

## ***Thelbridge Parish Council***

### **Minutes**

**27<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs Boundy, Clements, Cowell, Gibson, Gillbard, Hayes, Squires (DCC & MDDC), Wainwright (MDDC)

**I. Apologies**

Cllr Grant

**II. Approval of minutes**

The minutes of 2nd December were approved and will be signed at a later date.

**III. Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

**IV. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**V. Report from Cllr Squires**

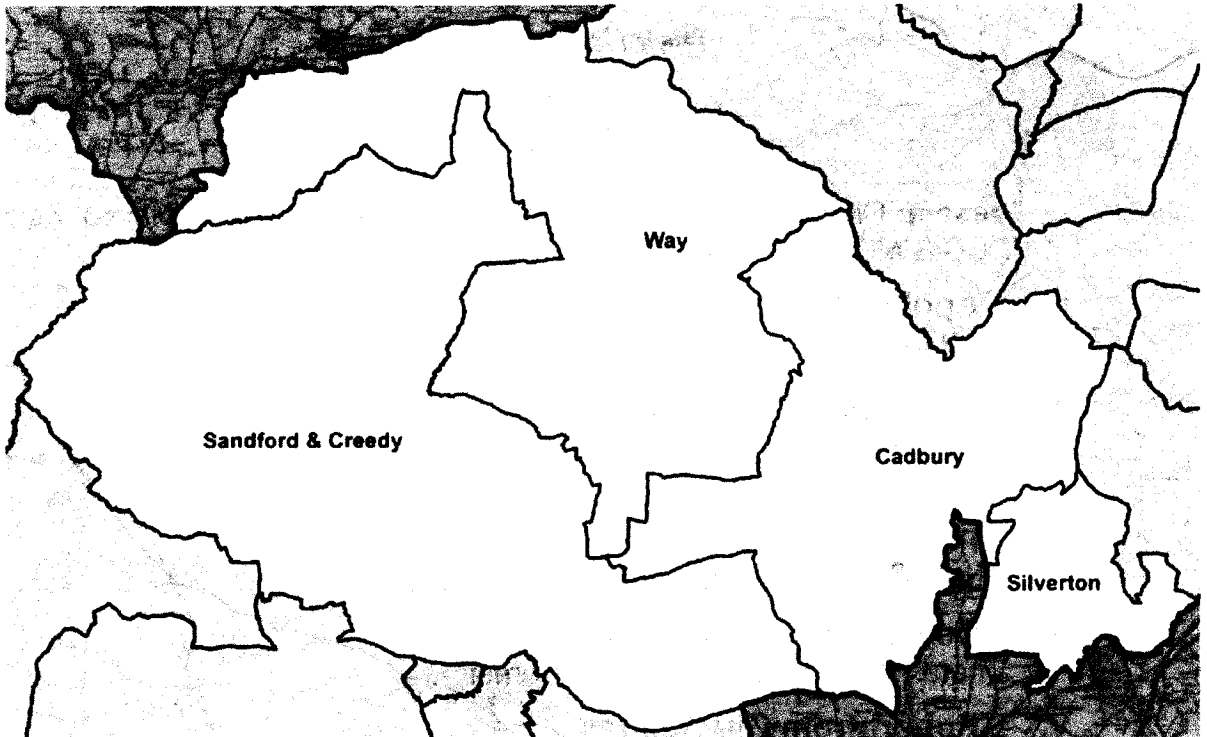
The budget is being considered; forward planning is difficult with a one year only grant. Council Tax is likely to increase. There are more children now in care, 825 in Devon. Social care is also under pressure due to the Covid pandemic.

**Report from Cllr Wainwright**

The Crediton food bank has seen a huge increase in demand. Business grants in support of local businesses affected by the lockdown are ongoing with leisure centre staff helping with the process. Although the Local Plan was only recently approved, planning for the next one has started. A new sustainability specialist has been appointed and will be looking at e.g. energy efficiency in buildings.

**VI. Clerk's Report**

The Local Government Boundary Commission published final recommendations for future electoral arrangements for Mid Devon District Council. They are proposing that Mid Devon District Council should continue to have 42 councillors, but two fewer wards. Those councillors should represent five three-councillor wards, 10 two-councillor wards and seven single-councillor wards, across the district. It is also proposed that the boundaries of all wards should change, except for Silverton and Upper Culm. A handful of submissions in relation to Way ward were received during consultation on the further draft recommendations. Two local residents and Councillor Squires opposed our proposed Way ward on the basis that it split the village of Nomansland between two wards. Persuaded by the evidence received that this warding arrangement would not promote effective and convenient local government the report reverts to the original draft recommendations for Way ward, which will include Thelbridge parish and have one councillor.



The proposed changes must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order - the legal document which brings into force the recommendations - will now be laid before Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements for Mid Devon District Council to be implemented at the local elections in 2023.

#### **VII. Future Meetings**

As it currently stands, all council meetings held on, or after the 7 May, must return to a face-to-face format; Government is being lobbied but there are no current plans to extend the regulations that allow virtual meetings. The annual meeting must be held in May, but could be done virtually before 7th May.

#### **VIII. HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The Government has announced that there will be an additional bank holiday to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. The late May bank holiday will be moved to Thursday 2 June 2022 and an additional Jubilee bank holiday will be on Friday 3 June 2022

#### **IX. CAB Donation**

An email receipt and thanks were received on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **X. Precept**

The request form has been submitted to MDDC.

#### **XI. Future of Transport: rural strategy: call for evidence – Department for Transport**

This call for evidence seeks views and evidence from all those with an interest in rural transport.

Following the government's Future of mobility: urban strategy, which was published in March 2019, the Department for Transport are now seeking views and evidence on what could be incorporated into a Future of Transport: rural strategy.

*W. K. B.*

The consultation document has 3 sections:

- the context of the Future of Transport: rural strategy
- the government's assessment of the mobility trends in rural areas, and the emerging opportunities for rural environments that are being witnessed in transport innovation – this section seeks views on whether government have identified these correctly and further evidence for these trends
- consideration of the approach that the government could take to help shape these opportunities to benefit rural areas

This consultation closes on 16 February 2021.

Future of Transport: rural strategy – call for evidence - GOV.UK  
([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## **XII. Finance**

- a) There were no new payments to approve.
- b) The statement of accounts and budget monitoring report were reviewed.
- c) Internet banking; it was **resolved** that the Clerk should have “Full Access (Delegate) Create Only”. This would allow the Clerk to setup payments for two authorised signatories to approve online. Whilst the intention to phase out cheques by 2018 was cancelled and the Payments Council say they will continue to be available for as long as there is a need, there is an ongoing drive to move to more efficient methods of payment.
- d) Two of the three existing signatories, use the internet and can be authorised to approve payments online, however it would be beneficial to have a third authorised signatory with internet access to allow for occasions when other councillors are not available. Payments could still be made by cheque if necessary. It was **resolved** to make Cllr Clements a fourth signatory and the third person with internet banking access for the approval of payments.

## **XIII. Website**

The website report was considered and it was **resolved** to apply for a .gov.uk domain name.

## **XIV. Broadband Provision**

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) have failed to provide information of the coverage and roll out plan for the new Airband contract. Third party information suggests Nomansland is included and a postcode checker will be available on the CDS website in March; the new contract is due to commence this year and complete in 2024.

For premises not included in the Airband contract there is the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Homes and businesses in rural areas of the UK may be eligible for funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband when part of a group scheme. Group projects are when two or more residents and/or SMEs get together to combine their vouchers towards the shared cost of installation. Single connections are not eligible for additional funding. Rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers worth £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small to medium-sized business (SME) to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections.

More information is available via the website  
<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

**XV. Wind Turbine**

The community group sent a leaflet to all residents at the end of last year and intend to send out a follow up canvassing opinion on a wind turbine within the parish.

**XVI. Defibrillator**

The defibrillator report was considered and it was **resolved** to wait until the lockdown was over since fund raising would then be possible. The Locality Budget held by Cllr Squires is fully spent for this year; further funds may become available after June, subject to budget approval.

**XVII. Road Warden Scheme**

Two volunteers have completed their online training and await their two-day training course. The third volunteer has not been able to access the online training so far.

**XVIII. Planning**

There have been no new planning applications.  
Consultation on the White Paper, "Planning for the Future", received over 40,000 responses. The government will publish a response in the Spring setting out its decisions on the proposed way forward including preparing for legislation, should the government so decide, in the Autumn. The reform will take a few years to implement.

**XIX. Items for Future Agenda**

- Newsletter
- Financial regulations
- Communications strategy
- Expenses policy
- Year end accounts

**XX. Future Meeting Dates**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> March (payment approvals/planning/newsletter)
- 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (year-end accounts)
- 4<sup>th</sup> May (annual meeting)

The meeting closed at 20:27

Signed: W. K. Bondy (Chairman) Date 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021