

**GITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 2ND MAY 2012**

Present:

Gittisham Village Ward

Cllr D Fallows (chairman)
Cllr Ms Maggie Walker
Cllr R Hayman
Cllr Ms S Trumper

Gittisham Vale Ward

Cllr D Valentine

In attendance; Ms Fiona Clampin (clerk), Cllr Roger Giles (DCC)

Apologies for absence: Cllr E Underdown, Cllr M Edmonds

1/12 To receive and accept apologies

Apologies were received and accepted.

2/12 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3/12 To receive the Beat Manager's Report

The police confirmed in an email following the meeting there had been no crimes in the parish this month.

4/12 To receive declarations of interest

None.

5/12 Reports from County Council and District Council representatives

Cllr Giles reported back from the Feniton annual parish meeting, where it had been discussed that EDDC's proposal for up to 450 additional homes in Gittisham parish would result in Feniton Primary having to accommodate somehow an extra 112 children (75 if 300 homes). He agreed to investigate a suggestion that had been made to him by the school headteacher that the catchment area would be redrawn (a lengthy process), and some children would go to Honiton schools instead.

Members heard that the recent stormy weather has brought down 15 trees, caused 10 drainage incidents and 6 incidents of flooding in the area managed by DCC's John Hopkins.

Cllr Giles asked members to note a significant refusal by EDDC of a recent planning application. Redrow Homes's plan to build houses in Ottery (north of Higher Ridgeway) were turned down by EDDC under delegated powers. It was outside the built-up area boundary and also on best agricultural land.

Cllr Giles told members that the Chair of Buckerell parish council, Steve Mears, had died. The clerk will arrange a condolence card from Gittisham PC.

6/12 To approve the May payments and to note the current bank balance

It was resolved to approve the following payments:

0526	F J Clampin	£172.67	Clerk's fee and expenses
0527	Laps Lawns	£80	Maintenance of playing fields
0528	Nick Adams	£82.20	Annual play area safety inspection

0529	Websites Ahoy	£257.40	Development of parish website
0530	Devon Assoc of Local Councils	£122.66	Annual membership
0531	Mr P Sellick	£30	Three months distribution of gazette in Vale
0532	Community First	£236.72	Insurance

Members were informed that the current bank balance stands at £11,919.78.

7/12 To consider the formulation of a strategic plan to cover the period 2012-2015 including a village flood risk plan

The Chair said he had written a snow plan that forms part of the parish strategic plan. Bags of salt can be accommodated in the little shed at Curlditch, and they should be arriving soon. Members heard that Nick and Sarah Agg-Manning's house had been flooded, although this was believed to be as a result of soakaways becoming saturated, rather than run-off coming down the road. Cllr Valentine said his work on the strategic plan was continuing.

8/12 To receive a report on the Local Plan meetings at EDDC to date and to consider future input

The Chair reported he had attended a meeting in Sidmouth at the end of April, along with Cllrs Giles and Wright. It had been called by a range of people who are opposed to EDDC's development plans. The Save our Sidmouth group is fighting a 5-hectare development north of the A3052 on the Sidbury side of Sidford. Members heard how many people at the meeting were exercised at the possible loss of the Knowle parkland, when EDDC's move to Honiton goes ahead. The Chair asked if it was worth the Sidmouth action group putting in an application to list the park land, but Cllr Giles warned this was a lengthy process. The chair remarked that the length of time taken by English Heritage to make a decision would only act in favour of the action group. Opposition to much of EDDC's development plans is gathering pace, with the clerk reminding members of a Facebook page called 'Vote of No Confidence in EDDC Planning'.

Cllr Valentine explained that EDDC has now produced its proposed submission draft of the Local Plan, following the consultation exercise at the end of last year. Members were concerned to hear of a completely new site identified for 300 additional homes, at the top of the Vale right the way along to the Sidmouth Road. This lies partly in Gittisham parish and also in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Cllr Valentine said there had been no previous consultation about this new area by EDDC, and advised canvassing parishioners' views – especially in the Vale. This should help to refresh the parish council's submission in August 2012 when EDDC will begin a final public consultation before submitting the plan to the inspector. The new area has been named 'Heathfield Manor'. Cllr Valentine pointed out some discrepancies between the text and the map in the draft Local Plan, so it's not clear how many homes are under discussion. Given the appearance of this 'new' piece of land, members asked the clerk to contact Buckereil and Awliscombe parish councils to find out if they are aware of the proposal. Members felt any development could potentially degrade the view from both villages, and agreed to also put something in the Gittisham Gazette to alert parishioners.

Cllr Valentine reminded members that the 15 hectares of employment land proposed around Hayne Lane is still on the cards, although now EDDC says it will be released in 'phases'. The first phase would involve land owned by EDDC.

Members discussed why EDDC appeared to be struggling to find space in Honiton for 450 new homes. Honiton's Cllr Ash had provided EDDC with a list of potential sites within the town. During May and June there will be a short informal consultation to identify the boundaries of built-up areas, which will include the allocations. The clerk had already been in touch with Honiton Town Council, who were not aware of the consultation. She agreed to keep in contact with HTC and ask for Gittisham to be involved in any meeting between Honiton and EDDC. Cllr Valentine explained that following this process, EDDC will have what it believes to be the right boundaries and right allocations. It will then insert any additions to the current plan and the final plan will go to the council in July.

9/12 To consider progress on the modernisation of the play area including depreciation and to note the current play area finances

Cllrs Hayman and Fallows have not yet met to discuss timing for putting topsoil in the play area.

The clerk reported that the new shackle for the bird's nest swing was on its way, and that she had received correspondence from the roundabout supplier that suggested the equipment would soon be fixed.

Members discussed the site of the gap in the wall that will link the two parts of the play area, and decided against the hedge where the bungalows are would be the most appropriate place. This would then result in any contractor finishing off one end of a wall, rather than two. The Chair agreed to speak to Mrs Abbott about this once she has settled back in after her stay in hospital. Members also discussed the building of a barbecue, and Cllrs Trumper and Fallows agreed to provide the bricks.

10/12 To consider the problem of birds' nests causing a health and safety risk in chimneys

Members were concerned at the potential risk to life posed by jackdaws building nests in village chimneys, following two fires in the space of two weeks where this was the cause. Cllr Walker explained that the birds always returned to where they were born, and that in the past, annual culls of birds had been carried out in the parish. Members recognised that they could not indemnify the Combe Estate against any action taken as a result of a cull, but they did appreciate the offer of the estate to take legal action against the birds. The Chair encouraged all home owners in the village to protect their fire chimneys against the birds, and the parish council will contact the relevant agents / Combe Estate to explain the benefits of this for all properties in the village. Members agreed that any fire in the village could have catastrophic consequences for all residents, due to the large number of thatched properties. The Chair's understanding of the law is that it does not allow householders to deal with the birds directly, but farmers are entitled to take action in order to protect their crops. Members agreed this would be the best way forward to remedy the situation for the benefit of parishioners. The clerk agreed to draft a letter to all property owners within the village boundary explaining the situation.

11/12 To consider limited residential development in the parish

Members had all seen a letter to the Chair from Justin Lascelles at Savills, saying that the Combe Estate would be keen to open a dialogue with the parish council and villagers regarding limited residential development in the parish. The letter, dated 16 April, said that in the past the parish council had broadly supported this idea, particularly if any development included affordable or rented housing for local people to use as their main home.

The Chair expressed concern about the steady depopulation of the village and reminded members of the parish plan, which had proposed creating 6–10 new homes over the life of the plan. Cllr Hayman pointed out that properties had been built in the village through the centuries and any opposition to limited development could kill the village. Cllr Valentine reminded members that the starting point for any development would be a housing needs survey to understand the level of need. Members discussed the possibility of a covenant in any application to specify the houses would be a first home; this is possible.

The clerk agreed to invite Mr Lascelles to a future parish council meeting to present his thoughts.

12/12 To consider the development of the parish website

The clerk reported that the website was under development, and all copy needed to be received by 7th May for the site to go live. She agreed to approach Ken Hunt at Combe House to find out if he would permit the use of the history page on their site. The Chair said he has a tithe map that could potentially make a nice addition to the site. There will be a page with details of councillors; members agreed they would provide information they were comfortable with. Members also discussed monetising the site in some way, either by putting links to websites that would earn e.g. 5p per click or by inviting local businesses to pay for having a page on the site. They supported the idea of a disclaimer on the site to say the council did not endorse any particular business. The clerk agreed to speak to Clare Bryden about what might be reasonable.

13/12 To consider parish activity for the Diamond Jubilee

Members considered a request to subsidise the beer for this event on 5th June, but resolved instead to pay for the hall hire.

14/12 To consider any late entry correspondence

The clerk agreed to investigate with BT the company's intentions for the telephone in the village. The box itself is owned by the parish council.

15/12 Matters to be reported to DCC / EDDC

Cllr Giles agreed to investigate with DCC highways department the poor state of Dark Lane, as a resident may need to use a wheelchair in future.

16/12 Matters for the forward agenda

It was agreed to include the play area, website, Local Plan, Strategy 2012-15 and residential development in the next agenda.

17/12 Clerk's Report

None.

18/12 Date of next two meetings. Wednesday 6th June and Wednesday 4th July at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2110 hrs.

Chairman.....

6th June 2012