

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 23 October 2024**

Present: Cllrs. Brice (chair), Ellison, Farr, Jeffery, Newberry, Pengilly, Sharron Newberry, Cllr. Elliott (Torrige District Council / TDC) and M. Dymond (clerk).

24.108 Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr. Cooke, Cllr. Lock (Torrige District Council / TDC), Cllr. Saywell (Devon County Council / DCC) and PCSO Brown.

24.109 Public Participation and Feedback

None

24.110 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

County

Devolution — I am delighted to say that the new Government has confirmed Devon’s Devolution Deal is going ahead, as previously agreed with the former Government. This is good news for Devon and it means the start of a journey of having greater powers devolved down to Devon. Immediate measures include £16m worth of additional funding for projects involving ‘green’ jobs, homes, skills and business growth. The new Combined Authority will have devolved powers and direct control of adult education to create up to 50,000 new training and retention opportunities by 2030.

The Government is also offering a strong partnership with Homes England to use the ‘Affordable Housing Programme’ and ‘Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund’ to create a joint action plan for affordable housing schemes for local people.

The plan is for the Government to pass the necessary legislation in the autumn, with hopefully the first meeting of the Combined County Authority being held in January.

OFSTED Inspection — The Council’s Children’s Services are currently being inspected by OFSTED. It will be some time before their final report is issued but their inspection is due to finish by the end of this week and we should hopefully be given some indicative feedback as to whether the Children’s Services Department is improving in its performance compared with its last inspection.

Local Highways Matters — Rooks Cross has been assessed for serviceability patching so I am hoping repairs will take place here (if they haven’t already) soon.

District

With the closure of the 23/24 budget we have a draft surplus of £1,371,000. We intend on using this draft surplus in a few areas, i.e. providing staff training, maintenance to vehicles, but mainly to shore up our reserves. Also to acquire property for temporary accommodation, add to our apprenticeship programme and also help towards funding the following leisure and property upgrades.

At full council on the 14th of October we approved plans for £1,000,000 of funding to improve energy efficiency for Holsworthy swimming pool; this will be supplied by the public sector decarbonisation scheme. This will be via an air to water heat source pump to heat the building and pool, but only should the system be adequate enough. Their anticipation of this move is that the new heat pump will replace the existing oil-fired boiler and not only significantly reduce the heating costs but also dramatically reduce the carbon emissions, of which the swimming pools are the most in the district.

Total property emissions — Top 5 Sites	2023/24 (Tonnes CO2 equivalent) Total
HOLSWORTHY LEISURE CENTRE	243.7
TORRIDGE LEISURE CENTRE	209.7
TORRINGTON SWIMMING POOL	103.2
APPLEDORE FISHDOCK A and B	77.6
RIVERBANK HOUSE	74.1

This will be supported by the possibility of installing a 40MW array of solar PV on the roof. Unfortunately, they cannot cover the entire building due to the possibility of asbestos on part of the roofing sheets and the current planned location on the roof needs to be repaired first.

Also, following the outstanding results of the last two years for Active Torridge (the arm's length company set up by TDC to run the leisure facilities) we approved to extend the contract to run the leisure services until 2032. Following their classes being full to capacity and their wish to expand their portfolio of locations, we also approved the lease of the old library (part of the Bideford town hall) to Active Torridge. This they intend to use as a modern gym facility, along with moving their HQ offices to the site as well, freeing up their current location. With the additional facility, they project their operational management fee to fall from just under £678,000 in 2022/23 to an estimated £166,200 by 2029/30. The new gym facility is expected to open in early 2026 following the completion of the refurbishment works, for which we also approved the expenditure at the same meeting.

Those refurbishment works mentioned are a complete re-roofing of the entire building along with thermal insulation upgrades, internal alterations and refurbishment of the entire ground floor, the cost of which is £1,600,000 for the roof works and for the latter £1,581,900, totalling £3,181,000. The funding for this will be provided from budget set aside for the works over the previous years along with reserves and grant funding etc. Being a listed building, we are obliged to maintain the upkeep of the building and there has not been any significant refurbishment or maintenance for several decades due to other financial commitments. It is hoped that these works will secure the structural integrity of the building for decades to come.

We also approved three new play-zones, basically astroturf or similar surface enclosed areas for various recreational sports and age groups to use. The sites will measure 20m x 30m and cost around £275,000 each. We have accepted an offer of grant funding for 75% of the cost from Rural England Prosperity Fund and they have also searched and identified in the district the locations for the sites. They are to be situated at Stanhope Park, Holsworthy; Pollyfield, East The Water; former tennis courts at Gas Lane in Torrington.

Active Torridge has been identified as the appropriate partner to manage the sites, with the council managing the maintenance as per their other sites.

There is a new round of funding from Hearts of London for defibrillators. If interested and you have not had the email, please get in touch and I can forward the email on.

Round 6 of the household support fund is now active. It helps residents of Torridge who are struggling to afford the likes of energy bills, food, appliances, housing and essentials. If anyone should find that they need any help, then call 01271 371499 or go online to www.torridge.gov.uk/householdfund.

2) Village Hall / Social Club — None

3) Youth Club — None

4) PCSO/Police Report — No report received. Clerk had asked PCSOs Brown and Baker to send reminder for Microsoft Teams at least a few days before the meeting, not on the same afternoon as the meeting.

5) Playing Field — Final cut once weather permits.

Actions taken: None at present.

6) Snow Warden — General update on condition of gritter and salt grit stock
Gritter to be checked and still 2 tons of salt grit in storage.

Actions taken: Cllr. Farr to check gritter is in working order.

24.111 Minutes of Meeting of 25 September 2024

Minutes were approved and signed off as a true record.

24.112 Matters arising from last meeting

24.113 New matters

New website going "live"

Sharron Newberry attended the meeting and gave the following update:

- 1.Wix would have amounted to £500 per year including website hosting, domain name and emails via

Google Workspace.

2. Sharron contacted Terry Fairbrother for help, as he works in IT. He suggested Krystal Hosting Ltd.
3. Wix and Krystal systems are incompatible and it was impossible to simply transfer the built website, meaning we would almost have to start from scratch again. Originally, we hoped the website would be "live" now but at present we are looking at February 2025.
4. The cost is £84 for the website, hosting and emails through Krystal. The only additional cost will be the domain when the council transfers it over.
5. Until the new website is up and running, council decided to renew for one more year with Phil O'Neill [Domainsrush], our previous provider.

Sharron thanked councillors for their patience and understanding; all councillors agreed that [Wix] cost would have been prohibitive.

Actions taken: Sharron Newberry presented council with invoice from Krystal Ltd. For the sum of £84.00, Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr. Pengilley seconded, all councillors agreed to reimburse Sharron Newberry. Cheque written out, countersigned and handed over.

Cllr. Pengilley to contact Phil O'Neill and arrange website hosting for another year. Cllr. Pengilley proposed, Cllr. Brice seconded and all councillors agreed to pay annual charge of £40.00. Cheque written out, countersigned and handed to Cllr. Pengilley who will send it off. He will also send invoice to clerk, so that the invoice can be signed off at next meeting.

Parish Salary Recharge 1 April to 30 September 2024: £1659.28

Invoice was signed by Cllrs. Brice and Pengilley. Payment was proposed by Cllr. Brice, seconded by Cllr. Pengilley. All agreed.

Actions taken: Cheque written out and countersigned. Clerk to send off.

24.114 PROW Monthly Report

None

24.115 Planning

1/0887/2024/FUL Honeysuckle Cottage, Yarnscombe, Barnstaple, Devon

Erection of ground floor extension to include extended living room, extra bedroom and garage — No comments

24.116 Additional Planning

None

24.117 Accounts

Reimbursement to Sharron Newberry £84.00 — see item 24.113

Parish Salary Recharge 1 April to 30 September 2024 £1659.28 — see item 24.113

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Councillors decided to forego a meeting in November and meet on 11 DECEMBER 2024, 7.30PM.

Actions taken: Clerk to inform District/County councillors, announcement to be put on website.

Meeting ended at 8.20pm.

8th November 2024