

LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

11th FEBRUARY 2021

Note – This meeting was held remotely using video conference facilities

Present	Councillors: Geoff Bond Colin Edworthy James French Mark Glover (Chairman) Peter Haselhurst David Ley Franklin Tucker Melissa Baker (PCSO) (part time) David Hurley (TDC)
In attendance	Leigh Pollinger – Parish Clerk 0 members of the public.
314	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologies were received from Andrew Saywell. Jenny Coles and Pat Mitchell did not attend due to lack of internet capabilities.
315	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
315.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No matters arising that are not covered later in the meeting.
315.2	Minutes of meeting held on 14 th January 2021 to be agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes were proposed by James French and seconded by Peter Haselhurst.
316	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no declaration of interests.
317	REPORTS
317.1	Police Community Support Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Melissa Baker advised that although the level of crime was 0 in the area the number of incidents had increased to 7 compared to last year's 1. There is now a covid car in the district which is handling any covid related and reported incidents.
317.2	County Councillor

Andrew Saywell forwarded a copy of his report prior to the meeting.

I have a meeting of the 'Torrington Town Partnership' on tonight. I'm hoping to be able to join you later but if not, please find my written report below which I hope you find useful.

Coronavirus

- Stats – As of 9th February DCC area of Devon now up to 18,506 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic.
- Since the 5th February that is a weekly increase of 475 infections.
- By way of comparison... in Torridge there were 15 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon 24 in the last 7 days, West Devon 31 cases in the last 7 days. (West Devon's numbers had been affected by a couple of care home outbreaks but their numbers are now decreasing)
- There are now over 20,000 tests a week being carried out in the County.

The good news is... **cases are falling, locally, District-wide and County-wide.**

Locally we are still doing incredibly well to keep our infection rates low. Devon has the lowest upper-tier infection rate in England (59.2). Torridge has the lowest infection rate in England (22), with only the Shetland and Orkney Islands recording lower infection rates in the UK.

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 at mid-October.

Infection cases in Devon are highest among the 20 to 39 year old age group. We are still seeing the virus spreading in some workplaces, often attributable to car sharing.

If car sharing is essential please follow the recommended guidance about reducing the risk to yourselves and fellow passengers – guidance can be found online [here](#).

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.**

Community Testing

DCC has started to roll out Community Testing for coronavirus.

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.**

The first site opened at the end of January, at County Hall in Exeter, with other sites planned to become available across the County in February and March. Sites are being targeted at areas with higher levels of the virus first.

In Torrington a community testing site will be set up at Bideford – however the plan is to have a mobile testing facility to cover Torrington, Holsworthy, Hartland and Bradworthy up and running in March, dates to be determined. The aim is to have testing as accessible as it can be.

When this is up and running locally, 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 has, so far, been going well.

Main points for vaccine rollout:

- 204,815 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose between 8th December – 31st January
- 91.6% (72,831) of over 80s have received their first dose in Devon
- 72.7% (39,993) of people aged 75-79 in Devon have received their first dose.
- Devon is on course to have offered everyone in the JCVI Groups 1-4 by mid-February.
- Nearly all older people's care homes across Devon have had vaccination visits.
- **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.**
- Beware vaccine scammers – remember the vaccine is free and only available on the NHS; and you will never be asked for financial information if contacted for an appointment.
- **Torrington's GP Surgeries now administering vaccines locally –** Castle Gardens surgery held their first Covid vaccine clinic on

Saturday 23rd January and plans are afoot to have a constant Covid clinic running throughout the week. They are targeting those that they know cannot make it to Barnstaple or other vaccine centres.

- I have suggested to the NHS at using other mass vaccine sites in Torrington though there are logistical challenges involved, however more local options are becoming available.
- 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. Rolling is getting more localised, those who cannot travel far should be able to get their jab administered locally.

Covid-19 Prompt Action Grant

A reminder that DCC's COVID-19 grants have opened again for the third lockdown. The guidance is slightly amended and can be found on this link along with the online application

form. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/covid-19-fund/>

The biggest difference to the first two waves is that DCC are working in partnership with Devon Community Foundation to fund food projects. So any project that is for food provision needs to apply here <http://devoncf.com/apply/community-food-programme-2/>

Free School Meals Voucher Schemes

During Half Term DCC will be providing more than 15,000 children's families in Devon will be receiving food vouchers

Families of children currently receiving free school meals will automatically be 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 will be for more than 15,000 children in the County. The vouchers – worth £15 a week for each child – can be redeemed in major supermarkets across Devon. Arrangements are in place for families who cannot get to a supermarket.

More information can be found online [here](#).

DCC Budget

The Budget has now gone through the Scrutiny process for approval at the Council's Cabinet on 12th February, followed by Full Council. As exact details are still TBC but the overall budget is set to increase by £37million with an uplift in the Adult Social Care and Children's Services Budgets. Exact details remain TBC however and I will give the Town Council a full briefing next month once all the details are available.

	<p><u>Highways – Potholes and Gritting</u></p> <p>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 first, ahead of non-safety defects and serviceability patching. Nonetheless, please continue to report the potholes. I have reported some this week down Brown’s Lane.</p> <p>There have also been localised flooding incidents on the highways around Torrington Rural as well though these appear to have been dealt with once reported.</p> <p><u>Elections</u></p> <p>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’ve worked hard for Langtree these last four years and together I believe we have achieved a lot. There have been some significant road improvements within the Parish, with more to come... but there is more to do. I remain though at your service until May, and I hope to be afterwards as well.</p>
317.3	<p>District Councillor</p> <p>David Hurley presented his report as follows:</p> <p>On Wednesday 13th January the Members Capital Programme meeting took place. Councillors discussed several proposals to help balance the budget and an updated report was presented at the Community and Resources meeting held on 25th January where the recommendations in the report were supported. The outcome of this report will be debated at Full Council on 22nd February and will form the basis of the 2021-2022 TDC budget.</p> <p><u>May Elections</u></p> <p>At present it would appear that the Elections on 6th May will go ahead. In addition to the Devon County Councillor election will be the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as 2 by elections for Holsworthy Town Council.</p> <p>The Polling Stations that may be used have been sent a questionnaire to ensure they are suitable to be used during this pandemic. Questions such as the hall layout, number of exits, space to queue outside etc. have been asked. Officers are working through the returned questionnaires to ensure the venues are suitable. Each station will have additional measures for COVID as well as a number of extra COVID related signs. All stations will have social distancing with floor markers on the floor, as well as hand sanitizer on the entrance and exit of the building. The polling booths will be cleaned regularly and I believe that voters will be asked to bring their own pencil. Supplied pencils will be cleaned after every use. The staff in the polling station itself will all have</p>

	<p>a visor on as well as a mask which they will change every four hours.</p> <p>Officers are working to try and come up with some social media campaigns for the elections. The main one will be to try and promote postal voting whilst informing people that polling stations will be Covid-secure. The electoral commission are expecting an increase of up to 50% in the number of postal votes.</p> <p><u>Community Emergency Plans Event</u></p> <p>This free event is taking place on Thursday 25th Feb at 7pm. This is being run in conjunction with Devon Communities Together and is designed to help Communities pull together an Emergency Plan with local volunteers. A Community Emergency Plan (CEP) is devised by the community themselves, very often Town and Parish Council lead. It follows a template and identifies possible risks, how they might be mitigated, what resources are needed and how the community would contribute to responding to an event. Funding is available for Communities. Invitations are being sent to Town and Parish Councils and the event, lasting around 1 hour, and will be short on presentations with the emphasis on answering questions.</p> <p><u>Council Tax Increases</u></p> <p>I will come back to this topic in the next month or so to confirm, or alter these figures. Proposed increases are</p> <p>Devon County Council 2% plus 3% Social Care Precept.</p> <p>Devon and Cornwall Police £15 Band D which equates to around 6.8%</p> <p>Devon and Somerset Fire Service 2%</p> <p>Torrige District Council £5 which is around 2.96% for a Band D</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils No limit.</p> <p>If all these figures come to fruition and Parish and Town Councils raise their precept by 2% then a Band D would rise by £95.06 of which Torrige's share would only be £5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: James French, Mark Glover and Peter Haselhurst asked if they could be invited to the Community Emergency Plans Event.
<p>318</p>	<p>PARISH MATTERS</p>
<p>318.1</p>	<p>To receive an update on the formal transfer of the MUGA to Langtree Parish Hall and Langtree Hall Players (operating organisation).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter, Peter and Wright are finalising the wording on the proposed lease document between the Parish Council and the Parish Hall. It is hoped that the draft document will be available shortly. It was agreed that the document will be circulated to councillors for comment before issuing to the Parish Hall.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have received a comment from a parishioner regarding the visibility of one particular light when driving along Fore Street. Abacus Lighting have been contacted requesting a visit to adjust when they are next in the area. 						
319	PLANNING						
319.1	No planning applications have been received prior to issuing agenda.						
319.2	<p>To consider any other planning applications received between issuing of agenda and meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No planning applications have been received. 						
320	CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCE						
320.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at end January 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank balance at 29th January 2021 <table border="1" data-bbox="434 878 1385 1095"> <tr> <td>Lloyds Main Account</td> <td>£25,823.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number 2 account</td> <td>£0.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£25,823.48</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactions during the month were £120 received and repaid Torridge AFC. Received from HMRC, VAT repayment £17,138.55; Sport England, balance of grant, £2,400.00. As the VAT monies have been received we have repaid the £15000 loan from the Parish Hall committee in early February. The Abacus Lighting invoice for £4841.47 is still to be paid as we are awaiting a response to our query over the cost make up. 	Lloyds Main Account	£25,823.43	Number 2 account	£0.05	Total	£25,823.48
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Total	£25,823.48						
320.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A payment to Langtree Parish Hall for £453.20 to cover a RAW Piper invoice for stone (for MUGA drainage) paid by them in error. 						
320.3	<p>To review MJ Baker quotation for mowing works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MJ Baker has quoted Langtree Park and Church Lane - £870 (same as last year) and Beech Road - £330 (same as last year). It was agreed that MJ Baker should continue the work in 2021. 						
320.4	<p>To agree the budget for 2021/2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budget was agreed. 						

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was also agreed that the Parish Council will pay the insurance cost for the MUGA (due May 2021) for this year to help Langtree Hall Players get off the ground.
320.5	<p>To review updated parish council documentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following documents had been circulated prior to the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations – these were approved. • Purpose of Financial Reserves – these were approved. • Risk Register – councillors will review and make comments at the next meeting. • Asset Register – this was approved.
320.6	<p>To review correspondence received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An email has been received from Lewis Clarke a journalist representing North Devon Journal requesting that he receives details of agendas of our meetings. It was agreed that these would be sent.
321	<p>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
322	<p>ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was commented that the Dragon Hill road sign has disappeared – Highways to be notified. • There are problems with potholes in Putshole Lane (see Andrew Saywell report above). The main issue seems to be related to drainage. • There is concern that the tree in Langtree Park may be at risk of falling and damaging outbuildings in one of the houses that back on to the play area. Dave Steggles to be contacted to view tree condition. • There was discussion regarding the potential name of the new road leading into the development in Stibb Cross. The current suggestion by the developer is The Warren. Potential alternatives are to be suggested based on Market or Market Place due to the field that the development is in used to be called Market Field and the old market was adjacent to this site. • The sewage smell in Fore Street and also Church Lane appears to be getting worse – South West Water to be contacted. • The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.
323	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p>

	The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11 th March 2021.
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