

FRITHELSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual Frithelstock Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4th March 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom.

Present: Cllrs T Warrington (Chairman), A Hardwick, C Stevens, L Hunkin and M Baker.
Also in attendance: Mrs K Graddock - Parish Clerk and 1 member of the public. and Cllr A Saywell - Devon County Council.

FP93 Apologies
Cllr A Heard and Cllr L Hunkin will be late in attendance.

FP94 Declarations of Interest
None.

FP95 Minutes
RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date due to Covid-19.

(NC)

FP96 Public Participation
The Parish Council has 3 representatives on the Management Committee of the Parish Hall, however, they are not Parish Councillors.

A member of the public mentioned that litter is becoming an issue, there were cans, bottles, fast food rubbish that was picked up by a parishioner and asked whether a 'take your litter home' sign could be placed within the layby.

FP97 Reports from Outside Bodies

a) Devon County Council - Cllr Saywell

Cllr Saywell gave his report, which is attached as Appendix 1.
Cllr Warrington asked about the flooding on Hele Lane. Cllr Saywell said he thought this was being actioned but would investigate.
Cllr Warrington asked about the SCARF report that was meant to take place. Cllr Saywell said that it did go to Committee but the Police would need to start doing some enforcements but the County Engineers are looking at the matter further.

b) Torridge District Council - Cllr Pennington

Not in attendance.

c) Police

No report has been received.

FP98 Finance and payments

a) To receive and approve payments and Receipts 14th January 2021 until 4th March 2021.

Payments

	NAME	AMOUNT	CHQ NO
30	K Graddock - Salary , February and March	£255.89	Bacs 4/3
31	HMRC - PAYE/NI	£170.40	Bacs 4/3
32	K Graddock, Expenses inc 2 months of Zoom	£53.78	Bacs 4/3
33	DCC Pension Fund	£95.63	Bacs 4/3
	Total	£575.70	

No receipts.

Bank Balances as of 4th March 2021.

Current A/C £4754.24

Reserve A/C £668.30

RESOLVED: That the payments and receipts as detailed above are accepted and actioned by the Clerk.

(NC)

FP99

Website

Cllrs Stevens and Hardwick gave an update on the progress to date. They have been having regular meetings and have been updating the history section, photographs etc and hope to have a draft soon. The Clerk reminded members that a payment of £549 has been authorised but anything over this would need Council approval prior to spending.

FP100

Parish Hall Management Committee Representative

RESOLVED: That Cllr Baker be nominated and appointed to the Parish Hall Management Committee.

(NC)

FP101

Torrington 100

Torrington 100 have some possible funding available for a friendly Bench and some possible planters.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk investigate the application process and apply for a possible bench and planters within the Recreation field.

(NC)

FP102

Planning

a) **1/0180/2021/FUL Proposed Agricultural Shed to cover manure store at Harracott, Frithelstock, Torrington**

RESOLVED: That no comment is made as the applicant is a Parish Councillor.

(NC)

b) **1/0190/2021/FUL Proposed extension to existing shed to provide covered yard areas at Horwood Barton, Frithelstockstone, Bideford**

RESOLVED: That no objection is raised to the application.

(NC)

*** Cllr Hunkin entered the meeting at 8.10pm. ***

FP103 Highways

Cllr Warrington reported that progress is being made and there is currently work taking place to the drains. The main road going to Stibb Cross will have new skid deterrent down. He stated that he will continue to liaise with Highways and update members as and when new information or progress comes to light.

FP104 Councillor Questions

Cllr Warrington would like to find out who owns the piece of land in Church Lane to ascertain whether bollards could be placed on this area. The Clerk will do a Land Registry search.

Official signs put to pick up litter in the layby/pull in. The Clerk said she would enquire with Cllr Saywell whether this is a DCC layby and whether they can place 'take your litter home' signs within.

Cllr Warrington informed members that he would investigate the possibility of using the phone box as a community asset such as a book swap etc.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Signed: Dated:

Appendix 1 - Report from Cllr Saywell

Coronavirus

- Stats – As of 3rd March the DCC area of Devon now up to 19,354 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic.
- Since the 26th February that is a weekly increase of 223 infections.
- By way of comparison... in Torridge there were 9 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon 13 in the last 7 days, West Devon 4 cases in the last 7 days.
- There are over 20,000 tests a week being carried out in the County.
- In all 18 Parishes within Torrington Rural there were 0-2 new infections in the seven days up to 26th February. When there are fewer than 3 infections the Government does not show the data to protect individuals' identities.

So the good news is... **infection cases have fallen sharply during the lockdown locally, District-wide and County-wide.**

Locally we are still doing incredibly well to keep our infection rates low. Devon has the third lowest upper-tier local authority infection rate in England (27.8), with only Cornwall and the Isle of Wight recording slightly lower rates.

At District level, Torridge has the third lowest infection rate in England (13.2), just behind the South Hams (12.6) and West Devon (7.2). All rates are well below the England average of 91.4.

However, these numbers can change quickly, and while the falling infection rates are good news, new infection cases are still around the same level now as they were towards the end of September, though numbers are continuing to decline.

Infection cases in Devon are highest among the 20 to 39 year old age group. But they all falling in all age groups, and most rapidly with the over 80s.

We are however still seeing the virus spreading in some workplaces, often attributable to car sharing. We have also seen some localised spikes in the County, with one recently in Tiverton which caused a rise in the infection rates in Mid Devon.

Key workers should also look to use Community Testing sites when they become available (more information below).

As infections fall and vaccinations ramp up, we must not let our guard down now. Please **stay at home**, and only leave home if you absolutely have to. When you do go out, don't forget to **socially distance, wear a face covering in indoor public spaces and wash your hands regularly.**

While numbers are so low it doesn't take much, a few cases in a couple of workplaces, for the figures to go in the wrong direction and to see a high percentage increase, so keeping to the rules is still very important.

Community Testing

DCC has started to roll out Community Testing for coronavirus, with testing facilities now in Barnstaple, Tiverton, and Exeter.

Plans are afoot to have a mobile testing facility to cover Torrington, Holsworthy, Hartland and Bradworthy in March, though exact dates to be determined. The aim is to have testing as accessible as it can be.

Community testing will help to find individuals who have COVID-19 but do not have symptoms and need to isolate and who may inadvertently be spreading the virus. A positive or negative result will not remove the need to follow existing COVID measures socially and in the workplace.

Rapid lateral flow tests will be used, which will provide a result within thirty minutes. This will not be a substitute for the national coronavirus testing – **if you are symptomatic, people should book a free NHS test via the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website or by calling 119. Do not use community testing.**

When this is up and running locally, or if people would like to use the Barnstaple site, please use devon.cc/testing to book a test.

Please remember, if you have symptoms book a test through the Government website. Don't use DCC Community Testing.

COVID Vaccinations

The rollout of the vaccine in Devon and in Torrington Rural continues to go well.

I sent a briefing note from the NHS to the Town Council earlier this week but the main points for vaccine rollout:

- 391,325 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose between 8th December – 14th February
 - Latest estimate is 95% of over 70s in Devon have received their first dose.
 - The NHS in Devon are focusing on people aged 65 and over, and those who are clinically vulnerable.
 - Plans are now being made to roll out second doses for care home residents and staff.
 - Torrington's GP Surgeries now administering vaccines locally
 - People who are 65 or over can also choose to book direct with the pharmacy site at Westward Ho! on the national booking system.
 - Vaccinations of inpatients at the North Devon District Hospital is also taking place.
 - **Even when you have been vaccinated, you must still continue to follow the COVID-19 safety rules – stay at home as much as possible and remember hands, face, space.**
1. The NHS is also looking at mobile roll out for more isolated rural communities.

This remains a huge logistical exercise, very much dependent upon the speed and rate of vaccine supplies. Please wait for the NHS to contact you when it is your turn. The roll out is getting more localised, those who cannot travel far should be able to get their jab administered locally.

Locality Budget Grants

Funding from my Locality Budget has now been allocated (the deadline for applications is 5th March), but I was pleased to support the Parish Council's application for a new litter bin.

DCC Budget

The main work over January and February at the County Council has been the budget setting process. The Budget was approved at Full Council on the 18th February with more cash for vulnerable adults and children, health and potholes.

Key points:

1. £37m extra cash injection into vital services, including an additional £21.7m for Adult Care and Health, and £11.4m for Children's Services.
2. For Highways there will be an injection of extra revenue into the service including £600,000 for potholes and a new £100,000 fund for Town and Parishes to enhance street features.
3. An additional £600,000 into the Hardship Fund, to be distributed to the District Councils, to help people badly affected by the pandemic who may have been made redundant but are not yet receiving universal credit or benefit support.
4. The total overall revenue budget will be in excess of £578m.
5. To help pay for these increases, Council Tax will unfortunately have to rise – up 1.99% for general services and 3% dedicated solely to Adult Social Care. This will equate to an extra £1.38 a week for an average Band D household.
6. I know Council Tax rises are never welcome... but this will mean we both maintain vital services and can endeavour to improve them.
7. The backdrop to the budget is one of huge uncertainty and risk – we do not know how long the pandemic will continue for or what the longer term impact on the economy, public health and demand for services will be.

Highways

Work is ongoing on the A388. Unfortunately due the inclement weather there is a large backlog of potholes to repair. Extra Gangs are being deployed to fix these however they are prioritising safety defects on the **main road network first**, ahead of minor roads and non-safety defects and serviceability patching. There have also been localised flooding incidents on the highways around Torrington Rural though these are being reported and being attended to.

I'm aware of some pothole issues within the Parish and have been out this week to drive the roads myself and report some of the potholes on Clements Hill, the road to Hembury Bridge and the road past West Ash Farm. Because of the pothole backlog it will take some time but if nothing has happened in 2-3 weeks time then please let me know and I will follow it up.

Support for Families over Easter – Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Devon County Council has been awarded £1.69 million from the Department for Education to provide Holiday Activities and Food for children aged 5-16 on benefit related Free School Meals.

DCC are starting this process for the Easter Holidays and would welcome applications from Torrington area if they can demonstrate it is for the eligible children on Free School Meals.

The timescale for the HAF is 4 hours per day for 4 days over the Easter Holidays, which includes a nutritious hot meal, if you would like to contact the relevant officer, Melissa Filby 01392 383000 or email at melissa.filby@devon.gov.uk, she would be happy to discuss your project and if it fits the HAF criteria.

The scheme will be run across all of Devon for the summer holidays.

Support During Half Term

Over Half Term DCC will provide more than 15,000 children's families in Devon with food vouchers

Families of children currently receiving free school meals were automatically sent supermarket vouchers by DCC to help them buy food over the week-long holiday to replace the meals a child would have received during term-time. This was for more than 15,000 children in the County. The vouchers – worth £15 a week for each child – were redeemable in major supermarkets across Devon. Arrangements were put in place for families who cannot get to a supermarket.

Elections

The Government have confirmed that the May Elections to Devon County Council **will** be taking place on May 6th. I will be re-standing and am hopeful of re-election! I have worked hard for Frithelstock in the last four years and working together I believe we have achieved a lot, though as ever there is still more to do. A priority for me in the next term will be to continue the work on the speeding issues on the A388. I will remain at your service until May, and I hope to be afterwards as well.

As ever, if there are any issues you'd like me to look into please get in touch.

-

Andrew Saywell

Devon County Councillor for Torrington Rural
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