



Starcross
Parish Council

STARCROSS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Starcross Parish Council held in Starcross Pavilion on Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllrs Hopper (Chairman), Allen, Cadbury, Eyre, Lovell, McNally, Pegg and Rastall

Also present:

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), District Cllr Taylor and two members of the public

RESIDENTS' QUESTION TIME

The Chairman invited questions/comments from residents.

There were no questions or comments.

101023.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Chase
- Cllr Williamson
- Cllr Zawadzka
- County Cllr Connett

101023.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

101023.03 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members present received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 September 2023.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY by those members present that these minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of that meeting.

101023.04 ACTION REPORT

The Chairman listed the items on the action report:

Swan Road Steps

This will be added to the Highways Working Party's agenda.

Playpark bench

This is not yet resolved and is still in need of repair.

Bus Shelter

The Chair needs to write to the Fishing and Cruising Club to ask for their co-operation in trying to resolve the resiting of the bus shelter.

Planter

This item is on the agenda (item 7.2).

Well Street

There has been no recent update from Environmental Health regarding two cottages on Well Street. It was agreed that District Cllr Taylor would follow this up.

Traffic Lights

The Chair has asked Cllr Connett if there is any development regarding the proposed traffic lights trial at the pillars around Easter time next year. DCC will update the Parish Council directly.

Nest swing

Missing bolt - Cllr Allen will speak to Cllr Chase about obtaining another bolt from Rhino Play.

Split underneath the nest swing – the Chairman suggested that some gravel is put underneath to fill the gap.

Highways Working Party

Members were invited to write to the Chairman if they are interested in being part of this.

101023.05 CRIME & SPEEDWATCH REPORT

There was no crime report. PC Orchard now has a new role within the police and the appointment of a new Neighbourhood Beat Manager is pending.

Cllr McNally advised that a truCAM police officer will be present in the village for two sessions over the coming month monitoring speed in the evenings along the Strand. Next week, Cllr McNally advised that he will be downloading a report from the VAS signs and sending them to Vision Zero South West. They are looking at installing average speed cameras between Cockwood and Kenton.

101023.06 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

6.1 District Cllr Taylor advised that he has asked Teign Housing to replace a missing sign on the path near Longfields.

The parking permits in New Road have been approved by Full Council. The permits (£280 per year) will be available for any resident in Teignbridge to purchase from November. Blue badge permits have gone back to Overview and Scrutiny for review due to the potential costs.

He also reported that he has been heavily involved in the recent flooding in Kenton.

6.2 County Cllr Connett was unable to attend the meeting but sent a written report:

Floods in Kenton

My very great thanks to everyone who helped in dealing with the floods - both at the time and in the aftermath - at Kenton and nearby properties.

While many residents have household insurance and the process is beginning, we know others did not.

There is help available from Teignbridge District Council through the Household Support Fund and also Council Tax relief for affected properties.

I would encourage anyone who is affected to contact the council to see what support is available, or to contact my colleague Cllr Gary Taylor (gary.taylor@teignbridge.gov.uk) or me (alan.connett@devon.gov.uk)

An event was held at the Victory Hall, Kenton, arranged by the county council's flood and coastal team, and attended by Teignbridge and the Environment Agency. It was a well-attended event and I hope from that we will be able to progress actions to help the community in future.

Mobile Libraries

The decision made by the Cabinet at Devon County Council to axe the entire mobile library service was 'called in' for further examination by scrutiny councillors.

The outcome is that the decision has been sent back to the Cabinet.

It is on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 11th October. However, I understand this will be a simple reference and a further, more detailed, report will come back to a later Cabinet meeting.

Across the Exminster and Haldon division, the mobile library service is shown on the county council website to visit Dunchideock, Exminster, Ide, Kenn, Kennford, Kenton and Starcross.

I would encourage all residents who can, to use the mobile libraries.

There is also a petition, both paper and online, calling for the mobile libraries to be saved. I believe, it's now around 10,000 signatures and is supported by many authors including Michael Morpurgo.

Link to the petition: <https://www.change.org/p/save-our-mobile-library-service>

Deficit on Special Educational Needs (SEND)

The projected deficit this year is forecast at £36.6million - taking the total cumulative deficit for Devon County Council to £162million by the end of March.

Devon County Council says that "in line with the Department for Education guidance this deficit will not be dealt with this financial year but carried to future years".

To give some context to that figure, the deficit on special educational needs just about exceeds the county council's entire reserves.

Devon isn't the only council with a SEND deficit... it just has one of the biggest and again reflects the lack of adequate Government funding for schools and special services in Devon.

Number of Staff rising at Devon County Council

In a report to council on September 7, it was confirmed that the number of staff employed by the council has increased by 1,432 in the past five years.

In 2017/18 the number of employees was 3,845 and for 2023/24 is 5,277.

The council also says the number of interims, agency staff and consultants will need to be substantially reduced - something I have been calling for over the past many years in order to get help get a grip on the council's spending.

Selling Assets

Post COVID, Devon says that occupancy stats in its offices are low with an average of 20% to 30% occupancy across its estate.

The county's 'estate' is quite considerable and includes over 1,000 assets including 364 schools, 500 land assets, 64 farms and around 300 operational buildings (including offices, children's centres, libraries, youth centres, industrial estate, recycling centres, day centres, respite centres, contact centres and children's homes.

The county council is now looking at disposing of a number of assets in Exeter and Barnstaple and believes its plan, if fully achieved, will save around £300,000 a year in revenue costs and £3-£5million in backlog maintenance. To implement the programme will cost in the region of £160,000.

Properties on the disposal list include: Larkbeare House in Exeter, Compass House and Ivybank in Exeter, some land at County Hall (site of the former Matford offices), St Georges Road Youth Centre in Barnstaple, and an industrial unit at Pottington, Barnstaple.

Highways matters

Small local schemes for double yellow lines in Exminster, Ide and Starcross have been submitted as part of the annual programme.

These are now being considered and prepared by the relevant highways team and will eventually come forward and be advertised as part of the formal public consultation. If there are objections, they will be reported to the Devon highways and traffic orders committee for the Teignbridge area and a final decision made by councillors.

Call to fix Devon's roads with HS2 funding

I have written to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak highlighting the plight of Devon's highways from potholes, damaged surfaces and faded white lines and calling for £250 million urgently for the county's roads.

The Prime Minister promised over £41 billion for the Midlands and the North on special projects in those regions but just £6.5 billion for the rest of the country including some rail improvement in the south west. Here in Devon, the County Council estimates the spending required to bring the most deteriorated road surfaces into good condition is £167 million along with £55 million a year to prevent further deterioration to the structure of Devon's highway network.

Devon County Council figures show 34,199 holes were recorded in the 11 months of 2022/23, compared to 44,263 the previous year. Almost 7,400 were recorded in January.

In a freedom of information response in March this year, the council said that on 13th February there were 1,883 pothole defects with the council contractor waiting for repair and between April 2021 and December last year £147,776 had been paid out for 263 pothole damage claims.

The Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) report shows the backlog of carriageway repairs nationally has increased by almost a quarter (23%) on the previous year to £12.6 billion - or £61,700 for every mile of local road in England and Wales.

In a report to councillors in April this year, Devon said that since 2012/13 the annual revenue funding given to highways for maintenance of Devon roads has gradually fallen from around £35 million to approximately £25 million last year. Coupled with inflationary change, in particular the rapid increase in inflation seen last year, this has meant that the budget for highway maintenance has halved in real terms compared to a decade ago.

The effect of the cut in funding, councillors heard, is "the knock-on impact of forcing change in priorities with safety taking higher consideration and proactive works being stopped, contributing to a more rapid deterioration of roads."

In my view, about £250 million now could begin to make a real difference to the county's roads. I hope we get a positive reply here in Devon from the Prime Minister.

101023.07 FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE (Cllrs Hopper, Chase, Pegg and Rastall)

- 7.1 **Financial Report** – members received and noted the financial report 12 September 9 October 2023 and were asked to approve the payments listed (copy attached).
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Cadbury

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the payments listed are made.

The Chair highlighted some concerns about the frequency of cuts being undertaken by Plant Tech and asked the Parks, Gardens and Flood Defences Committee to monitor this over the coming month.

- 7.2 Proposal: That SPC takes over maintenance of the brick planter at the top of Bonhay Road and also the area surrounding the brook entrance. Approval from both Teignbridge District Council and Teign Housing will be sought.
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Allen

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that SPC takes over maintenance of the brick planter at the top of Bonhay Road and also the area surrounding the brook entrance subject to approval from both Teignbridge District Council and Teign Housing.

ACTION: Chair to write to TDC and TH

FUNDING: Grant and 24-25 Precept.

7.3 **General Report/Question & Answers**
None

101023.08 PARKS, GARDENS AND FLOOD DEFENCE
(Cllrs Chase, Williamson, McNally and Allen)

Committee Chair Report (Cllr Chase)

8.1 **General Report/Question & Answers**

Cllr Allen reported that progress is being made with the wild area.

Concerns have been raised about hedge cuttings falling in and blocking the gully in the playpark. It was agreed that the Committee should monitor this and alert Teign Housing to the issue.

101023.09 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
(Cllrs Pegg, Cadbury, Lovell & Zawadzka)

Whole Council to Debate (accompanying documents)

9.1 **New applications/appeals**

None

9.2 **Decisions:**

9.2.1 23/01494/HOU – 49 Longfield Estate, Starcross
Single storey side extension and porch

Members noted that TDC has granted conditional planning permission.

9.2.2 23/01551/TPO – Courtenay Mews, The Strand, Starcross
T1 Holm oak and T2 Holm oak – remove any deadwood over 50mm,
crown lifting to 5 metres over car park and 3 metres over platform

Members noted that TDC has granted partial consent for these works.

9.3 **General Report/Question & Answers**

Concerns were raised about development at Green Pastures which does not have planning permission. It was agreed that the clerk should alert the Enforcement Officer.

101023.10 PAVILION & SPORTS FIELD
(Cllrs Rastall, Hopper, McNally and Williamson)

Committee Chair Report (Cllrs Rastall & Hopper)

10.1 Proposal: To reimburse Cllr Hopper £36.10 for purchase of food items for the Pavilion Café

Proposer: Cllr Rastall; Seconder: Cllr Cadbury

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY to reimburse Cllr Hopper as proposed.

ACTION: Clerk to refund

FUNDING: Pavilion Café

- 10.2 Proposal: To reimburse Cllr Rastall £12.73 - for kitchen tongs for the Pavilion Café (£3.33) and a new key for volunteer access (£9.40)
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Cadbury

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY to reimburse Cllr Rastall as proposed.

ACTION: Clerk to refund

FUNDING: Pavilion Café

- 10.3 **General Report/Questions & Answers**
None

101023.11 WORKING PARTY REPORTS
None

101023.12 NON-COMMITTEE ITEMS

- 12.1 Proposal: That SPC looks at either cleaning or replacing the signs at the railway steps
Proposer: Cllr Lovell; Seconder: Cllr Cadbury

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that, initially, Cllr Lovell and Cadbury will clean the signs.

- 12.2 Proposal: To accept the gift of a Christmas Tree from the Christmas Tree Group.
Proposer: Cllr Hopper; Seconder: Cllr Cadbury

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY by members to accept the gift of the Christmas Tree from the Christmas Tree Group.

101023.13 COUNCILLORS' PROJECTS

- 13.1 The Finance and Governance Committee met and discussed which projects it should consider for finance and the source of funds during 2024-25.

The following ideas were submitted:

- **Re-Surfacing of the path on the east edge of the Sports Field Car Park**
- **Improvements to the Cycle Humps**
- **Fences and gates for the Play Park**

Following discussions it was suggested that the Car Park Path was a priority since it has become overgrown and unused. This may warrant use of Reserves immediately rather than a delay until next year. At the same time installation of the NO PARKING sign could be completed under the same contract. Two Pavilion projects are still to be completed - the terrace and disabled access ramp.

The Finance and Governance Committee will continue to look at these ideas and any other proposals received from other Committees for inclusion in next year's budget.

101023.14 CORRESPONDENCE
None

101023.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 14 November 2023 in the Pavilion commencing at 7.30pm.

SIGNED:
Chairman of the Parish Council

DATE: 14 November 2023

Starcross Parish Council Finance Report – 10 October 2023

Summary of Bank Balances at 9 October 2023	
Current (C)	£51,790.87
Pavilion Trading (P)	£10,603.98
Allocated Reserves (A)	£48,002.48
Total	£110,397.33

Income: 13 September – 9 October 2023		
TDC (2 nd instalment of precept)	£21,942	C
Ecclesiastical (insurance claim – Pavilion showers)	£6288.10	C
Pavilion café	£308.55	P
Pavilion hire	£1,021.70	P
Bank interest (29 Sept)	£55.24	A

Payments for approval			
Clerk	Salary & disbursements (Sept)	£562.02	C
Plant Tech	Grounds maintenance (Sept)	£933.12	C
J Hopper	Reimbursement for items for Pavilion Café (see item 10.1 on Oct agenda)	£36.10	P
T Greenslade	Pavilion - cleaning, fobbing and supplies (Sept)	£236.94	P
S Rastall	Reimbursement for Pavilion items (see item 10.2 on Sept agenda)	£12.73	P

Direct Debits: 13 September – 9 October 2023			
Octopus (20/9)	Energy	£429.03	C
Bankline (15/9)	Banking fees	£22.80	C
Biffa (25/9)	Waste bin at Pavilion (rental & collection)	£35.04	P
Shell Energy (18/9)	Pavilion telephone and broadband	£21.99	P

Clerk (September)	Salary	Tax	Net	Disbursements
Salary	£516.25	£0	£516.25	
Telephone and Internet	-	-	-	£5.00
Using home as an office	-	-	-	£8.67
Mileage @ 45p per mile	-	-	-	£15.30
Quickbooks	-	-	-	£16.80
TOTAL				£562.02