

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 11 December 2024**

Present: Cllrs. Brice (chair), Ellison, Cooke. Farr, Jeffery, Newberry, Pengilly, Saywell (Devon County Council / DCC) and M. Dymond (Clerk)

24.108 Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllrs. Elliott, Lock (Torridge District Council / TDC) and PCSO Brown. There were no declarations of interest and no requests for dispensations had been received.

24.109 Public Participation and Feedback

None

24.110 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

County

According to new information and government spending guidelines, rural communities will be £10 million worse off. Setting of draft budget has been postponed until end of next week. Final budget setting in January, at the moment £30 million deficit.

Council tax for second homes to be discussed. Extra funding into highways has to be stopped; Cllr. Saywell explained that final budget will be balanced.

Regarding devolution, Devon and Cornwall could be unitary authority with city mayors. There is further financial support available until at least March 2025 for households that are struggling with costs of energy (Household Support Fund) and support is also still available through Free School Meals Fund. A more detailed email outlining restructuring of government funding and devolution had been circulated among councillors the previous week.

Responding to questions from councillors, Cllr. Saywell confirmed that there is funding available for a Self-Help / Enhancement Scheme, whereby parishioners can request funding to carry out minor pothole repairs themselves. He confirmed that ditching is being done at present and that DCC has paid out several tens of thousands of pounds where car repair claims (due to potholes) had been made.

Actions taken: Cllr. Saywell will send more info and contact details re. Self-Help Scheme.

District — None

2) Village Hall / Social Club — Cllr. Newberry had attended AGM. The following issues were addressed:

Fire Alarm systems need replacing, electric safety testing needs to be carried out, cost should be maximum of £20,000. Youth Club was discussed and how best to start it up again.

3) Youth Club — in discussion, see 24.120/2

4) PCSO/Police Report — End of service for PCSO Brown

PCSO Brown will retire, she sent crime report for last month; 2 two road traffic incidents, one suspicious incident.

Clerk will try to receive reminders for Teams meetings in good time, so that either clerk or councillors can attend.

Actions taken: Clerk to inform councillors of Teams Meetings as soon as she has up-to-date information.

5) Playing Field — Invoice for grass cutting £576.00

So far, other contractors are unable to match price of Fred Turner. Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr. Pengilly seconded. All agreed to pay invoice.

Actions taken: Cheque written out and countersigned, handed to Cllr. Cooke who will pass it on to Fred Turner.

6) Snow warden — Gritter used once so far in snowy weather.

24.111 Minutes of Meeting of 23 October 2024

There had been no meeting in November. Draft Minutes from 23 October were approved and signed off as a true record.

24.112 Matters arising from last Meeting

None

24.113 New Matters

Annual Review of Council policies and procedures

Cllr. Pengilly had reviewed policies and procedures, updated where needed and circulated among councillors.

Actions taken: None at present.

NALC Pay scales 24/25 — According to pay scales clerk's hourly rate has risen from £12.63 to £13.26, thereby entitling clerk to a back payment of £132.30. All councillors agreed to pay increase. Cllr. Brice will inform TDC payroll who will adjust new salary and add back payment to next month's salary.

Actions taken: Cllr. Brice to send email to TDC Payroll.

Community / Treasurer's Account Fees starting on 14 January 2025

From mid January 2025 the council's Treasurer Account will incur a monthly charge of £4.25; this will double in the second year. 100 electronic payments per month are free, but cheques paid in or out will cost £0.50. Cllr. Pengilly and treasurers of other village organisations have made enquiries at other banks to find a "free of charge" account, but so far have been unsuccessful. Councillors discussed the possibility of phasing out cheque payments and switching over to electronic payments only.

Actions taken: Discuss electronic payment switchover at next meeting in more detail.

24.114 PROW Monthly Report — New Contact at DCC

Ever since Ros Davies had left PROW at County Council it was difficult to find a new contact and/or get response from DCC regarding footpath issues. Cllr. Saywell advised to get in contact with Martin Caddy via martin.caddy@devon.gov.uk

24.115 Planning

[1/0772/2024/FUL](#), Demolition of agricultural building and erection of new dwelling and associated works (Variation of condition 2 of planning approval 1/0066/2023/FUL), buildings at grid reference 255410 123805, Yarnscombe, Devon — Permitted

24.116 Additional Planning

Honeysuckle Cottage, Yarnscombe, Barnstaple, EX31 3LX

Erection of ground floor extension to include extended living room, extra bedroom and garage Ref. No: [1/0887/2024/FUL](#)

24.117 Accounts

Budget and Precept setting

Clerk had provided budget for 2024/25 and actual spending by 1 December 2024.

Last year council had received £1295 in grants, which partially helped to recover cost of metal fencing in playing field. Maintenance and Repair of assets were budgeted at £2000 but final figure due to fence ended up at £12,583.20 (fence). Council dissolved Instant Access Account and transferred it to Treasurer's account in order to pay for second instalments of invoice by WM Ironworks for fence. At the end of November 2024, Council still holds £10,289.02 in 32 days access account. At the time of the meeting, £2,282.36 in VAT refund was still outstanding. Overall, council stayed within budget. For financial year 2025/26, the increase in clerk's salary, potential increase in DALC subscription and allowing for banking expenses and other unexpected expenditure, council decided on precept of £8,300. In real terms, this would mean an increase of £2.49 per month per household.

Actions taken: Clerk filled out relevant form, chair and clerk signed form. Clerk to send off.

Grass cutting Invoice £576.00 see 24.120/5

Meeting ended at 8.30pm.

31st December 2024