

**GITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 1ST JULY 2020
via Skype**

The Parish Council Meeting has to take place remotely for reasons of social distancing brought in by HM Government during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Present:

Gittisham Village Ward

Cllr C Hall (Chair)
Cllr M Walker
Cllr D Valentine

Gittisham Vale Ward

Cllr A Wilkins (Vice Chair)
Cllr P Orchard
Cllr J Twist

In attendance: Cllr Susie Bond (EDDC), Fiona Clampin (clerk), two members of the public

Apologies for absence: Cllr Phil Twiss (DCC), PCSO Darren England

51/20 To elect a Chairperson and signature of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Walker nominated Cllr Hall for election as Chair for 2020/21. This nomination was seconded by Cllr Valentine. A roll call of members present at the meeting was then taken. It was then resolved by a unanimous decision that Cllr Hall be elected Chair for 2020/21 of Gittisham Parish Council. In accordance with Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972, Cllr Hall then made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

52/20 To elect a Vice Chairperson

Cllr Walker moved, seconded by Cllr Hall :- "That Cllr Wilkins be elected as Vice Chairman for Gittisham Parish Council for 2020/2021". Upon a vote being taken it was then resolved by a unanimous decision that Cllr Wilkins be elected Vice Chairman of Gittisham Parish Council for 2020/2021. Cllr Wilkins then made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

53/20 To accept and approve apologies

Apologies were received and accepted.

54/20 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 3rd June 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

55/20 To receive the Beat Manager's Report

The police did not send a report this month, and the clerk said the link to the crime statistics on the Devon & Cornwall Police website had changed. Cllr Orchard said there is a third party website which produces crime statistics, but it has a three-month time lag.

56/20 To receive declarations of interest

None.

57/20 Reports from County Council and District Council representatives

Being unable to attend the meeting, Cllr Twiss sent the following report:

"This latest Division report is inevitably taken up with the impact of COVID-19, but I feel much more confident about the many positives in it and longer term our capacity to recover and thrive in the 'new normal'. What is sure is that when this vile disease flares up again, as seems very likely in some places, we will be much better prepared, and ready from what has been learned in double quick time during this initial outbreak.

As of Friday last week a total of 196 patients previously infected with the disease have been discharged and 1 only remains at Wonford. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 sadly 47 patients have died at the RD&E. So broadly good news as the rate of infection slows down in Devon and little negative to report, but to misquote regarding the virus and sadly 'it will be back'. The next peak is not expected to occur until later in the year or early next but it is important that we all remain vigilant and do not become complacent. The RD&E has started Antibody Testing and early indications support previous estimates of a very low level of antibody (and hence likely immunity) in Devon compared even with e.g. Swindon and Gloucestershire. This immunity (or lack of it) significantly impacts the Effective R rate and hence the rate of spread of the disease.

A big concern as a result of COVID-19 is the impact of other areas of healthcare locally, particularly in the acute Hospital setting of the RD&E for those with life-threatening or time critical disease, as well as other patients on elective lists who are in pain and/or experiencing limitations on their ability to enjoy life to the full. Waiting lists are growing normally again, which might ordinarily be a good thing, but now for the wrong reasons with long waiting patients waiting longer still. Having virtually eradicated waits of over 52 weeks, there is now a larger group of people in this category and shows the challenges ahead. Productivity has been held back because of COVID and a plan needs to be formulated to correct this. A big ask given the operational challenges we all have and will have while the pandemic plays out.

Support for discharges to adult social care has been excellent during the pandemic (although clearly there is appropriate national debate on discharges to non-hospital care environments) and clearly we can't return to the old ways on this and social care needs to be adequately funded.

A few broad questions relating to the RD&E that have been cropping up, with the answers below that you might find of interest.

Are we restarting elective work?

We are executing a detailed elective recovery plan covering both the 'normal' trust and the Nuffield. It is being clinically led, at Executive, but urging some caution the number of 40+ and 52+ week wait patients has increased dramatically and productivity (e.g. due to increased infection control measures) has reduced. So the plan will not recover the position, but will mitigate further deterioration and resources will be applied fairly and decisions driven by clinical need.

What is being done regarding staffing levels e.g. with changes in immigration rules?

The latest indications are that recruitment to further/higher education for NHS related professions has been strong. In part this is by further enhancement of an already strong NHS brand and also by the relative job security that is on offer, particularly in the context of rapidly increasing unemployment.

How is the RD&E supporting staff?

Like other NHS Trusts staff have been offered mentoring/counselling, free parking, hot drinks etc. Some of these will be maintained and enhanced (e.g. health and well-being support) others (e.g. free parking) will come to an end at some point.

Reducing inequalities

There has been much national comment on this recently, particularly in the light of increased mortality amongst BAME people and other global events. This is clearly to be welcomed. The RD&E takes the equality and indeed inclusivity agendas very seriously (at Board level this is led by the CEO). We clearly can, must and will do better. I am very keen that we continue to focus on inclusivity beyond protected characteristics as well: I do not believe that our allocation of resource is as fair as we would like it to be.

The R value

Much is talked about "The R value". This is an important regional barometer based on modelling data, but while it provides an estimate of ongoing transmission, it alone does not determine the rate of growth of coronavirus and does not accurately reflect Devon's local data on the ground and should be treated with a little caution.

The South West R value spans from Isles of Scilly to Bristol, and while there have been hotspots in other parts of the region that increase the R value, Devon's figures have remained low. We have the fifth lowest number of recorded cases when comparing Devon to all 150 upper tier local authorities and the consistency of the numbers suggest that levels have plateaued recently. That's in part due to our residents adhering to lockdown, and heeding national guidance around staying home and social distancing. We have done well in that regard and need to keep that up.

COVID-19 Prompt Action Fund.

The fund was launched at the very start of the lockdown 24th March as a grant of less than £500 for constituted and not-for-private-profit voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector groups and organisations, town and parish councils, charities, or a combination of such groups working together.

After the first 50 or so applications it became obvious that, in some cases, £500 was not nearly enough to cover costs such as providing ready meals, transportation and a myriad of other services provided so a further grant fund was added to a maximum of £5,000. To date some 370 separate applications have been received of which some 340 have been processed (some were clearly nothing to do with the present pandemic and the grants were seen to prop up ordinary activities!). Decisions to fund (or not) were triaged and it was difficult to take a decision, where DCC Officers have been very fair in processing them.

£330,000 has been distributed so far against an original budget of £480,000. Applications have been tailing off during the last couple of weeks; so much of the remaining fund will now be put towards the 'recovery phase', however that looks.

Transportation

Friday 5th June was the last day that National Bus Pass Holders were able to use passes before 09.30. Transport providers now need capacity for workers and commuters especially with social distancing reducing capacity on buses by more than 50%. At present services are operating at a reduced level of around 50% (although this does vary across the County and are being additionally supported by two parallel CBSSG (COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant) funds, one paid direct to operators and one via local authorities for supported services, both about to expire. A new tranche of CBSSG will be paid direct to operators. Stagecoach has indicated that they will aim for an 80% restoration of bus services.

In view of the uncertainty over how to preserve existing supported services, with reference to the previously announced New Funding prior to the present crisis, it is highly likely that DCC will not proceed with our programme of new and extended services, but instead use the funding to supporting existing services during this period of uncertainty.

Libraries

Library buildings may be closed due to the difficulty of social distancing but library staff have been hard at work enhancing their e-readership by increasing their library of e-books, loaning e-readers and even hand delivering books to the more vulnerable or 'shielded' residents.

Children's Service and Schools

Since the COVID 19 emergency was announced over 300 schools (85%) have remained open for children of key workers and vulnerable children. At the start on 24th March we had 2455 children in school and as the pandemic developed numbers went down to 866. Numbers gradually went up again and just before half term on the 20th of May nearly 4000 children were attending. The attendance of key workers and vulnerable children has been above the National average. Teachers have been brilliant from the start and it is hard to over emphasise how flexible and imaginative they have been.

The overwhelming majority of children have been at home and schools have been engaging with their students virtually and with workbooks. Devon's school population is about 96000. Early Years and Childminders have been open as well, about 497 (44%). When the Government announced that some Primary Year Groups would return to school from the 1st of June 2020, all schools were asked to do a COVID 19 safety assessment, which is valuable for when they do re-open. Schools are keeping in close contact with parents and it is fully appreciated that many parents and teachers are concerned at schools starting to open. It's an individual decision. This virus is going to be with us for some time and we need to

find a way to live with it.

Social Care

Primarily DCC needs to plan for the worst, but hope for the best e.g. Domiciliary Care Agencies unable to provide Care, to clear and make space in our Acute Hospitals, as well as the need to provide additional accommodation and plan for a much worse scenario than has actually happened! The extra planning, work and expense needs to be viewed in this context. Adult Social Care staff have risen to the enormous challenge and have acted in an exemplary manner, matters not helped when one of the Senior Staff members succumbed to the virus and still recovering. However DCC has been working for many years in partnership with the NHS and these good working relationships have undoubtedly helped to weather the storm.

Supporting Communities

Working to identify and contact people within different levels of vulnerability, such as those in the Shielding Group, and those that may be a drain on the Health and Care System without some support – so a voluntary and community response needed to be identified and developed.

Working with the Clinical commission Group DCC to create a ‘Third Capacity’ building were identified buildings that could support the Covid-19 discharge pathway and release hospital bed capacity. In the end, 3 facilities were established – The Hamptons Hotel Exeter, Durrant House Hotel Bideford, and the Nightingale Hospital Sowton Exeter.

Supporting our Social Care Providers

DCC set up a Provider email mailbox that is monitored 7 days a week and made arrangements to ensure that Care Homes had sufficient food and developed a Provider Sustainability Framework that includes the payment of guaranteed hours for staff. A new contract has been offered to DCC Domiciliary care Providers (DCP), as long as they guaranteed to pay their Care workers £10/hour. We helped coordinate the provision of PPE – sourced new suppliers – and became the provider of last resort – making available PPE to anyone who was in danger of running out. DCC has also covered the additional costs of PPE. Where a Home has had a case of Covid-19, additional support and staffing were provided.

Cllr Bond said that work is ongoing to attempt to get the council back on to a normal calendar of meetings, while at the same time continuing to tackle the issues faced with Covid.

The new administration has called two meetings of the Zoom Planning Committee in July as there are a number of applications requiring decision.

Meanwhile, the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan is moving slowly forward, said Cllr Bond. This is a joint initiative of Teignbridge District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid-Devon District Council and East Devon District Council and looks at future development to 2040. Given Boris Johnson’s mantra of ‘Build, Build, Build’, it’s important that this process continues, so that allocations for future development are decided democratically, rather than by developer whim. A meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting (again via Zoom) will be held on 23 July (5-7 pm) to discuss whether the Option sites should be sent out to public consultation in September.

Cllr Bond added that EDDC would soon be issuing guidance to town and parish councils on reopening play areas, and members agreed that Gittisham would wait to hear what the district council advised before taking any further steps.

58/20 To consider the parish council response to the COVID-19 outbreak

The Chair said the volunteer group was working well in the village, and Cllr Wilkins said this was the same in the Vale. Cllr Wilkins asked if more books could be donated to the book exchange in the Vale bus stop. Cllr Walker reported that St Michael’s Church was now open again.

59/20 To note the latest planning decision notices

- a) 20/0902/FUL - Coign Cottage Gittisham Honiton EX14 3AB - Construction of single storey front extension and provision of cladding to the existing stables. **Approval –**

standard time limit.

- b) 20/0780/FUL 7 Ferndale Close Honiton EX14 2YN – Extension to existing outbuilding including single storey flat roof extension on rear elevation of main house linking to extended outbuilding. **Approval with conditions.**

60/20 To consider the following planning applications:

- a) **20/0451/FUL Shermans Farm Gittisham EX14 3AU – Construction of permanent agricultural worker’s dwelling with parking and associated development (amended plans regarding elevations / floor and site plans, additional site drawings, Landscape Architect comments)**

Members had no objection to the amended application.

61/20 To consider plans for expenditure in the parish under the Community Infrastructure Levy & S106

Cllr Orchard said the public consultation had ended on 27th June, but the clerk confirmed that no specific suggestions had been received for new outdoor sports equipment. Cllr Valentine said he had asked Baker Estates if the parish council could look at the footpath network around Hayne Lane with the prospect of putting in some benches. He had also suggested to Baker Estates a fitness trail as a possibility.

ACTION: Cllr Orchard to check with Jamie Buckley at EDDC the next steps now the public consultation has finished, and to ask whether benches can be purchased using S106 funding or CIL.

Cllr Walker said some village residents had asked if it would be possible to provide additional dog waste bins.

ACTION: The Chair to investigate prices from independent suppliers, as EDDC’s are considered too high.

62/20 To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman to maintain drains and ditches in the parish

Cllr Valentine said the village bus shelter could do with a lick of paint, and the Chair suggested this would be a good time to undertake this. She added that Len Abbott had confirmed he had carried out the strimming work in the river under his own direction.

The Chair said that following a meeting between herself, Cllr Orchard and Mike Brown of DCC Highways, Mr Brown said the collapsed culvert outside Clysthayes was on his list of repairs. Cllr Orchard said that DCC had told him the blocked culvert between Old Elm Road and the railway was not sufficiently blocked to need work.

ACTION: Cllr Walker to ask Len Abbott to repaint the bus shelter. The clerk to forward the current play area inspection report to Cllr Walker.

63/20 To consider climate change measures within the parish

Members discussed the possibility of installing an electric vehicle charging point in the village.

ACTION: Cllr Wilkins to take this project forward and research options.

64/20 To consider limited residential development in the parish

Cllr Valentine said he was waiting for a response to a detailed report he'd prepared to justify the planning aspects of the proposed development to EDDC. Elsewhere, he said the CLT had been seeking tenders for onsite investigations, as well as the expressions of interest from architects. He remarked that at one point Baker Estates had offered to contribute £100,000 towards the cost of the Gittisham CLT, but this offer had been rejected by EDDC as it was considered inappropriate at that stage to make offers. However, he added, in the subsequent S106 agreement that came forward, Baker Estates had provided for £500,000 towards the provision of affordable housing in the district. Cllr Valentine said he hoped that some of this could be spent in Gittisham, especially as the design considerations for any future planning application by the CLT could be above and beyond what a housing association would be prepared to pay. Members thanked Cllr Valentine, and said they were pleased to learn things were moving forward.

65/20 To consider the parish emergency plan

Cllr Valentine said he and Cllr Orchard were looking to see how they could incorporate a template emergency plan for parishes that DCC had produced in 2015, as well as guidance from Devon Communities Together. He added that a community response team would need to be in place, which did not need to be connected to the parish council, and he would be asking for volunteers. The Chair said that the COVID-19 crisis had revealed how many vulnerable people there were in the parish, and also how many people were prepared to volunteer their help. Cllr Valentine said he and Cllr Orchard would report back to the parish council over the course of the next few months.

ACTION: Cllr Valentine to ask the Chair where it is possible to source some up to date flood plans.

66/20 To consider the casual vacancy in Gittisham Village ward

Following the resignation of Cllr Hayman, the clerk said the casual vacancy had been advertised on the noticeboards and the parish website. She said that if ten electors came forward by 15th July 2020 to request an election, an election would be held to fill the vacancy. (Under current legislation a poll cannot take place until 6 May 2021 as a result of the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and the Coronavirus Act 2020.) If not, the parish council could proceed to co-opt, and follow the policy approved at the March 2020 meeting (minute ref 237/19).

67/20 To approve the July payments and to note the current bank balance

It was resolved to approve the following payments:

1049	F J Clampin	£220.09	Clerk's salary and expenses
1050	F J Clampin	£218.79	Clerk's salary (to cover August, as no meeting)
1051	Michael Poll	£60	Play area grass cutting, (inv ref. 10016)
1052	Michael Poll	£60	Play area grass cutting, (inv ref. 10020)
1053	Len Abbott	£147	10.5 hours lengthsman work, June 2020 (at new rate of £14/hr)
1054	Len Abbott	£5.65	Expenses (petrol), June 2020
1055	Len Abbott	£4	Backdated pay owing to cover new rate of £14/hr from 1 st April 2020
DD	NEST	£17.50	Clerk's pension
DD	NEST	£17.50	Clerk's pension

Members were informed that the current bank balance stands at £10,328.76 (which includes the £7,000 in the business reserve account).

68/20 To complete the annual review of effectiveness of internal control and risk assessment

Members adopted the risk assessment and the annual review of effectiveness of internal control.

69/20 To complete the annual review of the standing orders and financial regulations

Members adopted the financial regulations. The clerk said as new model standing orders were due to be issued by NALC, she would move the review of standing orders to a future agenda.

70/20 To review the parish council's asset register

The clerk said she had added the bench which is due to be installed in Gittisham Vale. Councillors resolved to approve the amended version.

71/20 To consider any late entry correspondence

Cllr Valentine said Fiona Moores at The Pig had told him that the hotel would be reopening on 6th July 2020. Cllr Wilkins said the new Combe Farm shop would be opening soon. Cllr Orchard reported that the bus stops in Devonshire Road and at Combe Garden Centre are due to be installed on 5th August.

ACTION: The clerk to write to Fiona Moores asking that staff and visitors be reminded of the need to drive slowly through the village and surrounding roads.

72/20 Matters to be reported to DCC / EDDC

Cllr Wilkins said he welcomed the start of works on Hayne Lane on 3rd August. He said he had spoken to DCC operatives inspecting the site, who had found a collapsed culvert.

73/20 For information only; items for the forward agenda

It was agreed to meet next in September 2020, and include the following items on the next agenda: casual vacancy, coronavirus, climate change, lengthsman work, limited residential development, S106, parish clerk's computer, Hayne Farm defibrillator, play area.

74/20 Clerk's Report

None.

75/20 Date of next two meetings. Wednesday 2nd September and Wednesday 7th October at 7.30pm via Zoom. Should restrictions on public movement be lifted, these meetings will revert to being held in the parish room or another suitable venue.

ACTION: The Chair to set up a Zoom meeting instead of Skype.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2045 hrs.

Chairman.....

2nd September 2020