

LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

10th MARCH 2022

Present	Councillors: Jenny Coles John Davies Peter Haselhurst (Chairman of Meeting) Pat Mitchell Franklin Tucker David Hurley (TDC) Andrew Saywell (DCC) (part time)
In attendance	Leigh Pollinger – Parish Clerk 0 members of the public
438	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies received from Geoff Bond, Mark Glover and David Ley.
439	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
439.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speedwatch. PCSO Melissa Baker has been put in touch with Gary Parsons.
439.2	Minutes of meeting held on 13 th February 2022 to be signed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved, proposed by John Davies seconded by Franklin Tucker.
440	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None were declared.
441	REPORTS
441.1	Police Community Support Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No report received.
441.2	County Councillor <u>Help for Ukraine</u> Still lots of work going on behind the scenes but ‘Team Devon’, including DCC, the District Councils and Devon Association of Local Councils have pledged to work together to support Ukrainian refugees seeking sanctuary in the UK, in particular those with relatives in Devon.

Individually, councils have also taken steps to cut Russian links, such as through contracts for energy provision. And any few remaining investments within the Devon Pension Fund, linked to Russian assets, are being sold off quickly.

Ukrainian and Polish Authorities have also asked for financial/charitable contributions rather than donations of equipment etc as they have already been inundated with offers of help.

Storm Eunice

As you all know, Storm Eunice caused severe disruption and damage, with winds reaching up to 100mph in some places. The Highways Network Operations Control Centre took almost 1,300 calls during the storm period and a team of 150 Highways Officers, contractors and more than 70 tree surgeons cleared debris including rocks, trees, and branches from minor roads. Over 400 trees were uprooted. Gritters also had to be deployed due to falling road temperatures.

There were extensive power outages across Devon, and in particular Torrington Rural. I am well aware of the issues we had locally in Langtree electricity blackouts and I raised this with the Emergency Planning Team at DCC who passed this onto Western Power Distribution, though DCC does not have the power to reprioritise WPD's restoration plans. At the peak of the storm on Friday, WPD were dealing with over 60,000 premises across Devon and Cornwall, and nearly 10,000 of those were registered as Priority Customers. I am well aware of the issues we had locally in Langtree with electricity blackouts and I raised this with the Emergency Planning Team at DCC.

DCC's Incident Management Team took the decision to proactively contact certain groupings of people known to DCC Adults and Childrens services, where they potentially would be vulnerable if left with no power. This happened, and a number of welfare issues were successfully resolved.

A386 landslide

Works are progressing well; early uncertainties over "lead times" for material supply have been resolved without causing delay, which is positive.

Based on current progress on site and thanks to the requested increased resources and weekend working, the specialist contractor's latest programme of works indicates that we should be able to take the lane closure off in the early part of the week commencing 04/04/22.

DCC Budget

When not dealing with landslides, storms and power outages, the major work this month has been setting and approving the new DCC Budget for the 2022-23 financial year. In summary, the revenue budget will

increase to £629 million, with a 10.5% increase (£29.6m) for Adult Social Care, 10.8% (£17m) for Children's Services.

Since the provisional budget was produced, it had been possible to include another £1 million on drainage and potholes and maintain £329,000 to support community groups. In addition, there would be an £8 million contribution from the NHS to help deliver adult and social care.

DCC's Council Tax precept will increase by 2.99% (the lowest since 2015).

While funding has increased for services, it has been an extremely tight budget to set. DCC is taking nearly £23 million out of reserves to help balance the budget, and according to our Chief Executive, **76% of DCC's expenditure goes on just over 3% of Devon's population**. I hope that gives you an idea of the challenges we face. There is a huge demand on our Adult and Children's Services as we now come out of the pandemic. Demographic pressures are also increasing our spend, with an ageing population and adults with disabilities, health conditions, learning difficulties, etc. living longer.

Our aim throughout as a Council and Administration is to protect the young, the old and the vulnerable. And that will remain... but I also want to see ways we can ensure we do this in the future without necessarily spending more than three quarters of our budget on just 3% of the population. That will be the big challenge in the coming years/decades...

Free School Meal Vouchers

Families of nearly 19,000 children in Devon have been sent supermarket vouchers this February half-term thanks to one-off government funding that DCC have used to continue our drive to combat holiday hunger the county.

Over the past year, DCC have invested over £4.7 million worth of government funding on providing nearly 140,000 supermarket vouchers for families who qualify for free school meals so their children don't go hungry over the school holidays. Securing additional one-off funding means the scheme is able to operate again over the upcoming February half term break and Easter holiday, with vouchers worth £15 per child per week automatically sent to families of children currently receiving free school meals to help them buy food.

Covid Update

I hope this is a promising 'sign of the times' that I have been able to leave this update until last. Key message is covid has not gone away and advice is still to stay at home if you test positive and only come out if negative on day 5 and day 6.

Covid rates in Devon have increased but hospitalisations remain low/stable.

441.3

District Councillor

Council Tax

On 21st February TDC voted to raise Council Tax by £5 for a Band D property. This equates to a rise of 2.88%. Torridge, as the Billing Authority, collects for the other precepting authorities and this will be DCC 2.99%, Devon and Cornwall PCC 4.23% Devon and Somerset Fire authority 1.99% and Town and Parish Councils an average of 5.28%. Total average for a band D property is 3.15%. As ever at this time of the year I mention that TDC only retains around 8p in the pound.

OPCC Cllr Advocate Seminar

In a couple of weeks time on 22nd March I will be attending the OPCC Cllr Advocate seminar in Bodmin. If there is anything that you would like me to mention please email me.

Beech House Shebbear Data Breach

As you are aware, there was a serious data breach last October when patient notes/files were deposited in skips outside the old Beech House surgery when it was being converted to living accommodation. In addition drugs, needles etc were also dumped in the skip. I understand that an investigation is presently taking place by persons unknown. I've asked for more information from Torridge and they reported that despite asking their contact at the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) repeatedly since January for a contact at CQC (Care Quality Commission who it seems instigated the investigation) no answer was forthcoming. I wrote to the person at the CCG asking for this information and have been informed that they will contact the CQC and ask for the best person to contact. I don't want this serious issue to be simply swept under the carpet as more time passes. As ever I'll keep pressing for answers.

Highways Parish and Town Council Newsletter

In the latest edition of this newsletter **Robert Richards - Highways and Traffic Management Group Manager** reports that "With regard to the condition of the network, I'm very pleased to inform you that this financial year will see the lowest number of reported defects across the county since our current Term Maintenance Contract with Milestone commenced in 2017. The mild winter has no doubt helped but there have been a number of other influences including the county-wide roll out of the Dragon Patchers, and the fact that we encourage inspectors to order works before they meet our policy rather than waiting for potholes to get bigger. Inspectors are also able to order larger repairs rather than just making the defect safe."

Don't forget, if you see or are unfortunate enough to encounter a pothole whilst driving, report it on DCC's Report a Problem web page. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

442	PARISH MATTERS						
442.1	<p>Any matters concerning the football field / MUGA that may impact the Parish Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have received some questions over the lease from the Parish Hall committee, these have been responded to. 						
443	PLANNING						
443.1	<p>To consider planning application ref 1/0177/2022/FUL Single Storey Extension, including the demolition of an existing single storey extension. Gortlage, Langtree, Torrington, Devon EX38 8PA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has no objections. 						
443.2	<p>To consider any planning applications received between issuing of agenda and meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other planning applications have been received. 						
444	CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCE						
444.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at end February 2022. The position at the end of February was:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="432 1133 1385 1350"> <tr> <td>Lloyds account</td> <td>£2376.73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td> <td>£4000.41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£6377.14</td> </tr> </table> <p>There were no payments or receipts during the month.</p>	Lloyds account	£2376.73	Reserve account	£4000.41	Total	£6377.14
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444.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Mitchell £695 for roof between container and Changing Room RoSPA £252 for annual inspection fees of play areas. TK Play £192 repairs to Beech Road swing. 						
444.3	<p>If information is available, to discuss election arrangements for May 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local elections will happen in May 2023 so no action at this time. 						
444.4	<p>To review correspondence received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from Torridge Planning Department regarding availability of funding linked to planning permission in Stibb Cross 						

	<p>£4132.82 towards playspace £15889.47 towards parks, sport and recreation £678.37 towards allotment provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROSPA Play Area Inspection Reports • These items were considered as a whole as they are interrelated. <p>Discussions centered on the allocation of monies between Beech Road and Langtree Park and the split between each site. It was agreed that TK Play should be asked to quote to make the repairs identified in the ROSPA report. Langtree School be approached to see if they have data of the demographics of children in Stibb Cross and Langtree so that any allocation of remaining monies is related to need.</p>
445	<p>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
446	<p>ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Saywell confirmed that he has completed the necessary forms for Langtree to have a 20mph speed limit through the village. • Photographs of the community to celebrate the Jubilee celebrations are being coordinated by the Parish Hall Committee. • The meeting closed at 8.35pm.
447	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Thursday 14th April at 7.30pm.</p>