

EXMOOR PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 27th January 2022 7.30pm at The Old School, Simonsbath

Present: Parish Councillors – F Schott (Chair) FS, T Gowlland TG, A Chapman AC, J Chanter JC, J Wright JW, County Cllr: F Nicholson FN, District Cllr: S Pugsley SP, Clerk R Tomalin, Members of the public: Two

The meeting started at 7.33pm.

1/22 Questions from the public: None

2/22 Apologies of Absence: None

3/22 Declarations of notifiable interest: None

The agenda items were taken out of order so the members of the public could participate.

7/22 Planning – (i) 6/14/22/101 THE EXMOOR FOREST INN, SIMONSBATH, MINEHEAD, TA24 7SH
Proposed demolition of existing barn and construction of building with retail on the ground floor and living accommodation on the first floor – Ed Greenall & Charles O'Connor (the applicants) attended the PC meeting to share their vision and answer questions from the Cllrs. The applicants explained that the existing barn was in a poor state of repair and needed to be taken down and rebuilt. The application is for a like-for-like building, it will look the same, have the same number of windows but the roof will have a shallower pitch to allow more light into the neighbouring property. There will be no windows at the back. The plan is to develop the range of organic meat (from Exmoor Forest Farms, a related entity) sold in the inn, allow more room for food preparation and importantly cold storage which is a particular constraint currently. Longer term plans would be to offer mail order meat and potentially expand into a farm shop if demand is there. Other local producers have already expressed an interest in renting cold storage space as the local slaughter house only offers short term facilities. Upstairs would be, in the first instance, staff accommodation as it is difficult to find rental accommodation locally, and it would be better for staff and the environment if they did not need to travel from Minehead or South Molton. More staff are needed (last Summer employed 13 people) but it is impossible to recruit without accommodation. Outside will remain a gravel car park with low level hooded lighting, and electric car charging points will be installed, a first for the parish!

The Cllrs asked whether the retail space would stock items like milk etc so that the villagers did not need to go into Exford. The applicants explained that expanding the space into a farm shop was a possibility but there was a fine balancing act to meet customers needs. The Cllrs also asked why the proposed building would be rebuilt in corrugated metal as they thought it was an eyesore and the opportunity to build something more aesthetically pleasing in local materials. The applicants explained they thought they should keep the agricultural look of the building. The Cllrs all agreed that it was an excellent proposal which would increase the viability of an important local business, create employment opportunities and ensure the sustainability of the local and wider community. The Cllrs strongly supported the application.

(ii) Shared Rural Network Pre-Application Telecommunications Installation: 1003 LAND AT BIRCHLEAVE – the applicants also expressed an interest in this agenda item as the proposed site of the mast is on land owned by their family. The site is a field of species rich grassland; this is a natural habitat and has not been cultivated for agricultural purposes. The operator (Three) had already done some work on the land including creating a stone track from Winstitchen Lane across two fields. The landowner had written a robust letter to Three but was concerned the mast might be imposed on them. FS explained he had written to ENPA to understand what their thoughts were.

The Cllrs all expressed concern that at 20m the mast will be very visible and would bring no real benefit to the village as the existing masts already provided good coverage. When the mast was erected at Warren there had been much back and forth regarding its exact location; the end result being it is very well concealed. FS will respond to Three with the views of the PC.

(iii) Fibre Broadband – the applicants reported that fibre broadband would soon be coming to the village as OpenReach have a commitment to provide fibre if a premises converts from residential to commercial. It is understood the fibre cable will split at the bridge and go to Kinsford and Duredon.

(iv) Queens Jubilee – while the applicants were at the meeting the Queens Jubilee was discussed, they confirmed the Exmoor Forest Inn would be taking part in the celebrations but there were no exact plans at present. They offered the use of the lawn at Barton for a village celebration, the Cllrs also considered The Old School as a possible venue.

(v) Local Plan 5 Year Review Survey – see **6/22**

The applicants left the meeting at 7.57pm

4/22 Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 25/11/2021 These were proposed by TG and seconded by FS as a true and correct record of what took place and all agreed and the Chair signed.

5/22 Matters arising from the minutes of 25/11/2021 - none

6/22 District and County council reports: (i) Orders for elections will be laid before Parliament this week, so it is increasingly likely they will take place in May. SP noted that parish representatives are elected to ENPA every 4 years, and this would occur next year as usual (not in line with the Somerset elections). It was not clear what would happen if a parish councillor who was a member of the ENPA decided to retire or was defeated (ii) The LCN Highways pilot continues; a small steering group was formed at the Exmoor Panel meeting to take forward how this will really work in practice. The group is due to meet on 11th February (iii) Glover Review – the government has released a consultation following the Glover review. There is potential for the Secretary of State to appoint the Chairman of the NPA but clearly it should be down to the Committee to appoint a suitable representative, although this is far better than the initial proposal of the whole committee being appointed by London. NPs and AONBs are currently managed by different bodies but could be managed together under one group (iv) Local Plan 5 Year Review Survey – ENPA is currently conducting a review to see if the policies need to be reviewed. It is likely the background advice and guidance will be changed rather than have a full policy review. This is an opportunity to have your say if you think the application of planning policy needs changing; Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to respond.

8/22 Finance: (i) Bank reconciliation £6,490.06 as of 3rd December 2021, no January statement received. Cheques cleared since last reconciliation: Chq 279 £84 A Vigars Parish Maintenance. Cheques written but not yet cleared: Chq 278 £40.09 SALC fees, Chq 283 £157.35 Outgoing Clerks Pay & Expenses Oct & Nov 21, Chq 284 £36 PAYE to HMRC Oct & Nov 21 (ii) Invoices authorised prior to Jan meeting: outgoing clerks pay and exp Oct & Nov 2021 **C Hornsby £157.35 Chq 283**, PAYE due to HMRC Oct & Nov 2021 **HMRC £36.00 Chq 284** (iii) Invoices for Jan meeting: None (iv) Clerk & Councillor Training – Clerk asked if she could attend Election Training which was being organised by SALC at a cost of £20 (which could be shared with Withypool & Hawkridge PC). The Cllrs all agreed it would be worthwhile.

9/22 Highways – (i) The tree by West Cottages is still there but the road has been repaired, although concerns were raised over the quality of the work and whether this would last (ii) Roadworks – much inconvenience had been caused recently as roadworks were occurring on two roads in the area meaning cars could not leave the village. It was a result of very poor planning, although FN reported that this had been discussed prior to the work taking place and the two were not supposed to occur at the same time.

10/22 Village parking Updates on parking in the village – Kate Brown (KB) from Traffic Management @SW&T has sent over a proposal to install recycled plastic wood effect bollards as a temporary solution whilst the Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) works on a more permanent solution of wooden bollards. FN explained that this would be one of the benefits of the LCN – this kind of issue could be dealt with at a local level. The Cllrs raised the following concerns: delaying permanent solution, plastic in a National Park, paying twice, sawmill up the road could produce the bollards, interval placement and installation to deter drivers moving them, BT cables underground. FN made it clear to Cllrs that Highways/Traffic Management may not always take the perceived logical approach, but it was in the interests of the parish to accept the temporary plastic bollards asap and assured Cllrs that they would be replaced with wooden ones. The existing boulders were still felt to be a more natural looking deterrent and much larger boulders were available from a local resident. However, the Cllrs agreed that immediate action was necessary to prevent an accident. FS to respond to KB noting Cllrs views. If the recycled bollards are installed notices should be displayed to explain that they are a temporary solution. FN showed the map supplied by KB which showed the highway still extends along the old road but this is currently being reserved by local residents for their own cars. The alternative car parking site below the sawmills is still being discussed, ENPA has approached the Environment Agency and Natural England and is waiting for a response (expected 3-4 month wait). The Cllrs all agreed it was important to attract people not turn them away.

11/22 Parish Maintenance - TG reported that the Browns who live at Hawkridge, next door to the Exmoor Forest Inn, have offered to paint the phone box if the PC provides the paint. The PC are happy to accept their generous offer which is very public spirited. TG to purchase the paint (PC to reimburse) and pass on the PC's thanks. It was also noted that the phone box does not work, FN suggested it should be reported once a week to BT.

12/22 Correspondence – (i) Queens Jubilee discussed under **7/22** (ii) Petition for Online Meetings - Clerk drew attention to an email recently circulated about signing a petition to re-instate online council meetings

13/22 Report from Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust – Lettings have taken off and there is regular pilates taking place. With more bookings it will be necessary to think about cleaning/cleaning materials and start to consider plans for a kitchen and toilets. A Trustees meeting is due to be held soon. A direct debit has been set up for the electricity, although this has highlighted that the building is known as both White Rock Cottage and The Old School. Further Covid grants are available for community buildings, Clerk to re-circulate email. Rob Wilson-North has presented some very interesting bridge designs for the Trustees to review. With work taking place in the garden, it will be an ideal entertaining venue, possibly for the Queens Jubilee celebrations.

14/22 Chairman's Notices - none

15/22 Items for next Agenda - none

16/22 Date and time of next meeting: 31st Mar 2022

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.57pm

Signed.....Date.....