

Haccombe-with-Combe Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall, Combeinteignhead on 1 May 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors G Humble (Chair), S Brampton, J Evans, R Hussey, H O'Regan & M Wakefield

Also present: County Cllr Dewhirst, District Cllr Radford (from item 5) and 7 members of the public

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

010524.01 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Hussey and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Humble is elected as Chair. Cllr Humble accepted the position and signed her declaration of acceptance of office.

010524.02 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Humble, seconded by Cllr O'Regan and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Pattinson is elected as Vice Chair. Being absent from the meeting, Cllr Pattinson would sign his declaration of acceptance of office at the next meeting.

010524.03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr A Cooper-Smith
- Cllr S Pattinson
- Cllr C Lockton
- Cllr H Martin
- District Cllr J Taylor
- County Councillor J Bradford

010524.04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

010524.05 OPEN FORUM

A resident made the following statement, speaking as an individual member of the community and not a representative of the Hearn Field Committee or any other organisation. The matter related to the recent application for a Premises Licence at Hearn Field:

In 45 years living in this parish, I have experienced at first hand its many changes and its development into the vibrant and lively community we enjoy today.

I am motivated by a sincere desire to help bring this uncomfortable episode to a speedy conclusion and to try to avoid any repetition of the misunderstandings and anxiety it has generated for everyone.

Recent developments have resulted in a sense of frustration on the part of all of us who want only harmony and enjoyment of the great privilege we have in living in such a beautiful place.

Mistakes have been made for which we must ALL take responsibility. Absence of timely information and good communication leaves opportunity for rumours fuelled by anxiety to run amok. This has allowed a division in our community that I know saddens us all.

We must however acknowledge that the intention behind everyone's actions and reactions is fundamentally good. There are many different agendas here, some public and some

personal, but at the core of them is the desire to protect and maintain an asset that we all value greatly.

I have no new information to share but wish to offer this as a possible way forward. There are established systems and procedures in place for the sharing of information, but these may need to be supported by the opportunity to exchange thoughts and points of view from our community either formally or informally on a regular basis. Our officers already give generously of their time and expertise, so I am volunteering to facilitate such meetings where required. We all need to feel heard, and this should go some way to preventing situations such as the one in which we unfortunately find ourselves today.

We need to unite in a determination to work together with respect for everyone's viewpoints and for the benefit of the whole community which we are so fortunate to be part of.

We are very happy to be able to report that we are about to circulate an email to our Hearn Field volunteers to ask for marshals for the Village show. There are 73 willing people on the list of volunteers. Anyone who would like to be added to the list will be made very welcome.

A resident asked the Council how it is getting on with the Environment Act 2022 and its requirement that local authorities have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Cllr Hussey advised that the recent hedge-laying at Hearn Field now includes different species of hedge to increase biodiversity. More can still be done to increase species biodiversity in the future.

A resident asked whether her item of correspondence had been circulated to all members. It was confirmed that it had and Cllr Hussey advised that he would lead a discussion on this later in the meeting and a formal written response would be made by the clerk based on that discussion.

For clarification (as there seems to have been confusion about the role and membership of The Friends of Hearn Field Group), the resident advised that the Friends of Hearn Field Group is a very fluid group which changes from time to time and also includes people who don't wish to stand up and be counted as they are worried about incriminations (such as people in the community not speaking to them if they join such a group). Clarification was sought about who can join. She advised that she is the Chair and she decides on membership through an initiation procedure.

The resident summarised the questions raised in her email which related to: possible expenditure of £1000 for a sign for Hearn Field, restricting use of the car park and whether this complies with the Open Spaces regulations, a request for contact name and telephone number for events after 9pm so if there is a problem, residents have a point of contact, that all meetings of Working Groups are minuted and those minutes are published, an approximate figure for the expenses of the Village Green, confirmation that people are not charged for entry to the field (though this can be tolerated for Bonfire Night) and donations only are requested. The Chair asked whether her or members of the Friends of Hearn Field had other ideas about how money can be raised if charges can't be levied. She advised that the donations can be requested, stalls (fee/%) etc. She very much supported events such as the planned local Tug-of-War event which has a village feel but with no entry charge.

A resident commented that the Premises Licence application has been very unsettling and it has divided the community. There was no communication about it and the support of the local community was never obtained. The Hearn Field Committee was unable to discuss this at its last meeting as the written notice from TDC had not been received. When it is received, she asked that everybody discusses the best way forward. There is a better way to achieve this through engagement. A public meeting or forum would be perfect. The community appreciates the hard work that goes in to organising these events to make it a great community. This is now an opportunity to protect the community. The Chair asked whether she was aware that when the Premises Licence notice was initially posted, she had

offered to talk to people about it. The resident advised that she was away and was not aware that this offer had been made.

010524.06 MINUTES

Members approved and authorised the Chair to sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3 April 2024 as a true and correct record of that meeting.

010524.07 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Hearn Field Committee

It was agreed that Cllrs Wakefield, Evans and Hussey would represent the Parish Council on the Hearn Field Committee with the Chair as an ex officio member.

7.2 Village Hall

This will remain as a vacancy for the time being.

7.3 Website & Social Media

It was agreed that Cllr Evans will continue to co-ordinate the website and social media with Cllr Hussey supporting. However, there are video tutorials so that ALL councillors are able to edit website content. Cllr Evans will run through this before the start of the next meeting.

7.4 Snow Warden & Sandbag Co-ordinator

Giles Cooper-Smith has now undertaken the required DCC training to carry out the role of Snow Warden.

Cllr Brampton will continue to monitor the sandbag store.

7.5 Emergency Plan

Last year, Cllr Amelia Cooper-Smith agreed to be the guardian of the Emergency Plan. It was agreed to review this at a future meeting when Cllr Cooper-Smith was present.

7.6 Climate and Environment

It was agreed that Cllr O'Regan would lead on this.

7.7 Councillor Advocate Scheme

It was agreed that Cllr Hussey would continue to represent the Parish Council on the Councillor Advocate Scheme.

7.8 Parish Paths Co-ordinator

Faye Hussey has agreed to continue as the Parish Paths Co-ordinator.

7.9 Parish Trees

Cllr Wakefield will keep a watchful eye over the trees for which the Parish Council is responsible and report any issues.

7.10 Defibrillator

Cllr Pattinson will continue to be the guardian of the defibrillator, carrying out the weekly checks and reporting to the Ambulance Service.

010524.08 HEARN FIELD

8.1 Members received the minutes of the Hearn Field Committee meeting held on 24 April. Cllr Hussey clarified that the Hearn Field Committee had not been in a position to comment on next steps in terms of the Premises Licence application as the formal notice from TDC setting out the reasons for refusal has not yet been received.

Cllr Hussey stressed that the Hearn Field is not a commercial organisation. If it was, it would be trying to maximise profit by whatever means. This is not the case. The Parish Council is made up of representatives of the community and if members don't represent their community, they are not doing their job.

Discussions continue about the expenditure of Covid recovery funds. Some items have been agreed and some are still being discussed.

Proposal: To spend around £200 on grass reinforcement mesh to protect the grass outside the Pavilion. Volunteers will lay it. This was agreed.

With regard to proposed Hearn Field signage (as raised in the Open Forum), this is still been worked on and is not therefore ready to come to this Council for approval. Some members acknowledged, however, that they thought the initial quoted cost was considered to be excessive.

Theatre groups and dates have been confirmed. Volunteers will be required and working groups will be meeting to discuss the arrangements. These will not be minuted but will be reported on at the next Parish Council meeting. TENS licences will not be applied for.

Villages in Action will be putting on a production called 'Car Share' on Sunday 9 June, 10am-3.30pm.

An event to remember Ron Vaulter is being held on Hearn Field on Sunday 19 May at 3.30pm. A plaque will also be unveiled with the words 'Some live in a community, others, like Ron, build them.' Refreshments will be provided. This will be funded out of the donation received from the Shaldon Kestrel Cycle Club in November 2022.

Proposal: To not charge Combe Tuggers to hold their social event at Hearn Field in September which is being organised to raise money for the village hall. This was agreed.

With regard to the Committee's discussion about the management of the car park (as minuted in the Hearn Field Committee minutes 24 April), Cllr Hussey confirmed that the Committee is in the process of working on this. It is very valuable to hear different perspectives from members of the public to aid future decisions on matters such as this.

8.2 Members received an email from Friends of Hearn Group and responses were agreed. *(To give context, the questions are also stated below).*

- *Refusal of the £1,000 sign expenditure that was mentioned at the Hearn Field Committee meeting. This shocked all of us last night as this promotes and highlights the existence of the field further and given the drive to hold events to cover expenditure does not make any sense! In our view this "de-ruralises" our rural community – after all why live here in this beautiful natural area if you want to change the rural environment including putting signage up everywhere and at such expense? I believe from the information I have, you would need to run again the biggest event at Hearn Field, bonfire night, to approximately cover this level of expenditure! There are already sufficient notice boards within the Parish. Regarding your comments last night, obviously (we hope) that on reflection you will not consider that more events are required just because the Woodshed takings are down.*

It was agreed at the Parish Council meeting that the issue of signage requires further discussion and consideration. Whilst it was agreed that some signage is required, the Hearn Field Committee will continue working on this to ensure that the style, wording and size is appropriate for this location.

- *If the car parking at the VG is to be pursued as discussed, full legal advice to be obtained and timely published (i.e. on PC website) regarding all governing legislation not just the Open Spaces Act 1906 but the relevant enclosure acts, etc and also bearing in mind current guidance and regulations including that covering the decisions, conduct and actions of the PC in such circumstances. As you quite rightly pointed out disabled access should be maintained at all times and in the same vein, access for prams/pushchairs and those with mobility issues (including their vehicles) should be maintained.*

This is a working issue. The Parish Council is a member of the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) and would seek advice from them first. It may also be appropriate to seek advice from Teignbridge District Council. If this is not forthcoming, the Parish Council would have to commit parish funds by obtaining legal advice from a firm of solicitors.

- *A salient comment from a member of the Hearn Field Committee was "everyone drives here" which shows a lack of understanding of the community involvement as many in the community walk to the VG – those outside of the parish are probably the main drivers?! So could you please confirm that all HF and PC members have been forwarded a copy of the premises licence application and all the objections so they can fully understand and consider all involvement and decisions moving forward as although you may appreciate all this, it is not clear to us whether all have all this information.*

All members have received details of the premises licence application and objections.

- *In pursuance of the sentiments stated at the meeting yesterday, please forward name and telephone number as soon as possible for 24/7 contact as necessary for all events going on after 9 pm at night including bookings straddling this time e.g. Reach Outdoors events, private events including weddings (but I can only find one online on 30 August) and the theatre events. Also please confirm the finish time for weddings.*

Weddings - music finishes at 10.30pm and guests should leave by 11pm (as per the Hire Agreement)

A member of the Committee is usually given the responsibility for attending a wedding event to ensure it finishes at the correct time etc. The Parish Council/Hearn Field Committee will be working on a contact system for other events, including Reach Outdoors.

- *In pursuance of Bob Hussey's stated request for us to "trust" (the committee/PC), please confirm that agendas and minutes of all meetings discussing PC issues held or instigated by the PC and HF from 1 January 2024, including working groups and "HF four" meetings/decisions have been or will be displayed on the PC website in a timely manner in line with the usual HF and PC agendas and minutes, particularly as it seemed to us that last night's meeting did not seem to contain a lot of content and there seemed to be very little contribution around the table to the issues or comments made.*

Parish Council and Hearn Field Committee meetings are minuted. Those minutes are posted on the website. Working Groups work on an informal basis having taken their instruction from the Parish Council/Hearn Field Committee. There is no requirement, therefore, to minute those meetings.

- *Please advise the approximate annual expenses for the VG and at what specific meeting(s) the financial position is reviewed to ensure sufficient monies in to cover these.*

The budget is set annually in November/December's Parish Council meetings. Expenses change each year. Looking at the expenditure for the last two years: 2022/23 - £11,000; 2023/24 - £14,000

These figures do not include clerk's time, insurance etc

It was to be noted that the public are always very welcome at meetings. However, it is important for the public to understand that the view of an individual should not be taken as the view of the Council or Hearn Field Committee until it has been discussed and ratified.

010524.09 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

County Cllr Dewhirst gave a report (copy attached).

District Cllr Radford asked two questions on behalf of District Cllr Taylor:

1. Has the Council had a reply from TDC in response to its recent complaint?
The Chair confirmed that she had received an acknowledgment that it has been passed to the legal team.
2. Is the Council going to appeal TDC's decision refusing the Premises Licence?
The Chair advised that the Parish Council has not received written notification from Licensing that it has been refused. District Cllr Radford advised that County Cllr Bradford had looked on TDC's website and could not find any information about why TDC has refused the application.

TDC has introduced Councillor contact forms so that members of the public can contact their District Councillors through an electronic contact form. The District Councillor will then log the concern on behalf of the resident. District Councillors can then track progress.

010524.10 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

No changes were proposed to the Parish Council governance documents. The Assets Register needs to be reviewed.

010524.11 POLICE REPORT

11.1 Crime Report:

The Parish of Haccombe-with-Combe is served by the Neighbourhood Police team working out of Teignmouth Police station. This area is part of the Coastal and Rural sector and has the beat code JN2F. The team is led by Inspector Sean Roper who is the Sector Inspector and Sergeant Maddy Williams is the Neighbourhood Team Leader. PC Ben Chadwick is the Neighbourhood Beat Manager who is supported by PCSO Saul Bunce.

In the period 1-30 April 2024, there were 3 recorded offences in the Haccombe-with-Combe area. (1 x burglary and 2 x criminal damage). Domestic related crimes are excluded from this report.

11.2 Councillor Advocate Scheme:

The next PACT meetings have been arranged for 30 May and 21 June at 10.30am on Hearn Field. Two breakfast dates have also been arranged.

010524.12 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

12.1 Expenditure

Members approved the following payments:

Payment type	Payee	Details	Amount
Online	Clerk	Salary (April)	£400.17
Online	Clerk	Expenses since July 2023	£98.50
Online	Lee Accounting (SW) Ltd	Internal audit of accounts	£108
Online	C Bouchard	Items purchased for Combe Show (Banner £68.27, Leaflets £60.86)	£129.13
Online	J Thadwald	Hearn Field Pavilion disabled toilet flooring	£562
Online	G Humble	Mower fuel	£50.04
Online	R Hussey	Reimbursement for marquee, gazebos and 15 tables	£3029.93
Online	Elizabeth Deane	TENS licence	£21
Online	M Wakefield	Reimbursement for toilet roll holder	£6.99
Taken from 1 st instalment of precept	DALC	Annual membership	£362.53

12.2 Income

Members noted the income from 28 March – 28 April 2024:

Received	Received from	Details	Amount
April	Lloyds	Interest	£13.04
April	TDC	First instalment of precept	£4,251.50
April	Western Power Distribution	Wayleave	£20.24
April	Woodshed Coffee	Feb/March (£160 + £50 electricity)	£210
April	Various	Hire of Hearn Field	£132

12.3 Bank Balances at 28 April 2024

Current account	Savings account	Sea Wall account	Total
£22,150.36	£12,633.70	£6,906.71	£41,690.77

(£500 has been transferred into the Sea Wall account from the current account as per the budget)

12.4 Insurance

Members received a quotation for the renewal of the insurance. It was agreed to accept the cover at a cost off £916.55.

12.5 Audit 2023/24

12.5.1 Members received and noted the year end bank reconciliation.

12.5.2 Members received and noted the internal auditor's report and agreed that this Council is confident that the internal audit arrangements provided by Lee Accounting (South West) Ltd provides excellent reassurance for the public that the financial systems are robust and fit for purpose and to continue with their appointment as the Internal Auditor to the Parish Council.

12.5.3 Members completed and approved Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2023/24) which were then signed by the Chair and Clerk/RFO.

12.5.4 Members received, approved and authorised the Chair and Clerk/RFO to sign Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2023/24)

010524.13 PLANNING

13.1 New applications/appeals/notifications

None

13.2 Decisions

13.2.1 23/01614/HOU & 23/01615/LBC – Yarner, Netherton

Reconfiguration of existing garage to form study, internal alterations to existing utility room and first floor en-suite and creation of new en-suite to upper first floor

Members noted that TDC has granted conditional consent.

13.2.2 23/01369/CLDP – 2 Holywell Cottages, Combeinteignhead
Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed boat shed

Members noted that TDC has determined that the development would not have been lawful within the meaning of Section 192 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 because the proposed boat shed does not fall within the domestic curtilage of 2 Holywell Cottages.

13.3 Enforcement updates

- Little Park
No further update.

- Land associated with 22/01635/AGR
No further update.
- Teignview Cottage
No further update.
- 1 Albert Cottages
No further update.
- 2 Holywell Cottages
The Enforcement Officer has advised that from a previous investigation it was noted that there was a temporary cabin sited on the land. However, at the time it was considered not to require planning permission as it was moveable. It was also noted that the land was being used to store vehicles and building materials but again as these appeared to be connected to the main house and not a business use it appeared no breach was occurring.

More recently the Council received a complaint about the state of the land and groundworks. As it appears the land is looking untidy and no planning permission has been granted for the area of hardstanding that is being created, the Enforcement Officer has written to the owner advising them of the planning breach and the need to tidy the land.

010524.19 HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

Residents are encouraged to report all potholes:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>

There were no new issues reported.

No further action appears to have been taken with regard to the abandoned vehicle. County Cllr Dewhirst offered to follow it up with TDC if someone was able to forward him the last correspondence.

010524.20 CORRESPONDENCE

None

010524.21 MEMBERS' ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR GENERAL DISCUSSION, FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS AND/OR ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

Members are reminded that they have not received the statutory notice of this business to be transacted and should therefore recognise that any decision made may be taken to be unlawful if challenged in the future

None

010524.22 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON SOCIAL MEDIA, PARISH MAGAZINE, NOTICE BOARDS ETC

Cllr Hussey will send some information about Ron Vaulter's memorial for inclusion on Facebook.

010524.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next Parish Council meeting would be held on 5 June 2024 at 7.30pm.

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Chair

County Councillor's Report 1st May – HWC

The leader of Devon County Council, Cllr John Hart, has announced he is leaving the post after 15 years.

John became Leader of Devon's opposition Conservative Party in 2007 and won power of the County Council in the 2009 election. He has remained Leader since then.

The Devon Conservative Group will hold a ballot to decide the County's next Leader and John will remain in post until then. He was first elected to his home ward of Wembury and Erme in 1989 and now represents Wembury and Bickleigh after boundary changes.

Mr Hart said among the highlights of his career in Devon were the major reorganisation of education in Exeter and winning a £100 million contract which saw all five secondary **schools** re-built with a big increase in exam standards along with the development of a number of new primary schools.

He led the council through the national period of austerity and headed Devon's response to the Covid pandemic when the county council was the regional lead authority for the South West. He set up Team Devon with the leaders and chief executives of all Devon's district councils and representatives of the county's town and parish councils and national parks. Team Devon came into its own during Covid when it mobilised to get help and support to the most vulnerable people as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Under John's leadership, the county council has invested some £2 billion on infrastructure including the construction of the South Devon Link Road, major improvements to the North Devon Link Road, the opening of Okehampton railway station and the introduction of daily train services to Exeter and the creation of a new railway station at Marsh Barton in Exeter. He also oversaw the county council's commitment to be net carbon zero by 2030.

Latterly he has piloted Devon's devolution deal with the Government in partnership with Torbay Council. He was also proud of his record of producing balanced budgets in every year of his leadership except one exceptional year during Covid.

Devon are planning to inject an extra £10 million into repairing the county's roads this year. The proposal is due to go before our Cabinet on Wednesday 8 May – in response to recent budget discussions for additional investment in highways, including drainage.

A better than expected settlement was received from the Government last month to help tackle our overspend on education for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Devon is now in a position to make extra money available for road repairs and drainage and will be looking to invest another £10 million into the highway maintenance budget.

The proposed additional £10 million funding will be spent across the county with £7.25 million on extensive patching repairs targeting issues identified by highways officers, County Councillors, town and parish councils and communities. It will also pay for £2 million of drainage improvements and £750,000 will be added to the ongoing road marking replacement programme.

If your community group has a project that could improve people's well-being, or reduce hardship, or provide a warm safe space to work, or learn, or socialise within you area, you can apply for a grant through the Growing Communities Fund.

Since July 2022 funding has been awarded to hundreds of local projects to help them respond to a specific local need.

This year's funding allocation will mean that since the fund was launched, we have made more than £1.1m available to help communities build self-reliance and resilience.

Groups with schemes that bring communities together, alleviate food poverty or tackle loneliness, isolation and build self-esteem, for example, are invited to apply.

This could include offering advice, peer support or guidance on budgeting, cooking low-cost nutritional meals or supporting the recruitment, training and retention of Volunteers.

Organisers of projects that have a clear and direct community benefit, such as improving the environment, or that use innovation to improve efficiency or proposals that seek to expand the reach of an existing scheme are also encouraged to apply.

There is more information at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/growing-communities-fund>

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