

# **Thelbridge Parish Council**

## **Minutes**

December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

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<http://thelbridge.btck.co.uk>

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**Present:** Cllrs Boundy (Chairman), Gibson, Ford, Grant, Webber

**Apologies:** Cllr Binks (MDDC), Squires (DCC & MDDC), Gillbard, Hayes

### I. Public forum

One member of the public attended in relation to the Definitive Map change regarding a new bridleway (see minutes VIII on 26<sup>th</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> October). The history of this proposed change may be found on the website in the PROW section. The Parish Council was asked to object to the new bridleway at the public inquiry on 13<sup>th</sup> December. The opportunity to provide a written submission has passed.

Two councillors supported this objection, three abstained; no councillors would be available to attend the public inquiry.

### II. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes for 4th October 2017 were signed as a correct record.

### III. Declarations of interest

John Gibson is a friend of the member of the public.

### IV. Written report provided by Cllr. Margaret Squires (Devon County Council & Mid Devon District Council)

I attended a Town and Parish briefing day organised by Devon County Council, the day was about highways. There was a presentation from Skanska the firm who is now the highway contractor for Devon. They have won the contract for seven years. Skanska have been managing highways for a number of years they originated in Sweden and have contracts with a number of English Counties including Somerset. Unlike South West Highways who had their own logo on the fleet, Skanska have adopted Devon Highways logo. They look after their staff well and operate their own training programs.

There was a presentation from Devon County about the Community Enhancement Fund (CFE) which parishes/communities can apply for. The CFE provides match funding for projects, where community involvement is

demonstrated. There is a proviso that any scheme will not need up keep from Devon County Highways. A scheme in Thorverton has recently been completed where a bridleway/footpath has been achieved following the loss of the road in the storms of 2012/2013.

The day also explained the "Road Wardens Scheme" where local parishes can nominate volunteers to undertake two days training to qualify to be able to carry out basic highway repairs, including clearing drains and filling potholes. Some parishes already have Snow Wardens who help to clear snow and keep roads clear, DCC will supply up to 5 Tons of salt in 25Kilo bags providing there is somewhere to store it.

As always potholes can be reported via the Devon County website [new.devon.gov.uk](http://new.devon.gov.uk) and following the link to report a pothole or by ringing the call centre 0345 155 1004. Potholes need to be at least 40mm deep and 300mm wide.

#### V. Clerk's Report

The Complaints Policy has been published on the website.

Delegate (read only) access to the bank account is now available to the Clerk.

A letter has been sent to the land owners regarding ditch clearance to the rear of the Eastwick Barton houses so that the repaired drain will be effective in preventing future flooding. One of the land owners rang to say that the ditch is clear, but pointed out that since they do not live in Nomansland, daily checks would not be feasible. Concern was also expressed regarding HGVs damaging the edge of the road, which Devon County Council is responsible for, potentially blocking the ditch. The land owners phoned DCC to check whether they were responsible for the ditch and were told that the ground between the field hedge and the road is the Council's responsibility. Further clarification has been sought and the Highways Officer has said "All ditches are the landowners responsibility unless recorded as a Parish Drain". This email has been forwarded to the landowners.

Reports summarising the SW Regional Training Seminar and the Annual Town and Parish Councils meeting at Mid Devon District Council were circulated at the meeting and are available on the website.

The Council was been given notice under section 1 of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 that the Office of National Statistics will be in touch to conduct an employment survey by phone. This was completed on 28th November.

The Parish Paths Partnerships (P3) Scheme is an initiative to ensure that the rights of way network is properly maintained and well publicised. It has the support of the National Association of Local Councils and is Devon County Council funded. The main aim is to improve the condition of the local rights of



way and keep them open and used properly. Parish councils in the scheme receive a grant to undertake rights of way work. The grant, paid by Devon County Council, covers:

1. The mileage, based on the length of rights of way in your parish.
2. Special projects.

Parishes currently involved include Morchard Bishop, Lapford, Chulmleigh, Witheridge and Rackenford. A Public Rights of Way Officer has volunteered to attend a meeting with a presentation to explain the scheme. It was **resolved** that the PROW officer be invited to the annual meeting.

- VI. General Data Protection Regulations report was considered and it was **resolved** that the Clerk be nominated as the Data Protection Officer. It was also **resolved** that the Data Protection Policy and Information Charter be adopted.
- VII. The Communications Strategy was discussed and it was **resolved** that the annual newsletter should go ahead since this will go to every household in the parish, but that no payment would be made to the Witheridge Group newsletter for any future entries.
- VIII. Finance
- a) The statement of accounts and budget monitoring spreadsheets were reviewed and approved.
  - b) The following payments were approved:
    - HMRC, third quarter £26.40
    - Printing and postage third quarter expenses £31.50
    - Thelbridge Parish Hall grant award of £250, contribution to kitchen improvements. The Parish Hall Committee has been awarded £1,000 from the TAP fund.
  - c) It was **resolved** not to pay £200 for an external audit (this was free to small authorities under the previous contract) in addition to the internal audit, since this is such a large proportion of the annual budget. PFK Littlejohn LLP have been appointed as the limited assurance auditors for Devon.
  - d) From 2017/18 authorities with a budget of less than £25,000 can self-certify as exempt from an external audit. It was **resolved** that that an exemption certificate should be completed and returned to the external auditor.
  - e) It was **resolved** not to subscribe to CPRE, annual membership currently £36.
  - f) Devon Association of Local Councils will be increasing their subscription rates by 2% for 2018/19.
- IX. Budget it was resolved to accept the 2018/19 budget as presented subject to reducing the audit fees from £250 to £50 and reducing the newsletter budget from £135 to £100. In 2018/19 MDDC will be entering into the third year of a

four year fixed funding settlement agreement. The Revenue Support Grant that MDDC receives will be reduced by 64% in 2018/19 and it will then disappear completely from 2019/20 onwards, therefore the level of Council Tax Reduction grant will be reduced on the same basis, which has an adverse effect on the parish council proportion of the Council Tax charge to households. With this I mind it was **resolved** that the value of the precept request be set at £1,416 a reduction from £1,500 last year. A band D householder will pay an estimated £10.14 per annum, a decrease of 3% in 2018/19 when compared with 2017/18.

## X. Planning

### Applications pending decision:

#### Conversion of 3 barns to 3 dwellings

Land and Buildings at NGR 278649 111338 (Billhole Farm) Puddington Devon

Ref. No: 17/01674/FULL

It was **resolved** that the comment will be “object” since there are concerns regarding the proximity of the slurry pit with respect to smell and potential danger to any future residents and in particular children.

#### Installation of oil central heating to include oil tank in garden and external boiler

Lower Woodhouse Cottage Thelbridge Crediton Devon EX17 4SJ

Ref. No: 17/01860/HOUSE

Listed Building Consent (as per agenda) has already been granted.

It was **resolved** that the comment will be “support”.

## XI. Items for future agenda

- Health and safety policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Arrangements for annual meeting

## XII. Date of future meetings all starting at 19:30 in the Thelbridge Parish Hall:

7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

16<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (annual meeting)

The meeting closed at 21:45

Signed W. K. Boudry (Chairman)

Date 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018