

Dalwood Parish Council

Minutes of the Dalwood Parish Council Meeting Held in the Pavilion on Monday 24 April 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr KFG Laing (Chairman), Cllr AP Benger, Cllr T Hodges, Cllr PH Lawrence, Cllr GJ Perry, Cllr LP White, Cllr Mrs CM Wyatt, Mrs D Wiltshire (Minutes)

In attendance: Mr R Beak, Mrs S Beak, Mrs S Cooper, Mrs H Horley, Mr O Morgan, Mr A Ross, Mrs D Scott-Stephens, Mr M Wiltshire

1) Welcome and apologies

Cllr Laing welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence. Cllr Laing stated the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of assisting with the Minutes, there were no objections to this.

2) Minutes of the meeting held 13 March 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held 13 March 2023 were accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings. Cllr Laing signed the Minutes.

3) Matter Arising

Jubilee Oak – Cllr Benger confirmed the replacement tree was an oak and not a beech. Cllr Benger agreed to contact East Devon District Council regarding the commemorative plaque.

Road Warden Scheme – Cllr Chubb had agreed to undertake the volunteer role of Road Warden for Kilmington. Subsequently, he has agreed to undertake this role for Dalwood Village. Cllr Chubb had undertaken the Chapter 8 training; this is safety training which allows for him to co-ordinate road closures, erect signage and traffic lights. Filling of potholes is not part of the role.

Financial Matters – Expenditure - Cllr Laing confirmed that the costs for the bus shelters and the donation to the village coronation celebrations had been paid for the previous month.

Hedges lining roads – the Council noted that the hedge at Ray Dare's has still not been cut; the hedge is falling into the road and requires attention. Cllr Perry agreed to follow up with the landowner.

4) Financial Matters

The Council considered and agreed to the expenditure of £100 to Shaun Burns for the maintenance of village verges.

The Council considered and agreed to the expenditure of £639.42 including VAT to Benger Landscaping for the brick work for the bus shelters.

5) Water Monitoring Survey

Cllr Wyatt confirmed there was nothing major to report. She confirmed the survey was to monitor phosphates in the river; samples are currently taken at Corry Brook on a monthly basis. The next sample will be taken from the river closer to the sewage works.

6) **Planning Matters**

Outstanding planning applications were noted as Sunnylands Farm, Ashdale and Laurel Cottage. No other planning applications had been submitted.

7) **Highway Matters**

There was a long discussion regarding the state of the village roads in particular the section between Carters Cross down to the Village and the section from Carters Cross to Moorcroft Cross. Cllr Benger stated that he had written to the local MP, the district and county councillors, he had submitted the village petition with his correspondence. The replies have been received; all have referred the Parish Council back to Devon Highways. The Council noted that there is a specific budget allocated to maintain the village roads; a large amount of this had been spent on improving the road from the top of Danes Hill towards Axminster and the section from Andrewhayes to Moorcroft Cross. Highways have confirmed Carters Cross to the village is on the road improvement plan, however no date for the works had been scheduled.

Concern was raised regarding the number of potholes which get reported but not filled. It was pointed out that the road at Carters Cross had been marked out in October, but no repairs had been carried out. Cllr Benger confirmed that Highways have stated that reported potholes will only be repaired if they meet the pothole criteria; this can be found on the website when reporting. Shelagh Beak reminded the Council of the new financial year plus the extra money provided by central government to councils to deal with potholes.

It was suggested that the Parish Council make contact with Dave Ashford, directly. Cllr Laing confirmed she had twice attempted to do this however, to date no response had been received. It was suggested that the Parish Council make a complaint on behalf of the parishioners to the Chairman of Highways. The Parish Council requested that parishioners continue to report potholes in and around the village; this will raise awareness of the poor condition of the roads. Andrew Ross had raised a complaint with Highways by phone as Highways do not give out their email address. He went on to say a number of potholes are showing on the website as being allocated for repair. Cllr Laing agreed to attempt to arrange a meeting with Dave Ashford to discuss the condition of the village roads.

8) **Parish Paths**

Owain Morgan reported the annual path survey had been completed and all paths had passed in relation to ease of accessibility. He reported that Shaun Burns had increased his prices for 2023 for undertaking footpath work; some costs should be covered by the footpaths grants. Owain agreed to forward Shaun's tender to Councillors once he had received a copy of Shaun's Public Liability insurance.

There are several repairs that are required:

- (i) A gate is required on the footbridge on bridleway 2,
- (ii) Footpath 23, from the phone box up to the top of Danes Hill, the stile is broken and needs replacing. It had been suggested that a gate replace the stile for accessibility. There are 2 different landowners to obtain permission from; the Council noted Owain had not been able to contact the second. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Perry would attempt to contact the second landowner. If this failed the Council agreed that the broken stile be replaced with a stile and not a gate.

October/November 2022. Cllr Laing agreed to review the bank statements and report back.

9) Maintenance Matters

Bus Shelter at Carters Cross – roof requires repair; there are holes in the roof. Cllr Bengler has some bitumen tiles that he was willing to donate. Following a short discussion, Cllr Laing agreed to contact 3 contractors for quotes.

No other maintenance matters were raised.

10) Noticeboards and Telephone Box

Telephone Box - the painting of the telephone box remains outstanding from June 2022. The Council noted that the door is wooden and has started to deteriorate.

The Parish Council noticeboard – Cllr Laing reported the lock is broken.

11) Bus Shelters

Cllr Bengler gave a comprehensive summary of the process the Parish Council had followed to obtain planning permission for the 2 bus shelters on the A35; a planning consultant had been employed to make the submission on the Council's behalf. There were no objections; planning approval was granted by East Devon District Council. National Highways had seen the construction of one shelter roof and halted further construction; they had subsequently condemned the shelters due to not meeting highways specification. The shelters have now been removed. Highways are currently investigating whether they have funds available to replace the 2 shelters to their specification.

There was a short discussion about the costs the Parish Council had incurred in obtaining professional advice together with the planning application costs and the need to understand what had gone wrong in the process. Cllr Bengler had received a large report from National Highways explaining in depth the reasons for halting the construction of the shelters. National Highways' permission had not been obtained as part of the planning process; Cllr Bengler explained this is required as the A35 is a main trunk road.

The Council agreed that part of the planning process had failed, and this required further investigation; the Parish Council would seek to recoup some of the costs it had incurred.

12) Trees, Seats and River

Noted the river requires cleaning. Cllr Perry confirmed works to undertake this had been scheduled for July.

13) Boundary Stone

Cllr Laing requested that if anyone walked through Shute Woods to check the boundary stone to ensure there were no issues. Its location is at Shute Pillars, just before the caravan site.

The DRT is organising a barbeque on Sunday 7 May starting at 6pm; location is the Jubilee field. The Parish Council agreed to add a commemorative plaque to the stone by the bridge. Cllr Bengel agreed to organise.

15) Public Forum

Village streetlights – Andrew Ross referred to the previous meeting when he had raised the issue of the AONB dark skies policy; he had requested the removal of the 3 streetlights in the village. He reminded the Council he had carried out a straw poll of Mowbay Hayes residents about the removal of the lights; only one person had objected. He challenged the Council on how the decision was reached not to switch them off. Following a brief discussion, the Council agreed to make improvements to the lights; this included changing the bulbs to LEDs, improving on/off times, ensuring the lights were directed downwards.

The Council noted the light in Town Court seemed to be on all day. Cllr Bengel agreed to contact Devon Highways to resolve.

Parish Council meeting dates – Rob Beak requested that the Council meeting dates were listed on the noticeboards in advance. Cllr Laing said that once the Parish Council had recruited a clerk, this would be done.

Parish Council Clerk – Sue Cooper raised concern regarding the still vacant position of Parish Clerk following Tim's resignation 12 months previously. The Council said they had recruited twice, unfortunately on both occasions the candidate had withdrawn. Cllr Laing had spoken to a number of local clerks, without any success. Various local clerks had agreed to enquire of colleagues, however, there has been no interest in the role.

This is becoming more urgent as there is no financial information presented at meetings and legally the Council is required to have a clerk. It was suggested that the role was split into finance and administration to aid recruitment.

The role requires certain knowledge in order to advise the Council on various issues and guide the Councillors in their role. This is a paid position; it was suggested that the pay was reviewed by Councillors.

Cllr Laing agreed to contact local Clerks again.

Bell Ringers – Cllr Hodges had been approached by a number of parishioners in relation to the time the bell ringers start to ring the church bells. The time is just as young children are going to bed. The Council noted that these were visiting bell ringers. The Council agreed this is a Church matter; Cllr Hodges agreed to speak to the church.

16) Date of next meeting

Meeting date agreed as Monday 15 May at 7.30pm; venue Village Hall.

Meeting concluded at 9.22pm.

K G Laing
15-5-23