

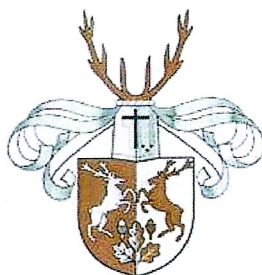
Clerk to the Council

Office Tel: 01643 863350

clerk@porlockparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.porlockparishcouncil.gov.uk

PORLOCK



Parish Council

Parish Room
Old School Centre
West End
PORLOCK
Somerset TA24 8NP

Signed:

Date: 11 APRIL '24

Minutes of the Porlock Annual Parish Meeting Porlock Village Hall, Wednesday 12 April 2023, 6pm

*The Parish Council Annual Report and Dunster Steep consultation brief are appendices to the minutes.
All of the community group reports/display materials will be available on the website and in the library.*

In attendance: approximately 50 members of the public

Parish Councillors: Cllr S Colson, Cllr D McCanlis (Chair), Cllr S McCanlis, Cllr D Thornton, Cllr L Thornton
(Temporary volunteer Clerk)

Somerset Councillors: Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr S Pugsley

Also present: Annie Dallaway (Locum RFO and minute taker)

1) Welcome and Introductions

Cllr D McCanlis, Chair of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and Cllr S Colson provided an overview of the format for the evening.

2) Apologies for absence received: Cllr L Bloys

3) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 9 March 2022 to be approved.

There were no minutes on record for the Annual Parish Meeting of 9 March 2022.

4) Annual Report from the Parish Council – see appendix to the mins

Cllr D McCanlis presented the report and opened the floor to questions:

PUBLIC: What will the criteria for projects be and how will the projects be selected? Will everyone have a say on the selection of projects?

COUNCIL: The Grants policy will detail the criteria for projects which request funding – the draft policy will be an agenda item for the Annual Meeting in May. Local residents will be encouraged to come forward with ideas and suggestions for projects. The council will be keen to select projects which have community support.

PUBLIC: Will the projects be funded out of the increased precept?

COUNCIL: The projects will be funded out of Earmarked Reserves. An additional £35K has been allocated to EMR funds out of general reserves. The increase in the precept for 23/24 was to enable the council to set a balanced revenue budget.

PUBLIC: Projects should demonstrate value for money and an over-riding benefit for the village. The High Street grant did not deliver benefit to the community.

COUNCIL: The High Street grant (ETCRF) was awarded by SW&T and was used to provide extensive floral displays in the village, seating, signage, events and promotion. A final report was submitted to SW&T which was well received.

PUBLIC: The extra costs of the External Audit for 21/22 were generated by the new council.

COUNCIL: The extra costs of the External Audit for 21/22 resulted in additional work the auditors had to carry out as a result of challenge correspondence received from members of the public (including Cllr D McCanlis before he became a councillor).

5) Report from Somerset Council

As of 1 April 2023, Somerset became a Unitary Authority. Cllr Steven Pugsley and Cllr Frances Nicholson are the two councillors for the Dulverton and Exmoor Division.

The Dulverton & Exmoor Division Local Community Network has a pilot Highways initiative with a dedicated Highways Steward who can identify and action small maintenance works. The pilot Highways initiative enabled the LCN to successfully fight the proposed cuts to the salt bags and bins.

Somerset Council has 8 representatives on the Exmoor National Park Planning Committee (Planning Authority) and Cllr Pugsley and Nicholson are appointed representatives.

The Moorland Federation of schools includes St Dubricius primary school in Porlock which has a new Head of School, Jo Smith.

Jo Smith introduced herself to those present at the meeting and reported that she was looking forward to working with the local community and parish council.

6) Initial public consultation on Dunster Steep footpath

Deferred to later in the meeting

7) Initial public consultation on extending traffic calming measures in the village

Cllr S Colson advised that there was no available SC budget for 20mph zones in Porlock for 2023/24 but community feedback about traffic calming measures would help to shape plans for next year. Possible initiatives include: extension of the 20mph speed limit for the village to include West Porlock and Porlock Weir, rumble strips, portable speed signs.

PUBLIC: 1 March 2023 was the deadline for communities to express interest in 20mph zones for 23/24 but funding could still be available from SC.

PUBLIC: Access for emergency vehicles is poor in Doverhay and Parsons Street.

PUBLIC: There is no police presence and a lack of speed cameras. How would you police a 20mph zone?

COUNCIL: Consider reinstatement of Community Speed Watch and establish dialogue with the local police.

PUBLIC: Concern expressed re urbanisation of this area of outstanding natural beauty with an abundance of metal posts and signs.

PUBLIC: There are two consultation issues on the agenda but the council needs to organise more comprehensive, community wide consultation to gather feedback from those who do not attend the council meetings.

COUNCIL: The council is keen for as much community engagement as possible.

PUBLIC: Concern expressed re the narrow, dangerous pavements in the village.

PUBLIC: Consider option of removing pavements and having a shared space for traffic and pedestrians created by road markings.

SOMERSET COUNCIL: Structural changes to the pavements would be problematic due to the inherent narrowness and built environment of Porlock. It might be possible to make the surfacing of the pavements safer. The Parish Council can request a site meeting with Highways officers to review the pavements and safety issues.

PUBLIC: Is there a legal weight or length restriction on Porlock Hill?

SOMERSET COUNCIL: Yes, there is an 18-tonne weight limit which is enforced by police.



Cllr Colson asked for an informal vote via show of hands for those in support of extending traffic calming measures in the village. More than half of those present were in favour.

Cllrs Nicholson and Pugsley left the meeting at 7pm

Cllrs D and L Thornton arrived at the meeting

8. Reports from the community and outside bodies.

Reports from the following community groups and outside bodies were on display in the main hall:

Exmoor National Park (including Rural Crime Survey, Public Rights of Way (PROW), CareMoor, Partnership Plan); Porlock Carnival Committee; Porlock Vale Coastal Community Team (including Plastic Free Porlock Vale, Porlock Vale Repair Café, Porlock Vale Creative, Water refill points); Porlock Flood Group; Exmoor Neighbourhood Policing Team; Porlock Community Library; Dovery Manor Museum; Porlock Village Hall; Porlock Weir Pilot Gig Club; Porlock Bowls Club; Porlock Football Club; Porlock Cricket Club; Porlock Recreation Ground; Porlock Spire Project; Traders of Porlock (TOP); SALC – Exmoor National Park Authority Elections; Lovelace Community Centre; Porlock Visitor Centre; Village Agent

DEFERRED ITEM:

6. Initial public consultation on Dunster Steep footpath – see appendix to the mins

Cllr L Thornton presented an overview of the project to date. In 2021, the Council agreed to pay for the legal costs of both parties in acquiring a strip of land alongside Dunster Steep. The transfer of ownership is currently with the solicitors, awaiting completion. Earmarked funds of £2,500 were set aside to meet these legal costs. In 2021, PPC commissioned a topographical survey from SCC of this strip of land, costing £1,017.50.

Tregenna Housing is proposing to develop nearby land and they have assisted in discussing the principle of the footpath with their transport consultant and the Planning Officer. The latter has acknowledged the benefits the footpath could have and advised that this should be considered separately from any planning application from Tregenna Housing.

PUBLIC: Does the council have funds set aside for this project?

COUNCIL: There is some funding available in the Earmarked reserves but not sufficient to cover all the costs identified. Funding could potentially come from raising the precept.

PUBLIC: Is funding available from the Local Authority?

COUNCIL: This has not yet been explored.

PUBLIC: What about a simple path like Vivienne's Way?

COUNCIL: We need to do the necessary surveys in the first instance and planning permission will be required.

PUBLIC: Would making the road one-way with traffic lights help as a traffic calming measure?

PUBLIC: The footpath is needed from a safety point of view as it is very dangerous for local residents and those travelling to Bossington.

PUBLIC: It would be useful to know if there are any statistics for road traffic accidents at the site.

PUBLIC: The footpath is a good idea but not if it is going to cost an excessive amount.

Cllr Colson asked for an informal vote via show of hands for those in support of the Dunster Steep footpath project. Approximately 6 in favour; 8 not in favour and the majority of those present abstaining from the informal vote. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to express support or otherwise for the initiative at this stage when the plans and costings were at a provisional stage and the funding source was not confirmed.

9. Public participation

PUBLIC: What celebrations have been planned for the King's Coronation



COUNCIL: A Community Lunch, a Picnic in the Churchyard, a Party in the Park at the Recreation Ground and a Concert in the Church. Flags and bunting will be erected and commemorative Coronation mugs have been ordered for all of the children at St Dubricius primary school. Events are planned in the Visitor Centre and the Library to support the "Big Help Out" which is a feature of the Coronation celebrations to celebrate and promote volunteering across the UK. £3K has been awarded from the National Lottery. Local groups have been asked if they would like funding from the grant towards the costs of the events and activities planned to celebrate the Coronation but no groups have come forward.

PUBLIC: Are the commemorative Coronation mugs locally made?

COUNCIL: The mugs have been sourced from a local company and are melamine rather than china as this will be more suitable for the children to use.

PUBLIC: The current Parish Council is not supported or trusted by the local community. A specific concern was raised about how a decision was made not to fund the Christmas Trees in 2021.

(Note: all six of the current councillors were elected unopposed).

Cllr L and D Thornton left the meeting.

COUNCIL: The Parish Council is keen to work with the local community for the benefit of the parish and hopes for positive communications and engagement. Dwelling on what has happened in the past is not productive and the on-going discordant communications between the council and some local residents is upsetting for all concerned. The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity to begin to work together in a more positive way.

PUBLIC: The previous council deserve an apology. There has been a lot of negative publicity in the local press and previous councillors consider that they have been publicly judged as being corrupt. The current council has suggested that they are "righting the wrongs of the previous council."

PUBLIC: The current council need to write to the newspaper and confirm that no money went missing.

COUNCIL: The External Auditor's Final Report for 2021/22, highlighted areas of weakness in financial management. The External Audit documents and Final Report are available to the public and the press on the council's website. The Parish Council has taken on board the findings of the auditors and is keen to move forwards and work with the Locum RFO to put in place a rigorous system of financial control going forward.

Cllr D McCanlis acknowledged the long service and valued contribution of past Chairman, Malcolm McCoy.

PUBLIC: The current council needs to exert less control and trust local groups and volunteers to carry on with their work in the community.

PUBLIC: It is time to put the past behind us, to demonstrate goodwill and common sense to enable the community to work together for the benefit of Porlock.

Cllr D McCanlis endorsed this sentiment and was pleased to end the Annual Parish Meeting on a more positive note.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

