

**GITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 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 R Hayman (Chair)  
Cllr C Hall (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr M Walker  
Cllr D Valentine

**Gittisham Vale Ward**

Cllr Peter Orchard  
Cllr A Wilkins  
Cllr J Twist

**In attendance:** One member of the public, Damian Furniss (on behalf of DCC), Cllr Susie Bond (EDDC), Fiona Clampin (clerk)

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

Before the meeting Damian Furniss updated members regarding the situation with corona virus from DCC's perspective, where he is acting as the lead on this for the county's adult social care system. He said much had changed over the past month since he last addressed parish councillors. He said the South West now has the lowest prevalence of identified cases of the virus and the lowest growth rate, but people should not be complacent in case the South West became at risk of a second wave of cases later in the year. Cllr Wilkins asked about further reductions to bus and train services. Mr Furniss explained that a subsidised service would be brought in to enable key workers to use dial-up taxis, as further reductions in public transport were likely. He reported that temporary hospital facilities similar to the Nightingale in London were planned for the South West, and he added that the Hampton by Hilton hotel at Exeter Airport was already being used as a temporary care home. More information on this developing situation is available from [www.devon.gov.uk/document/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/](http://www.devon.gov.uk/document/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/)

Damian Furniss left the meeting.

**248/19 To accept and approve apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted.

**249/19 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were confirmed and will be signed by the Chair as soon as practically possible.

**250/19 To receive the Beat Manager's Report**

The clerk said the D&C Police website had been updated, and the old link for the local crime statistics was now broken.

**251/19 To receive declarations of interest**

The Chair declared an interest in item as he is both neighbour and a tenant of the landowner.

**252/19 Reports from County Council and District Council representatives**

In his absence, Cllr Twiss sent the following report (dated 27/03/20): "The Coronavirus (COVID-19) issue remains the overriding priority for members, Officers and staff at DCC and Chief Executive Phil Norrey is now asking that all staff consider volunteering to temporarily leave their current post (assuming they are

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working in a non-critical area of the organisation) and take up a temporary position in a critical service supporting and protecting some of the most vulnerable people in Devon.

“This means that some work areas of DCC will temporarily not function as before, and until this crisis has passed when we return to normality. Phil Norrey has requested cancellation/postponement of appropriate meetings not related to the COVID-19 crisis. The DCC secretariat is looking at longer term plans for all council committee meetings as the current situation evolves, due to lack of resources deployed to other areas of the Council and this includes some elected members who are not in an excluded group.

“For that reason, please accept my apologies for all ‘virtual meetings’ until 31st of May, but feel free to contact me by E Mail for items of a very urgent nature, not connected to the COVID-19 situation as my role has changed significantly in recent days to help full time with this.”

Cllr Twiss also provided an update from James Brent, Chairman of the RD&E, which had been sent to him and other Governors, which he described as both gloomy and at the same time reassuring:

“The hospital remains very calm. We have cancelled (and many patients have cancelled) outpatient appointments and the discharges into the community have been impressive. The team have reconfigured the hospital within a week in what normally would have taken a year. We are clearly remaining vigilant that patients are remaining safe but there are undoubtedly lessons being learned now that will help us transform services to the benefit of our communities going forward.

While the hospital remains very calm, the number of Covid-19 patients is increasing and sadly we have had 2 inpatient deaths. Moreover, the spreading of disease in London, the south-east and midlands is following the trend expected, so there is clearly no doubt that our number of our Covid-19 patients will continue to increase significantly.

The rate of increase-and the impact on mortality-will be dramatically impacted by the compliance (or otherwise) with the Government’s social distancing strategy. It would be incredibly helpful if you could spread this message to your communities (clearly complying with the social distancing rules): non-compliance will cause a material increase in sickness and deaths.

You will have heard comment about personal protective equipment, ventilator capacity, testing and staff vacancies. We do generally have enough PPE (although the supply of eye protection is tight) in line with Public Health England guidelines (these differ to a degree from WHO and some college guidelines). The supply is just in time but is now being supported by our colleagues in the Royal Logistics Corps-a big thank you to them.

You may have seen that additional ventilator capacity has been commissioned from Dyson and discussions are continuing with other suppliers, but the delivery timelines make delayed transmission and social distancing ever more important.

The Health Service Journal has published an article commending R,D & E Lab colleagues on testing. Test capacity across the country (and world) remains much lower than ideal and is being increased rapidly. We all recognise the importance of testing staff ASAP so that they can return to work and help look after our patients. Antibody testing is also a potential game changer both in modelling the progression of the disease (and hence planning) and also helping our staff return to work to support patients.

In line with the Country, our staff absences have dramatically increased. This is not causing an issue at the moment, but we are keen to improve ASAP- e.g. through the increase in testing capacity-to help deal with the surge in cases.

Finally, on a positive note. The response to this crisis has been absolutely extraordinary and if anyone needed assurance of the good that exists in humanity this is providing it. You will have seen and have seen the staggering response to the national call for volunteers. This is reflected in the local and regional response which has been extraordinary. Most of all, however, I remain so impressed by the incredible calm and compassionate professionalism throughout our organisation from Suzanne and our execs to our most

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junior staff.”

Cllr Bond said that the hub at EDDC is the go-to place for information on how to get through the lock-down. The hotline is manned from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and gives advice and support to whoever needs it. <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/east-devon-district-council-coronavirus-community-support-hub/coronavirus-community-support-hub-hotline/>

**253/19 To agree emergency arrangements and a scheme of delegation and payment for services during the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure continuity of the Council functions (as far as practicable)**

The clerk explained that as we are all being encouraged to follow government guidance on social distancing and self-isolation, this makes it very difficult to adhere to the legislation that currently guides local council decision-making i.e. councillors must be physically present at a council meeting in order to take part. However, the National Association of Local Councils and DALC had advised that parish councils begin to take decisions by email or other remote methods. This will be in breach of legislation, but NALC's view is that if there is a challenge afterwards, the courts will accept that exceptional times called for exceptional measures. Decisions in this way should be kept to truly urgent issues, and full records kept of the decisions taken i.e. councillors confirming their votes by email which the clerk keeps as a record of the decision. It is also in NALC's opinion, that if councils do not hold their scheduled meetings, including the annual council meeting, then the likelihood of successful legal challenge is very low. [N.B. from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 new regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May next year. They also remove the requirement to hold an annual meeting. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings.]

Members resolved to conduct parish council meetings online until such time as the regulations regarding social distancing are lifted. The Chair thanked Cllr Wilkins for his work in setting up the online solution to meetings.

**254/19 To consider the parish council response to the COVID-19 outbreak**

Cllr Hall said the volunteer group set up in response to the coronavirus outbreak was working well, with volunteers nominated as a point of contact and help for a specified group of households. Cllr Walker said her group was finding this very useful. Cllr Wilkins said the support group for Honiton had leafleted all properties in the Vale, so he felt it was counter-productive and potentially confusing to add anything in Gittisham Vale.

**255/19 To note the latest planning decision notices**

Cllr Wilkins said there were no new updates.  
The Chair left the meeting. Cllr Hall took the Chair.

**256/19 To consider the following planning applications:**

- a) 20/0451/FUL Shermans Farm Gittisham Honiton EX14 3AU - Construction of permanent agricultural worker's dwelling with parking and associated development

In response to Cllr Valentine's question about agricultural need, Cllr Bond said an agricultural survey had been carried out and planners were happy on this point. Members agreed the following response: subject to there being a proven agricultural need, the parish council has no objection in principle to the erection of an agricultural dwelling but is concerned that the scale of the proposed dwelling is greater than that necessary to meet the needs of an agricultural worker. The parish council has additional concerns that the proposed design would have an adverse effect on the setting within the AONB.

The Chair returned to the meeting.

- b) 20/0379/LBC 1 Riverside Cottages Gittisham Honiton EX14 3AE - Extension to existing outbuilding works to also include raising floor level to match the main house; single storey flat roof extension on rear elevation of main house linking to extended outbuilding; removal of 1no. window and 1no. door on ground floor rear elevation; construction of wall at ground floor; replace 2no. windows (W4, W5) at ground floor north elevation; replace 1no. window (W3) on ground floor south elevation and

replace 1no. window (W8) on first floor north elevation; external insulation of part of wall at ground floor (bedroom 4); additional step leading from bedroom 4 to new hallway  
c) 20/0379/LBC 1 Riverside Cottages Gittisham Honiton EX14 3AE - Extension to existing outbuilding including single storey flat roof extension on rear elevation of main house linking to extended outbuilding

Members expressed reservations in respect of the impact proposals b) and c) will have both on the listed cottage and on the setting of the cottage in the Conservation Area. These works significantly increase the footprint of the existing structure and whilst there is no objection in principle to a small increase in size it must remain subservient in form and appearance to the listed cottage.

**257/19 To consider progress on the modernisation of the play area, including fundraising and regular safety inspections**

The clerk circulated the annual play area safety inspection, which members agreed was comprehensive and clearly laid out. Cllr Walker said she would ask Len Abbott to attend to the small number of items which needed attention. Cllr Hall said due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the play area had to be closed and she had fixed signs to that effect to the various entry points.

**258/19 To consider capital works to Gittisham Village Hall**

Cllr Hall reported that work was due to start earlier than planned, with contractors beginning work on 6<sup>th</sup> April to redecorate the village hall. She said she had issued a contract and written agreement that the work would proceed according to the social distancing measures. She added that the contractors must be allowed to work in isolation. Members resolved to approve the weekly payment schedule (itemised in minute ref 261/19), and agreed to review this if necessary.

**259/19 To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman to maintain drains and ditches in the parish**

Members approved Cllr Hall's suggestion that Len Abbott plant the remaining shrubs in the play area, and install the bird boxes. The Chair noted that DCC contractors had been working outside Clysthayes recently, clearing the blockage. It was understood that an order had been made for a new sump chamber to be installed in the existing hole.

**260/19 To consider climate change measures within the parish**

There was no progress on this.

**261/19 To approve the April payments and to note the current bank balance**

It was resolved to approve the following payments:

1017	F J Clampin	£223.61 Clerk's salary & expenses
1018	DALC	£146.83 Annual subscription
1019	Len Abbott	£13.50 Lengthsman work, 1 hr March 2020
1020	Playsafety Ltd	£107.40 Annual play area safety inspection
1021	Michael Poll	£60 Play area grass cutting (inv. ref 601/20/2)
1022	34SP	£95.40 Website hosting
1023	34SP	£15 Domain name
1024	Paul Martin	£1,000 Village hall refurbishment (wk1)
1025	Adam Martin	£1,500 Village hall refurbishment & materials (wk1)
1026	C O'Connor	£1,800 Village hall refurbishment & materials (wk1)
1027	Paul Martin	£1,000 Village hall refurbishment (wk2)
1028	Adam Martin	£1,000 Village hall refurbishment (wk2)
1029	Paul Martin	£1,000 Village hall refurbishment (wk3)
1030	Adam Martin	£1,500 Village hall refurbishment & materials (wk3)
1031	Paul Martin	£1,000 Village hall refurbishment (wk4)
1032	Adam Martin	£1,000 Village hall refurbishment (wk4)
DD	NEST	£17.50 Clerk's pension

The clerk said that half the annual precept had been received from EDDC. Members were informed that

the current bank balance stands at £10,131.65 (which includes the £7,000 in the business reserve account for contingency).

**262/19 To consider the date of the Annual Parish Meeting**

The clerk said it was not possible to hold the annual parish meeting remotely, and she was awaiting further guidance from DALC on this. [N.B. from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 remove the requirement for parish councils to hold an annual parish meeting.]

**263/19 To consider any late entry correspondence**

Cllr Hall enquired if it was possible to give a donation to a COVID-19 helpline that had been launched by the charity Devon Communities Together to provide vital support for parish and town councils and the Devon Village Halls Community Buildings networks during the outbreak. The clerk said she was checking whether this was possible with DALC.

**263/19 Matters to be reported to DCC / EDDC**

Cllr Wilkins said he hoped that the roadworks on Hayne Lane would be carried out, as they had not been completed as yet.

**264/19 Matters for the forward agenda**

Members agreed to include coronavirus, climate change, village hall capital works, play area, lengthsman work, limited residential development and emergency plan on the next agenda.

**265/19 Clerk's Report**

None.

**266/19 Date of next two meetings. Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.30pm via Skype. Should restrictions on public movement be lifted, these meetings will revert to being held in the parish room.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2020 hrs.

**Chairman.....**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2020**