

CLERKS REPORT. 31.10.2023

1. **GRANT FUNDING.** Council has made two successful grant applications so far in this financial year: one to the Devon Communities Resilience Fund for £1,340.91 for flood resilience equipment and signage, and one to the DCC's Growing Communities fund for £1,000 for food bank work. Feedback given to the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust for the £2,500 grant awarded for food bank / community support work in February 2023 includes the following points:
 - i. The funding from the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust enabled us to divert funds originally allocated for utilities and volunteer mileage to buying more food, so the grant indirectly put food on the table for more households giving them 3 meals a week and helping with lunches for school age children during the school holidays.
 - ii. We have noticed an increase in facing fuel poverty and that those living in rural areas are finding it increasingly difficult to keep a vehicle on the road (a vehicle in rural Devon is a necessity, not a luxury). They are asking us for more food so they can realign their priorities within their household budgets.
 - iii. We have also noticed a continuing decline in mental health and resilience, a trend we originally hoped would reverse post-covid.
2. **COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT.** It has been reported that the management of the Pinbrook Country Park is not in accordance with the management plan. The council is well-placed to bring pressure on those with responsibility for the maintenance contract, and at the September 2023 meeting, Council resolved that was its agreed position. An audit was conducted earlier this autumn; the parish council has not been made aware of its findings.
Action: Could Cllr Fernley / Coton obtain an update on the survey?
3. **WESTCLYST ALLOTMENTS.**
 - i. **Badgers:** An issue with badger ingress was noted, with wildlife cameras capturing images of activity in the top right-hand corner of the site. At the time of writing this report, the cameras have been moved along the top fence to see if there are additional points of entry. This has delayed handover of plots. It is hoped to be allocating the lower two rows of plots (8 in total) shortly, while ways forward are determined by badger activity along the top plots. The landowner and management company are aware, as is EDDC planning.
Update Nov 23: with badger presence confirmed, the most sensible, easiest, and cheapest option is to place a second badger-proof fence along the inside of the top fence line to prevent access into the allotments. This will result in a slight decrease in plot size of the top block of plots.
Recommendation: to approve the spend from the Allotments EMR for this fencing work.
 - ii. **Tenancy agreements:** this has been with Council's solicitors and we have also taken advice from the National Allotments Society. Preparation of the tenancy has been complicated by the fact the parish council has neither ownership nor lease of the site, yet will be operating the site and will be the authority permitting allotmenters to take possession of their plots. It has taken longer than anticipated to get the tenancy right;

however, we felt it was necessary to make sure the tenancy was legally watertight. The tenancy is presented to council later in tonight's agenda for adoption.

Recommendation: to approve the draft tenancy for Westclyst Allotments.

4. **WESTCLYST PUFFIN CROSSING.** A new pedestrian crossing is to be installed this autumn, providing a safe crossing point between the Poltimore gate bus stops. The crossing has been funded as part of the Moonhill Rise development and was a mitigation that the parish council fought for through the planning process.

Update Nov 23: Residents of Poltimore Way have raised concerns about potential negative impact on visibility at the junction if lights are installed at their proposed location. Installation has been postponed while residents' concerns are evaluated by DCC highways engineers. County Division Members and the parish clerk will attend a site meeting later this month.

5. **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.** Council received a Devon Communities Resilience Fund for £1,340.91 for flood resilience equipment and signage, which was almost immediately put to use in the floods at the end of October/early November (Storms Babet and Ciarán). Council staff spent a good part of the days ahead of the storm preparing for whatever may come: fuel for vehicles, chainsaws, and generators; all tools / equipment checked, fuelled up and ready to use; signage ready in prime locations; drains in low-lying areas cleared; farmers warned to get stock off low ground; PPE/wet-weather gear and changes of clothing hung up, etc. Members of public in key areas have, as always, been a fantastic help in communicating issues as they arise and keeping us informed of what may be needed in terms of signage, actions, etc., and feedback from the general public has been positive and appreciative.

6. **WISHFORD RAISED WALKWAY.** The works to replace the raised walkway, originally scheduled to take place earlier this summer, have commenced and the new material looks to be much better than the previous wooden planks.

Rain did stop play during the storms!
The damaged fencing on the opposite side will be replaced once the walkway is finished, using the same traffic management provision.



7. **HIGHFIELD TO KERSWELL HEDGE CUTTING.** There were complaints from residents about the narrow stretch of dual-use path between Withy bridge and Kerswell. Issues include:

- Frequency: our records (supported by photographs from those who walk/cycle the path regularly) indicate there have only been 2 cuts to date this season, whereas we should have just had the 6th cut according to the schedule.

- Height of cut: the tractor has only been making one pass. This results in brambles and foliage that is rooted further up the hedge hanging down at head height of cyclists/walkers. This is especially a problem after it rains.
- Depth of cut: I asked the contractor to scalp it back really hard, but it could have gone a lot tighter. Henry Gent ended up arranging for a local farmer to come through and give it a full height scalping after idverde had finished, which wasn't ideal or cost-effective.

Nov 23 update: Further to the issues report above, we met with the contractor in October and this is a summary of matters discussed:

- Contractor to send over a breakdown of dates that the tractor came through so we can then re-calculate what is owed for the year.
- Contractor has a copy of issues raised by the Environment Group, many of whom regularly use the cycle path for commuter and leisure cycling. Contractor informed that the Env Group are helping with monitoring the dates of the cuts.
- We identified that there may be a discrepancy between the minimum width of cut required by DCC Highways and the full width and height 'scalping' required by Broadclyst Parish Council. We noted that the tractor drivers might not always recognise which contract they are fulfilling and therefore which specification to cut to.

8. PREFERRED SUPPLIERS UPDATE

To approve the following preferred suppliers:

Supplier	Product	Justification
Gary Lodge (GLT Recovery)	Recovery services	Local, available, competitive price.
Isca Pest Control	Wasps/hornet removal	Specialist, local, prompt service.
Start Traffic	Traffic management products (ie signage, cones, lights)	Competitive price, approved suppliers recommended through grant award, stock availability, prompt service.
Exeter Tarpaulin Services Ltd	Tarpaulins	Local, competitive price, specialist service
swComms	Fibre broadband (office)	Only supplier of fibre to premises.
Maxwell Amenity – update name to Agrovista	Lawn and pitch seeds	Company takeover.
One Life Training	Stat training (HS at Work; EFAW)	Used previously, excellent service, local.
Hydrologic	Telemetry services	Supplier through Pathfinder grant; specialist service.

9. TITHEBARN DOG WASTE BINS

Currently serviced by Cavanna, there is an ongoing issue with dog bins not being serviced in the swale adjacent to Old Tithebarn lane. We are repeatedly being contacted by residents to report that the bins are overflowing; we email Cavanna which in turn promises to chase up its contractor. There is no recommendation, per se, just to note this issue and that the parish council is doing what it can to encourage the developer to deliver on its obligations.

10. ASSET MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

The asset management software that sits within the council's Rialtas finance software suite has been purchased and installed. It will take time to populate, as each asset needs coding and entering individually, along with its purchase details and insurance value.

We need to give some thought around how to set it up (asset codes) and how bulk assets will be recorded (as an example, are 50 chairs recorded as 1 x 50 chairs, or will 50 x 1 chair be entered. If a chair is broken, it is easy to delete 1 x chair from the register, otherwise you need to delete 1 x 50 chairs and re-enter 1 x 49 chairs).

11. FOOD BANK BULK PURCHASING

While we have a reasonable amount of fresh produce and end-of-day bakery items regularly donated by Tesco and Co-Op, ambient food is currently purchased for the food bank in two different ways: via FoodShare and as needed from Tesco weekly as a retail customer. The FoodShare delivery is bought by weight and can contain some random foodstuffs which are of limited value for our clients (e.g., sushi seaweed papers) or have gone past its useability. Our Tesco purchasing is much more tailored to household needs, and includes cereal, tins, packed lunch items, and basic cupboard staples from which households can make a meal.

The issues with buying from Tesco are two-fold: firstly (and somewhat selfishly) it means I have to go every week, but secondly sometimes stock availability for bulk purchasing is a challenge. Tesco itself does not offer a wholesale option, but we used to bulk-buy from Bookers. That has now closed, so Makro is the other option, but they don't seem to stock the cheaper brands and it is not best value for money to buy (for example) Heinz beans at over £1 a tin whereas the Tesco cheapest price is 28p/tin.

Morrisons offer a bulk wholesale service, with a minimum order of 40 outers. Some items are not quite as cheap as Tesco retail prices; however by the time you add in stock availability, volunteer mileage, and the time factor, a bulk monthly order is an attractive way of purchasing.

There are Ts&Cs, a new customer form, and site assessment questionnaire to complete. First order will be approx. 6-8 weeks after applying.

Recommendation: to trial using Morrisons wholesale service

12. PLANNING UPDATE

Re: 23/1537/MOUT, Elbury View. Up to 16 dwellings. All matters reserved except for access. New information has arisen following a site visit as a result of an email received from the neighbouring property regarding mention of a pavement on the site side of the road that would extend towards Dog

Village. Issues including those relating to a proposed pavement, trees, and hedgerows were noted on the site visit and reported to council in more depth in the September clerk's report:

Update Nov 23: Council has received the following feedback to its comments on the outline consultation:

- i. To be sure that there are no items of archaeological significance, the applicant has arranged for trenching to be carried out on the site. This will take place on 6th and 7th November.
- ii. Following issues raised about the tree root protection area (RPA) and shading issues from the tree canopy, EDDC's arboriculture officers and the applicant's arboriculture consultants are now talking to each other. Off the back of this, the layout may need to be amended, potentially even resulting in a reduction of the total number of dwellings to ensure the RPA is not compromised and other arbo-related matters we raised are resolved.
- iii. Council highlighted a discrepancy between the Design and Access (D&A) Statement and the Highways Access Plan, specifically in relation to a pavement running alongside the development on its side or the Whimble Road. There was also the matter of the indicative pavement using 3rd party privately owned land. Burrington Estates have investigated following our notes and have confirmed that the Highways Access Plan, which does not show a new pavement, is the Plan that will be taken forward for approval, and they will update the D&A Statement to reflect this inconsistency.

13. EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION UPDATE

i. Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan update.

Please find attached (in meeting docs pack) an autumn update from the Planning Policy team on progress with the emerging new Local Plan and related matters of relevance to neighbourhood planning.

Importantly, this includes an invitation for all town and parish councils to take part in a survey of neighbourhood planning activity and intentions. EDDC is keen to hear from as many town and parish councils as possible, irrespective of whether there is any prior neighbourhood planning experience or any intention to undertake neighbourhood planning in the future. The results will help inform the continued preparation of the new Local Plan (including the options for how EDDC approaches housing requirement for Designated Neighbourhood Areas). It will also help to plan and tailor the support it offers for neighbourhood planning in the district.

The survey is open for approximately 6 weeks to allow town/parish councils to discuss it at formal Council meetings, should they wish to do so. The closing date for responses is Friday 8th December. A pdf of the questions is included in the meeting docs pack.

EDDC says: We will be sharing the results with you and plan to hold a webinar early in the new year to feedback and discuss the findings, as well as to update again on the new Local Plan and other opportunities to engage its preparation.

ii. EDDC Council Plan workshops.

I attended the first stakeholders session, during which we worked in small groups to consider the challenges facing East Devon (as a geographical area) and EDDC (as a council), and then list what we felt were the priorities arising from those challenges. Stakeholders repeatedly felt the lack of infrastructure delivery that matched the pace of development was a top challenge and priority, along with public transport, rural poverty, climate emergency, cost of living crisis, funding cuts, human resource cuts, other highways matters, flooding, healthcare, recycling, and education. The engagement session was repeated with two further groups of people.

They now need to filter out what is their responsibility and what lies with County / other agencies, and from that will draw up a draft Council Plan which we will look at on 20th November and give feedback as to whether we feel they have got the right balance on their priorities.

This concludes my report.

Angie Hurren BEM
BA(Hons): Community Governance
Fellow SLCC
Broadclyst Parish Council Clerk & RFO.
31.10.2023