chaos. Cllr Tarr reported that she had asked the foreman as to why the road was being tarmaced as it didn't appear to have much wrong with it. He was extremely helpful and explained that A roads are tested every 12 months and this road was deemed "past its sell by date" The Council are then obliged to do maintenance otherwise they could be sued if there was an accident.

The road signs were not adequate and the diversion caused huge problems.

Cllr. Hind reported that there is a website for lost and found items reported to the Police. You can use this if you find something and after 28 days if not claimed it goes up for auction. You cannot use it to see if anything is found.

REPORT FROM SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – IAN BRAMBLE

Cllr Bramble reported that the application to the SCLF made by Sue, the Clerk for £700 for a new notice board was in the system and we would hear within the next week.

He is organising a presentation regarding the Neighbourhood Plan with Churchstow and Buckland Tout Saints and will let us know dates when confirmed.

Cllr. Bramble was surprised to find out that the documents from our QC regarding the Potato Processing Plant had not yet been sent to The Council's barrister.

He went on to say that the sale of unprocessed potatoes was suffering. Customers are buying ready peeled etc. Assuming that this goes ahead it may mean that this could become a chipping factory thus changing this to a light industrial factory.

Cllr. Stewart felt that on reading reports in the local papers over the last few months that SHDC Planning Department may not be fit for purpose. Particularly in respect of the Malborough Affordable Housing project, the Planning Department let the developer continue when they knew there were several incidences that were wrong but let them go ahead to make their own lives easier. The developers should have been fined a substantial amount if this wasn't put right. The message coming from the Planning Department was they ignored the signs.

Cllr Stewart also enquired of Cllr Bramble if the rumours that the Head of Planning and his deputy are leaving. Cllr Bramble said he was not aware of this but would make enquiries. Nationwide there is a shortage of Planners.

Cllr Stewart felt that if the Potato Plant goes ahead then nothing would be enforced.

Cllr. Bramble asked if we had submitted our increase for our Precept. Sue offered to follow this up. It was felt we should apply for an inflationary increase for 2015.

It was also reported that Parishes might have to have properly audited accounts. The Audit Commission has argued that this would be an additional load on the Parish.

SHDC has been awarded £700,000 from the Government. South Hams share is £430,000 Transformation Programme to help with cuts.

Currently it is looking that South and West Devon will be 3.3 million/year recurring, significantly altering the way we operate. Key staff are being

made redundant. The Council is on target by and large and for all the complaints, financially it is well run.

COUNCILLOR GILBERT THEN JOINED THE MEETING AND MADE HIS REPORT

He reminded everyone that there was an open meeting with Sarah Wollaston at the Quayside Leisure Centre on Friday at 2 pm.

He also reported that the Cottage Hotel had been granted Planning Permission for the Hotel extension.

Devon Schools have come out in the top 10 even though they have a lower budget.

Children in Care is improving, particularly in adoption and fostering.

1 million pounds/week cut caused entirely by Government Grant support being slashed. We are working towards being self-sufficient. Most monies go on Care of the Elderly, Schools and Roads
Cllr Hind suggested that we should get more money because we have a large number of retirees.

Devon appears to be wealthy, but it gets skewed by the South Hams. If it was based on average age we would come out a lot better.

MPs have been a bit naughty, they forget they have reduced the support but we have become more efficient, driving down costs, County are hoping for devolved powers.

4-5 million pounds is spent on gritting. Between 14,000-30,000 tons of salt is used on roads in Devon. 500-600 pot holes have reported each week in Devon this year compared with of 3,000 per week last year.

As Cllr Gilbert had not arrived at the meeting when the problems caused by the road works were discussed he was brought up to date regarding this. Neither West Alvington PC or Churchstow PC were advised about this. It appears that the notification for Churchstow had gone to the previous clerk, this has now been rectified and Sue will receive all notifications in future.

Cllr. Gilbert suggested that we write a letter of complaint, as signage was appalling and the diversion caused huge tailbacks. Cllr Hind to write to Devon County Council Head of Highways, Dave Whitton.

Cllr. Hind explained the problems regarding the speeding in Churchstow were not going to be resolved. Cllr. Gilbert suggested that when the new housing development was completed this would be reviewed under legislation as the flow of the road will be changed.

There is to be a review of Public Transport funding and we would lose 1.76 million by the end of 2016. Buses that are not used sufficiently will be cut as these cost up to £20.00 per person per trip. Cllr Hind asked if Devon County will charge for bus passes.

Cllr Hind asked if Parishes might eventually become involved in the aspect of transport. Cllr Gilbert felt that small parishes such as Churchstow would not, although market towns might have to.

Cllr Stewart remarked that if a parish is remote it is surely necessary to have Public Transport as people could not easily get to shops. This is a finite resource and we have to make a decision between transport, day centres or pot holes being mended.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION 11/3173/14/F.

As we did not have a meeting before this application was considered, it was emailed to all the Councillors and decision was that the Council would support this. Sue emailed this support to Development Management

6. UPDATE ON POTATO PROCESSING PLANT

Cllr Stewart reported that a 22 page document was written by our QC with four points of Unlawfulness.

Cllr. Bramble advised SHDC Planning Department that the Barristers report was imminent. The Planning Department then paced its preparation of the S106 notice in order to read the report

The fund collected by the Parish is around £1300 short. It was hoped that eventually this amount could be found by further donations from parishioners, particularly if the outcome for the parish is positive. The underlying problem is that Richard Martin who chaired this committee doesn't have immunity against being sued by SHDC. Cllr Bramble did comment that our own MP was aware of the problems within SHDC Planning Department

If Lidstone's are advised to go back to basics and start the planning application again, this could prove expensive; it was felt they have been badly advised.

Cllr Woodley asked whether we should check the land registry as to when this land for the Potato Plant was actually purchased.

Cllr Stewart expressed his thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to Cllr Bramble for all his help, support and advice during this difficult time.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk reported that confirmation had been received that morning that the Church House Inn had been granted Planning permission for work to be done on the roof.

Sue had also received a request from a student regarding the Council's General Power of Competence - Sue to reply.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is Wednesday 11th February, 7.30 in the Vestry

The Chairman Cllr Hind thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.