

**Minutes of the Ashford Parish Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 20th July 2023 at 7pm in the Church Hall,
St Peter's Church, Ashford**

Present: Cllrs P Hughes (Chairman), J Bosley, G Holder, B Kettle, V Lawson, and M Withey

Mrs V Woodhouse, Locum Parish Clerk
County Cllr, P Maskell
North Devon Cllr, R Knight

13 Members of the public

2307/01

Apologies

Cllr K Furse.

2307/02

Declarations of Interest

None.

The Chairman apologised for not introducing the new Cllrs at an earlier meeting and introduced the Cllrs to those in attendance.

2307/03

Minutes

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 and the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 6th June 2023 as a correct record.

2307/04

County Councillor Report

The report as circulated prior to the meeting is attached as Appendix One. Cllrs raised questions on the e-scooters it was unknown if the speed would be limited but noted that you would need to be over 18 to download the app and have a driving licence to use, concerns were raised at the lack of a bell on an e-scooter.

2307/05

District Councillor Report

Cllr Knight introduced himself and urged the Parish Cllrs and community to contact him if required.

2307/06

Recruitment Committee

a) To receive report from the Recruitment Committee and note recruitment of Locum Clerk

Members were informed that the position of Locum Parish Clerk had been offered to Mrs Victoria Woodhouse and accepted on an open-ended temporary contract, it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to ratify the appointment and note that members look forward to working with the Locum Clerk and to move the Parish Council forward.

b) To agree that the Locum Clerk assumes the role of RFO and Proper

Officer

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to appoint the Locum Parish Clerk, Mrs Victoria Woodhouse, as Proper Officer.

2307/07

Village Clean-up/Litter Pick

The Chairman apologised for the wording used and explained that it is the first litter pick organised by the Parish Council since 2019 but noted that other residents had organised such events. 5 Cllrs took part and trimmed overgrowth and cleaned signs as well as litter picking.

2307/08

Review of Governance

Members considered the creation of a working party to review the Parish Council's Governance and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to create a working party of the Locum Clerk, Chairman and Cllr Withey to review the Governance which will then be circulated and brought to Parish Council in due course for adoption.

2307/09

Parish Council Equipment

a) To consider the purchase of a laptop and associated software.

Information had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to purchase a HP laptop, Microsoft Home and Business, a mouse and external hard drive for use by the Parish Clerk.

b) To consider Parish Council emails.

Quotations were considered to set up and host Parish Council email addresses, it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to appoint WesternWeb to set up and host 8 email addresses for the Parish Council.

The County Cllr had agreed to check the conditions of her locality budget and whether or not she could provide funding towards the purchase of the above equipment.

2307/10

Highway Concerns

A report produced by a resident of the parish had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting, along with a request from the parishioner for the Parish Council to reconsider a case for a 20mph speed limit in Ashford and improvements to the A361 crossing to the Tarka Trail or any other safety measures for the village.

Cllr Kettle explained that he had been involved in a similar scheme at Marwood and the proposals had to follow the criteria as set out by Devon County Council as the Highways Authority and the correct procedures, he suggested that the Parish Council should speak to the County Cllr and ascertain the process to follow, it was noted that the report contained a lot of opinion but lacked the facts that would be required to take schemes forward.

It was noted that the Parish Council had previously investigated similar schemes and had submitted a request for a 20mph speed limit in 2021, however, it had not been successful, and the requirements had not changed. The Chairman explained that the criteria set by Devon County



Council for 20mph limits is very high and it is known, after conversations with various County Cllrs and Officers, that Ashford falls below what is needed to be successful.

It was noted that a crossing on the A361 would require a factual study to understand exact movements and it was suggested that the data could be gathered by volunteers. Cllr Maskell suggested consideration of a Community Speed Watch which could also help to provide the required data and be useful for a future 20mph speed limit application.

It is an aspiration of the Highways Authority for a crossing on the A361 in the future if funds become available.

After discussion it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, for the Clerk and Chairman to meet with the County Cllr to discuss the proposals and obtain an update on highway initiatives in the parish and criteria from the County Council and report back to the next meeting.

2307/11

Freedom of Information Act

Correspondence had been received from a member of the public in relation to a Freedom of Information request from July 2021. Cllr Lawson explained that he had replied with the information the Parish Council held and explained that an internal review could be requested within two months of the response, nothing further was received until recently.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, for the Locum Parish Clerk to undertake a review with the new Cllrs as they are independent from the original FOI.

2307/12

Parish Council Meeting

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to agree the 21st September 2023 for the next Parish Council Meeting and noted that Cllr Withey would prefer monthly meetings.

The Chairman explained that for this season the grass had been cut by residents and it was agreed to write to those residents and thank them for their contribution to the parish. Other residents that had helped to keep the village clean and tidy were also identified and it was agreed to write letters of thanks to them as well.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.49pm.

Signed 

Dated 5/9/23

IMPORTANT NOTE – IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH ANYTHING PLEASE CONTACT THE LOCUM PARISH CLERK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND NOT LATER THAN 7 DAYS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO AGREE ANY CHANGES, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE CHAIRMAN WHO WILL DETERMINE ANY CHANGES AND INFORM THE COUNCIL PRIOR TO THEIR FINAL APPROVAL

County Councillor Report for Ashford Parish Council

July 2023

Although the information below is related to Braunton, I have included it for your interest as it may effect your residents visiting Braunton for shopping and the E-Scooters may impact upon users of the Tarka trail.

On Street Parking Charges – Devon County Council are proposing to introducing charges along the Exeter Road in Braunton. The proposal would see free parking for 30 minutes, followed by a lower tariff for 1 hour, followed by a higher tariff for longer stay. This would be to encourage people to use the village car park and improve turnover. Any revenue would go towards subsidising the bus routes. Braunton Parish Council are not happy with these proposals and neither are the businesses along the road, who feel that meters will discourage people from stopping there.

Please email the Traffic Management team if you have any questions or concerns
christopher.rook@devon.gov.uk

E-Scooters – North Devon Council are trialling these scooters in Barnstaple and you may be aware that there was some upset a few weeks ago when scooter parking bays were painted overnight around Braunton. The scooter company had got ahead of themselves, but the trial is proposed to extend along the Tarka trail and into Braunton.

Please email North Devon Council if you have any questions or concerns
Dominie.Dunbrook@northdevon.gov.uk