

NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk:
Mrs R Rice

14a The Square North Tawton
EX20 2EP
Tel 01837 880121

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council held at the **Council Offices** on **TUESDAY 4th MARCH 2014** at **7.15 pm**.

Present:

Cllr S Blood	Cllr Dr P Brickley
Cllr Mrs C Burrow	Cllr K Hodge
Cllr Mrs G Hoggins	Cllr I MacLeod
Cllr Mrs J Morgan	Cllr N Morgan (Chair)
Cllr Mrs A Ponsford	Cllr Mrs D Rice
Cllr S Whiteley	

In attendance:

Mrs J Smith – Senior Engineer, West Devon Borough Council
Mr R Davies – Highways Neighbourhood Manager, Devon County Council
Mr R Crowe-Swords – FRCM Advisor, Environment Agency
Cllr J McInnes – Councillor - Devon County Council

9 Members of the public were present.

Open Forum

Mrs Margaret Pridham addressed the Town Council regarding flooding issues. Mrs Pridham stated that Nick Payne from West Devon Borough Council was chairing a meeting in 1999/2000 and stated that North Tawton should have regular autumnal drain clearing owing to the general flooding throughout the town. Mrs Pridham said that this clearly did not happen last autumn, and now 4th March it is getting worse. Mrs Pridham said that she did pass in a letter to the Town Council on the 14th February 2014 which mentioned all the completely blocked drains that she had seen from Barton Street/High Street to the bridge.

The Mill Lane/Bridge area is, all the time, getting worse, despite having 3 fire engines in the area on the 23rd December last year.

The Bridge Cottage drain on the highway remains blocked, in the field behind our flood defence drains the hedge growth is an obstruction and needs clearing, the ditch needs clearing and the inspection pit lifting. Mrs Pridham stated that she felt the Environment Agency had not maintained our flood defence in the leat, and this was now a problem for the rear of the properties.

Mrs Pridham said that there is now a large dam of trees downstream, trees have fallen in the river from the old Rugby Field and the Dunn Brothers are going to remove them in a couple of weeks. The general river needs a tidy.

Mrs Pridham said she had telephoned Slade Farm and spoke to Mrs Ash concerning the fencing, near the field gate, which is nearly in the river by the 5th arch.

Mrs Pridham said the middle arches badly need clearing and the 1st arch debris has also accumulated.

Mrs Pridham said that having spent £40,000 on a survey around the town before our flood defence work was carried out and approximately over £1 million, why was, and is, Waterloo Cottage allowed to send its leat water out through their garden wall, via a purpose built drain, to run across the pavement, down the road to cause further problems of flooding in an already suffering area.

Mrs Pridham said it seems you like to make money on our downfall as the area is purely neglected, but she thanked the firemen.

1. **Apologies for Absence** - Apologies were received from Cllr A Gillespie.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Mrs A Ponsford declared an interest in Item 4.2 16 Taw Vale Avenue.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**
 - 3.1 The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council held at the Council Offices on Tuesday 4th February 2014, previously circulated were approved and signed, with one minor amendment (Item 4.1 - the words Cornflower Way should be amended to Cornfield Way.
 - 3.2 The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council held at the Council Offices on Tuesday 18th February 2014, previously circulated, were approved and signed.
4. **Flooding and Highway Issues**

Mrs J Smith explained her role at West Devon Borough Council and stated that a really useful meeting has recently been held with the Town Council, Environment Agency, DCC Highways and Cllr McInnes. One of the contributing factors to recent flooding was that storm water gulleys were blocked and needed cleaning. DCC clean the gulleys once a year, but she felt that this need looking at, and she understood that DCC were amending this to once every three years. North Tawton Town Council has included in their budget an amount for gully cleaning, but this need to be scheduled carefully with DCC's schedule. Mrs Smith was aware of a problem in Exeter Street, which would be looked at.

The pump in Mill Lane, if the light is on it means that there is a fault; it does not mean it is working. The Environment Agency are going to put a new sign on the pump to indicate this. The Environment Agency check this pump every week in the winter months. The Environment Agency check the watercourse on a weekly basis and checks the screens. One of the gulleys in Mill Lane is a shallow gully, which is trapped. There is a problem with the scheme in the vicinity of Waterloo Cottage, which is being investigated. Mrs Smith stated that she had secured funding for flood boards for 60 and 62 Fore Street, these properties are Listed so she is working with the Conservation Officer on this matter. There is a dropped kerb outside these properties and DCC were to investigate this next week and perhaps another gully

could be installed. CCTV of the system was being arranged by the Environment Agency which needs to be done at a time when weather conditions are right; this was being pushed forward by the Environment Agency for North Tawton. There is a problem with wash off from Letherans Lane, which was being investigated. This is a public footpath and a private access track to the fields, so this may be contentious and the responsibilities of the owners of the lane.

Mr Rhys Davies spoke about fluvial and surface water, DCC would endeavour to keep systems functional, but with the extreme weather conditions there was nowhere for the water to go. Surface water drain inspection would be ongoing.

Mr Bob Crowe-Sword explained that the flood alleviation scheme had worked well. The stream running from Devonshire Gardens down to the river is now classed as main river. The grid at Devonshire Gardens and the lagoon are checked weekly. Riparian owners have a responsibility to keep the stream clear. CCTV was last done in April 2006, but the EA were hoping to do this soon. The problem in Taw Vale was being looked at, if there is a fault with the culvert it would be the land owner's responsibility to repair as Riparian Owner. The pumping station at Mill Lane was to keep water off Mill Lane, but it cannot be checked daily, due to resources. The flap valves in the pilling behind the cottages will be inspected; if they are faulty DCC will need to repair them. The leat is classed as main river. If gardens get flooded that is not classed as flooding.

The owner of Mill Steam Cottage stated that she had been flooded indoors, with water coming up from beneath the floors.

Mr Crowe-Sword felt that communication need to be improved.

Mrs Smith agreed to investigate the flooding problem at Mill Stream Cottage and the fact that the water was coming up through the floors, and Mr Crowe-Sword agreed to investigate a guarding board.

The Town Council were going to invite Riparian Owners to attend a presentation from the Environment Agency at their Annual Town Meeting due to be held in April/May.

Members of the public then asked questions.

Mr R Knott stated that he felt that when Highways staff cleaned out the gulleys that it was not done being done properly, he asked if the gulley emptying lorry should suck out all of the silt, as this was not being done.

Cllr McInnes stated that although DCC had stated that the gulleys would only be emptied once a year, this would be flexible. He was pleased that the Town Council had budgeted for supplementary emptying of the gulleys, this was a positive thing, the authorities working together, but it needed to be a co-ordinated approach. The Clerk was requested to contact Cllr McInnes if she was unable to get a response from DCC.

Cllr McInnes was also pleased that the Town Council had secured TAP funding for street sweeping and felt that this would help with the current problems of the drains getting blocked.

Mr Davies stated that DCC's responsibility was to drain the highway for highway users.

Mrs Smith stated that she would collate all the information and forward to the Town Council.

The Chairman thanked Mrs J Smith, Mr R Davies, Mr R Crowe-Swords and Cllr J McInnes for attending. The Chairman also thanked Mrs Pridham and other members of the public for attending.

Mrs J Smith, Mr R Davies, Mr R Crowe-Swords and Cllr J McInnes left the meeting.

4. PLANNING MATTERS

To consider the planning applications received from West Devon Borough Council and to make recommendations.

4.1 00164/2014

Retrospective application for demolition of boundary wall and fence in preparation for replacement with rendered wall

22 Fore Street, North Tawton, EX20 2DT

After some discussion it was resolved to object to the application for the following reasons:

The development is within the Conservation Area and within the Important Open Space area.

4.2 00177/2014

Householder application for conversion of garage to bedroom

16 Taw Vale Avenue, North Tawton, EX20 2AZ

After some discussion it was resolved to support the application.

To note decision of West Devon Borough Council

4.3 00956/2013

Land adjacent to 1 Park House, Fernleigh Close, North Tawton

Erection of single dwelling

Conditional consent 04/02/14

Noted.

5. FINANCE

5.1 Invoices. Members inspected the invoices and bank statements and appropriate payments were made in accordance with bank mandate.

5.2 Monthly statement – Members received the monthly statement and agreed to make the appropriate transfer from the reserve account to the current account to allow payments to be made.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee asked Members if they considered that there was anything that needed consideration for financing.

It was suggested:

- a water fountain for the park;
- more defibrillators in other areas of the town;
- CCTV for the park as the bid for grant aid from the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner was unsuccessful;
- charging for use of the public conveniences so that they could be open 24 hours per day.

6. Questions/Comments from members of the public

The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to comment/ask a question on any **agenda item only**.

Mr R Knott commented the cutting back of trees/shrubs behind the bus shelter. The workmen cut back the growth and then used a blower to blow the cuttings behind the bus shelter and underneath the seat. The Clerk stated that she would contact Golden Leaf Landscapes regarding this.

A question was asked about the trees on the grass verge beside the roundabout in Moor View. The Clerk stated that she had reported the matter to Devon County Council.

The meeting was opened again.

7. Any other business

Cllr Whiteley stated that he felt that CPRE should be invited to attend a meeting to express their views on solar farms.

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by Devon County Council stating that from April another library van would be used which is 1.5m longer than the current library van. Devon County Council were requesting suggestions from the Town Council where it could park, as the current position that the van uses in front of the Town Council office was not large enough because of the access to the Car Park and access to the property known as Bramley, 14c The Square. The Chairman asked members to contact the Clerk if they had any suggestions.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Council shall be **Tuesday 18th March 2014**.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.