

WITHERIDGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

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Minutes of the meeting held 03/04/25, 19:00 Witheridge Parish Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr Harvey Chairman Cllr Bibby
Cllr Cunningham Vice Chairman Cllr Dorow

Cllr Northam
Cllr Richardson
Cllr Smith

In Attendance:

County Cllr R Hopley
District Cllr P Jones

3 Members of the public
Parish Clerk

1. Chairman's Welcome.

Chairman welcomed all present.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllrs Bibby (arriving later) and Goodwin.

3. Minutes. To sign, if approved, the minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: Cllr Northam proposed, Cllr Smith seconded and all were in favour approval 04/04/24 minutes.

4. To receive the following Reports:-

4.1. Parish Council Chairman.

Report appended.

4.2. County and District Councillors.

Reports appended.

4.3. Police Advocate.

Report linked to on parish council website with minutes.

4.4. Local Group & Charity Reports.

None.

5. Open Questions.

None.

Closed 20:05.

Signed:

Chairman.

Dated:

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In March 2024 a meeting was held in the parish hall for residents to discuss the changes to the planning application for Juniper Rise, with Alison homes the builders and Legal and General who now own and manage the site. The change was the 30% affordable homes became 100% with a mixture of affordable rent, social rent and part ownership. The first tranche of rental homes were released in February 2025 and are occupied by people with Witheridge connections.

However the Parish council still await the transfer of the green space abutting the adventure playground known as the Northern Open space (NOS) which was part of the 106 agreement when the planning application for Willow Rise was approved by the District council. Mr. Cattermole of Alison Homes attended our June meeting and explained that building materials had been stored on the land to enable the path improvement alongside the B3137 to take place and once completed in July the NOS transfer would take place. The Council will now have to engage enforcement of the 106 agreement

Councillor Cunningham has been in negotiation with Alison Homes for some agreed improvements of the BMX track at the Adventure playground, however as regards "spades in the ground" nothing yet has materialised, but now the Spring weather has arrived we are hoping talks will continue?

The council budget of £60,000 for the financial year 2025/26 was approved by full council in December. This will be raised by setting a precept of 43,000, the difference coming from our general reserve. There are several expensive capital projects to fund this financial year. The new tarmac path at the adventure playground, repairs to the toilet block leaking roof, the existing skate ramp repairs, the funding of the tots playground lease, the railings around it and the recently vandalised motor bike Springer in the playground. The tarmac path has been completed satisfactorily and the erecting of the tots playground railings are due to commence in April.

There is a defibrillator on the outside wall of the toilet block in the square, however the council decided that another needs to be sited closer to the new housing development. Consultation has taken place with the doctor's surgery staff who have agreed to have the defib attached to the outside of their building. Full quotations have been obtained from the Community Heartbeat Foundation for both the defib and cabinet, plus installation and electrical costs. However it was decided that because of the capital projects mentioned above the request has been submitted to the Legal and General Partnership fund to finance the project.

I am delighted to report that the existing skate ramps at the Adventure playground will soon be dismantled and taken away for repair to be reinstated in situ. Council approved a revised quotation in February and it is hoped the contractor will be able to commence work in the next few weeks.

The 106 monies to fund village projects comes from the Juniper Way developers, as part of planning approval, the recipients of which are decided by the District council and are called the "heads of terms." They are amienity green space land acquisition, refurbishment of the Adventure Playground skate park, allotments, an all weather football pitch; children's play park equipment, and the Parish Hall. The Parish council have set up a sub group to explore the possibilities of land acquisition and the feasibility of a new skate park. Letters have been sent out to twelve local land owners seeking interest in selling land for recreation to the parish and the group has had a very positive teams meeting with a skate park provider who outlined possible layouts, costings, and suggestions of several other organisations for further funding.

Parish council meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month at the parish hall committee room however the format has changed. "Doors open" at 7pm whereby our county councillor, district councillor and our police advocate Cll. Smith give us their monthly reports. Parishioners and council alike are then invited to ask questions on these and updates on previous reports. Also during this time residents can bring to our attention any village concerns or their comments on a planning application to be discussed later by the council. The parish council meeting begins hopefully around 7.30 whereby there is no further public participation.

In my opinion the best attribute for a councillor is patience and resilience. Apart from the aforementioned BMX track and the NOS there are so many identified village projects that require county funding still awaiting completion.

The Lakelands newly installed bus shelter is not fit for purpose as it needs sides to keep out the inclement weather.

The chestnut trees at the entrance to Lakelands need a survey and remedial work which has been requested so many times by the parish.

The pedestrian path from Fore Street leading to North Street and the entrance to the village hall is known as "The Bow". The existing pair of railings complies with regulations designed to stop children and bicycles entering a main road at speed. However the positioning of such prevents any motorised buggies or large baby buggies from entering the path, which forces them onto using the dangerous "narrows" for access to the village shops, the existing pavement being too narrow. Council have campaigned for years to have the railings altered and a ramp to allow access and keep people safe and away from the ever increasing heavy traffic.

The perennial need for road repairs is the subject every month brought before the county councillor. Those in desperate need are two routes out of the village. One is the back road from Nomansland to the Link road and in particular Farm Flowers hill which when driving takes the form of a slalom trying to avoid the worst of the holes. The other is the B3137 the main route out of the village to Tiverton. The road through Nomansland at the cross road needs re surfacing as does so much of the hill out towards Cruwys Mochard woods. It is quickly becoming a bone shaking experience especially when pot holes cannot be

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avoided because of oncoming traffic. This section of the road is in Mid Devon so becomes their responsibility and Cllr Yabsley is in contact with his counterpart to hopefully have repairs scheduled.

We intend to keep pushing Devon County Council to get the above needs to come to fruition this financial year.

Jacky Harvey Chairman

County Councillor:-

- Minor roadworks scheduled.
- Site meeting with Cllr Richardson to review Speedwatch issues at Triangle.
- Monies in place for access changes to the Bow and Lakelands bus shelter.
- Site Meeting with Highways Neighbourhood Officer – Chairman to be notified of date to attend with other parish clrs.

Cllr Bibby arrived.

Cty Cllr Yabsley advised this was his last meeting as the county councillor and expressed he had enjoyed working with the parish council.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Yablsey.

Resident raised Willow Rise S106 Highways contribution and requirement for further management of speeding traffic in vicinity; the value of works implemented vs. financial contribution was disputed. Cllr Yabsley stated the parish council should dispute it in writing to DCC CEO.

District Councillor:-

- Local Government Reform update.
- Affordable Housing update, encouraged local residents with need to apply. Stressed to Housing Officers to ensure out of area applicants are made fully aware of the rural location impact on travel requirements.
- Concerns developer may have departed from plans and enforcement are investigating.
- Jeremy standing down as County Cllr after 25 years of service, thanks for all his support.

Thanks expressed on behalf of third parties who had expressed gratitude for help with their successful bids for housing at Juniper Rise.

- S106 Open Space Funding – initial draft of funding allocation to evolving projects for consideration and discussion. [Full report published on line with subsequent 01/05/25 Parish Council meeting minutes at www.witheridgepc.org].

Chairman thanked Cllr Jones.

Cllr Richardson raised issue concerning parish hall committee vat registration. Cllr Dorow stated the total vat on the S106 allocation was in the region of £80000, it was agreed a significant benefit to the village if all projects qualifying reclaim the VAT on their projects.

The Chairman expressed there should be greater opportunity for residents to express their thoughts. It was agreed to agenda 01/05/25 Parish Council meeting giving residents the opportunity to attend and make any representations.