

Blisland Parish Council



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MINUTES FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17th AUGUST 2023

Present: Cllr. Meads (Chair), Cllr. Dickin (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Green, Cllr. Shephard, Cllr. Stansfield, Cllr. Lowden, Cllr Teasdale, and Cllr Trevarthern.

23-08/1 Apologies: Cllr Spencer, Cllr J. Cruse (Cornwall Council).

Also Present: Locum Clerk: Carolyn May, 4 Members of the Public.

23-08/2 Declarations of Interest: No declarations of interest, or gifts, were made.

The meeting commenced at 7 pm. Cllr. Meads (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting.

AGENDA

23-08/3 Public Forum

Speed Limits - Claire Shannon addressed the meeting in relation to the issue of speeding traffic in the parish. Ms Shannon suggested that there was currently an opportunity for the Parish Council to look at the speed limits within the Parish and, consider extending the 30 mph limit out further from the current positions.

Ms Shannon suggested that more could be done to assist the increasing number of visiting motorists to understand the local road conditions in the area; inform motorists about what they can anticipate in terms of other road users in the area and their obligations in relation to the new Highway Code.

Ms Shannon suggested that these aims could be achieved through the implementation of more 30 mph limits, rather than the current 60 mph limits in situ around the village.

The volume and type of traffic in the village have both changed. Therefore, there is a greater number of people using the roads, who are not familiar with the area. There is also a more diverse group of road users (walkers/ cyclists/ horse riders). The only safe environment for walkers etc, particularly where there is no footpath, is a 30-mph limit.

Cllr Meads thanked Ms Shannon for bringing the matter to the attention of the Parish Council and stated that Item 11(c) on the agenda would address the issue of speeding in the village.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Meads, **seconded** by Cllr Stansfield and **RESOLVED** that Agenda Item 11 would be discussed following the public session. Unanimous.
Carried.

Planning Matter – Mr Lawrence Cunningham addressed the Parish Council in relation to his recent planning application for a conservatory – to which the Parish Council had raised an objection on the grounds of light emissions and the perceived impact of the same on the designated Dark Skies area.

Mr Cunningham provided the Members with a detailed specification, in relation to the properties of the glass to be used on the roof of the structure. He added that the structure would have no heating installed into the same and that there was no intention to fit any source of artificial light source within the structure, although a light point was included in the Anglian Windows plan, and that the point may be used in future to locate a fan. One Member stated that whilst it was not Mr Cunningham's intention to install lighting into the conservatory, there was a possibility that a future occupier of the property would elect to do this.

It was stated that the conservatory would only be used during daylight hours when it would be heated by the sun. During the hours of darkness, the structure would cool down. There would be no overspill of light from the structure during the hours of darkness. Mr Cunningham submitted that, considering the points raised by him, the plan submitted was in the spirit of the dark skies policy and asked the Parish Council to reconsider its decision in respect of the application.

Cllr Meads thanked Mr Cunningham for his address and explained the Planning Process. It was highlighted that the Parish Council is not a planning authority, merely a consultee of Cornwall Council (the relevant Planning Authority).

It was explained that the Parish Council was unable to alter its view on the matter as the decision had been democratic and made in accordance with the rules governing the operation of Parish Councils. Cllr Meads suggested that Mr Cunningham should forward his comments to Cornwall Council Planning Department for their consideration. Cllr Stansfield undertook to advise Mr Cunningham of the details which would enable this to be done.

Grit Bins - Mrs Sharon Loveridge addressed the Parish Council in relation to the possible installation of a grit bin at Tregenna. Mrs Loveridge explained that in icy conditions the area is dangerous for residents.

Cllr Meads asked Mrs Loveridge to leave the matter with the Parish Council, which would consider the request when the installation of additional grit bins is being considered in the future.

Speeding Vehicles in the Parish - Cllr Meads reminded Members that Cllr Stansfield had located information relating to Traffic Management and Speed Limits. Members had been asked to read parts of the information provided in preparation for the meeting.

Cllr Meads advised the meeting that she had attempted to assess the traffic management points against the criteria for different speed limits.

Cllr Shephard stated that vehicles travelling at 60mph, on some roads within the parish, cannot be described as 'speeding', as the current designated speed limit is 60 mph. However, the Councillor conceded that there was indeed a problem with speed, stating that it was ridiculous that motorists could leave the A30, and be permitted to drive at 60mph between the A30 and the village.

Having considered the documentation, Cllr Shephard suggested that there was a case for the Parish Council to request that the whole road to be subject to a lower speed limit. Personally, Cllr Shepherd would suggest that a 40mph limit between the A30 and the crossroads would be appropriate, with the speed limit being reduced to 30mph from that point onward.

Cllr Meads provided a comprehensive breakdown of speed and road conditions, as measured against the Traffic Management Criteria (attached at 'A'). Cllr Meads suggested that several of the points raised under 123/124/125 and 126 provide the Parish Council with cogent reasons for reducing speed limits.

Cllr Green suggested that there was an argument for reducing the speed limit, on either side of the school, to 20 mph (this is currently 30 mph).

Cllr Meads advised the meeting (under criterion 131), that the 30mph sign, coming into the village from Trewint, is placed next to the shop (at the very start of the village), however, some other signs are 'not as tight' around the village. It was noted that the signs erected on roads, which are not as busy as Trewint Road, are sited further out of the village, therefore there is advanced notice of the need to slow down.

Cllr Green suggested that all the 30 mph signs should be further from the village.

Cllr Stansfield advised the meeting that all 30 mph limits are to be reduced to 20 mph. Cornwall Council has started to roll the programme out but there is no indication of when Blisland will witness the change. He added that, to effect a change in the speed limit, as suggested during the extant discussion, it will be necessary to obtain the support of Cornwall Council (via Mr Oliver Jones).

Cllr Stansfield highlighted that speed limits represent only one part of the measure to control speed. Others include signage, road markings and activated sensors. Activated sensors, grant funded by a Cornwall Council affiliate (Vision Zero South West). The cost of the units amounted to £4,400. Unfortunately, there is no grant funding available at present.

It was pointed out that, until a lower speed limit is set, there would be no point in installing activated sensors. Therefore, the first task is to have the speed limit lowered.

Cllr Stansfield highlighted the following issues with the activated sensors:

- The units are moved around several predetermined locations every six weeks.
- The system does not record the registration number of speeding vehicles (due to data protection issues).

However, a record of the number of vehicles which have passed the unit, during each 12-hour period, being driven at a speed in excess of the speed limit is provided. If the evidence shows that there is a high number of speeding vehicles in an area, the police will attend with a speed camera.

Ms Shannon was permitted to address the Members further on the matter. She explained that one of her interests was psychology and human motivation. Whilst Ms Shannon agreed that enforcement of the speed limit was important, it was the message that would be provided in relation to the road conditions that motorists may encounter that are likely to change their driving habits.

In closing the discussion, Cllr Meads stressed the need for the Parish Council to be seen to attempt to address the problems surrounding the current speed limit in the parish. Cllr Lowden stated that there was a need to increase the number of speed signs on the approaches to the village, and to extend the 30mph limit to further from the village. Cllr Dickin reiterated the need for a reduced speed limit from the A30, to the village, and an extension of the 30mph boundary. The question is however, how can the Parish Council make this happen?

The Clerk advised the Chair that the first action should be to approach the local County Councillor, Cllr Stansfield felt that an approach should be made to Mr Oliver Jones (CC Highways Department). Cllr Stansfield did caution the Members that Mr Jones would very likely allude to the costs involved in reducing the speed limit (signage road/ markings/ admin costs etc).

The Clerk suggested that the Parish Council could submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), through the new CAP group for the area. She undertook to provide copies of EOI's to Cllr Stansfield.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Teasdale, **seconded** by Cllr Green, and **RESOLVED** that a letter would be written to Mr Oliver Jones, in which he would be invited to meet with Members, to discuss the evidenced based issues, which will be highlighted in the said document, and support the request for a reduction on the speed limit in the areas discussed. Unanimous. **Carried.**

It was agreed that the Highways and Footpaths Report would be concluded at this juncture.

Grit for the Bins – Cllr Stansfield advised the meeting that the grit bins would be filled by the first week in November 2023. Cllr Stansfield stated that the new Highway Steward (Nina Worth) would be meeting him, in relation to the flooding

situation at the entrance to Trewardale. He will raise the issue of the filling of the grit bins at that meeting.

Cllr Dickin proposed that the provision of further grit boxes should be listed as an agenda item for the October Parish Council meeting.

Road Markers – the markers at the Village Green have been completed. A list of the outstanding markers is to be compiled and will be discussed with the new Highways Steward when a meeting can be arranged.

Trewardale – The flooding situation is perceived to have arisen from:

- the state of the culvert opposite the entrance to Trewardale. During the 1970's – 1990's, this was cleaned regularly. However, it is now overgrown.
- The water run-off in both directions significantly floods the entrance to Trewardale. The entrance and the railings are Grade II Listed. The force of the run-off has been so forceful that it has pushed over one of the granite blocks, thereby damaging the structure. The first step is to invite the Highways Steward to attend at the site to view the same.
- In 2022, a Highways report was compiled in relation to the issue. It was suggested, to Cllr Cruse (CC), that works would be carried out to the property in March 2023, this did not happen. However, Cllr Stansfield has no knowledge of the work that was to be carried out under the Order emanating from the report.

The Order has now been removed from the Highway Schedule.

Cllr Stansfield stated that the work to be carried out at the site lies in the remit of the Highways Steward, and Mr Oliver Jones.

Footpaths - Cllr Green reported that she had received an email from Cllr. Fairman, in which he alluded to the path below Penquite to DeLank Quarry having been cut in previous years.

Investigation of the matter highlighted that this is a 'Silver Path' and should, therefore, have been on the cutting schedule.

However, due to injury, the contractor for the LMP contract is unable to complete the cuts for this year. Therefore, the PC will be required to find a different contractor to undertake the second and third cuts for the year.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Lowden, **seconded** by Cllr. Meads and **RESOLVED** that Lanhydrock Gardening should be asked to undertake the work, which should total approximately ten hours. Unanimous. **Carried.**

23-08/4 Approval of Minutes and Updates

23-08/4(1) Ordinary Parish Meeting - Members considered the Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Meeting of Blisland Parish Council, held on the 20th of July **2023**.

Page 5 – Cllr Stansfield advised that the body referred to should have been Historic England, not the Environment Agency.

Also, the ‘Harm to Whitley Barn’ – Cllr Stansfield stated that he had not explained the situation well. The Cllr referred to the statement that the ‘Enforcement Officer would confirm that the Law Officer agreed that there had been a procedural failure’.

In fact, everyone accepts that there has been a procedural failure. However, the Enforcement Officer will not identify the person responsible for the procedural failure. At a meeting, Cllr Stansfield (on behalf of the PC) had requested that the Enforcement Officer establish that the Law Officer had agreed that the procedural failure under the Planning Acts was sufficient for no action to be taken.

The concerns raised by the PC, relate to work carried out within the ANOB. At the site under discussion, cheap, lime stained, unrendered blocks were laid, when (in fact) the Cornish Hedge should have been rebuilt (in accordance with the conditions originally set out by the Planning Officer).

The Planning Officer subsequently issued a letter of waiver in relation to one of the said Planning Conditions (the waiver related to the trees). However, the way in which the waiver was written amounted to a discharge of all the conditions.

Cllr Stansfield wished for the Law Officer to confirm that the said letter was sufficient to permit the blocks to be laid. However, the Law Officer is not going to comply with that request.

However, the Enforcement Officer did **agree** to approach the owners of the property to ask if they would be prepared to undertake any voluntary steps, particularly in relation to the use of Breeze Blocks, which form part of the means of enclosure. The Enforcement Officer is to provide the PC with any update in relation to how the negotiations are proceeding. However, the PC were advised that, should the owners refuse to work with the Planning Department, little can be done from a Planning Enforcement perspective (Cllr. Meads read out the Enforcement Officer’s letter to the PC).

Cllr Stansfield stated that the Minute, as set out, required amendment, to include the explanation given. The Clerk advised that Minutes could not be added to, where the comments had not been articulated at the material time. However, the explanation would be recorded in the current meeting minutes.

Page 6. Planning Officer Attendance - This matter has been followed up by Cllr Cruse, the Parish Council now needs to identify possible dates for the meeting.

Page 8 – Retention of BT Telephone Box – the Clerk is still awaiting a response to the request relating to painting the Telephone Box and green cabinets.

Trees for Pentor – The Chair advised the meeting that she had perused the documents relating to the ‘Community Tree Planting’ initiative. The scheme is not

open to local authorities. The 'Landscape Recovery Scheme', this is a long-term scheme, which is mainly for farming and land which had been put aside. The only viable fund for the PC is the 'Urban Tree Challenge Fund' which requires further investigation into. Cllr. Cruse has offered to donate £100.00 towards trees for the area.

Cllr Lowden enquired about the ten trees that were offered to the PC previously. This had been discussed during a PC meeting. The Chair asked if Cllr Lowden could find the appropriate minutes, appertaining to the discussion.

Page 9 – Hedge Planting – it was noted that this matter should have been listed for discussion at the extant meeting. Cllr Lowden advised the Members that Mr James Hill had been approached to undertake the work. Mr Hill will submit an estimate in relation to the same. Cllr Meads advised that the 'Urban Grant Scheme' provides for bore holes to be dug to determine if there are services below the ground to be planted on.

Institute - The Chair suggested that the Institute booking system and income should be placed on the October agenda.

Page 10 – First Aid Course – Cllr Lowden reported that all attendees had passed the course, with each being awarded a certificate.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Stansfield, **seconded** by Cllr. Teasdale, and **RESOLVED** that, with the Minutes of the meeting held on the 20th of July 2023 would be accepted as an accurate reflection of the business conducted at the same. Unanimous. **Carried.**

The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

23-08/6 **Cornwall Councillors Report** – Noted

23-08/7 **Planning Applications and Pre-Applications**

PA23/05968 – Poundsconce, Blisland, Bodmin PL30 4HJ

Proposal: Submission of details to discharge Conditions 3 (bat box) and 4 (light), in respect of Decision Notice PA23/02723, dated 20.06.2023

It was **agreed** that this matter would be **noted**.

23-08/8 **Planning Decisions – noted.**

Cllr Stansfield advised the meeting that the Lower Hawks Tor Farm Application would be determined on 18th August 2023, using Delegated Powers. Cornwall Council Planners do not intend to insist on Rag Slate being used on the outshot.

23-08/9 **Neighbourhood Development Plan** - nothing to report.

23-08/9a **Finance**

Members considered the Schedule of Payments provided. An additional payment of £360.00 added.

The Clerk advised the Members that she had recently received the latest bank statement. She had noted a 'group payment' listed on the same, which she could not identify. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would raise this matter with the bank.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Stansfield, **seconded** by Cllr. Dickin and **RESOLVED** that the payment schedule, with an additional payment of £360, would be approved.
Unanimous. **Carried.**

23-08/10 Clerk's Rep and Correspondence

The Clerk reported that Cllr Dickin had now been added to the list of signatories for the Parish Council Bank Account. Cllr Spencer is to attend at Lloyds Bank to submit his request to be added.

The Clerk is still waiting to be issued with a chequebook and card machine/ pin number for the account.

23-08/11 Highways and Footpaths – addressed at 23-08/3 (ibid)

23-08/12 Environment

a. **Dark Skies Signage** - Cllr Meads had spoken to Cllr Cruse about this matter. Cllr Meads was provided with the contact details of the Cornwall Council Officer who is responsible for setting all the 'Dark Skies' meetings. Cllr Meads is to be advised of the date of the next (September) meeting, which she hopes to attend. Cllr Meads understands that designers are still working on the new signage.

b. **Trees for Pentor** - addressed at 23-08/4(1) (ibid)

c. **Hedge Planting – on-going matter.**

23-08/13 Duchy Defibrillators – Cllr Stansfield advised the meeting that the government scheme for defibrillator funding will open again in October 2023. He will complete and return the necessary documentation when able to do so.

Cllr Stansfield stated that he had attended at the office of National Power (Bodmin). The company declined to provide the Parish Council with a copy of the quotation which had been issued to Duchy Defibrillators. However, National Power will provide a new quotation to the Parish Council. This is required for submission with the grant application (ibid).

23-08/14 Institute – deferred to the October 2023 agenda.

23-08/16 Village Green

a. **Work on Benches** - the benches will be removed at the end of the summer, for refurbishment. The Clerk ascertained that the sum quoted for the work was exclusive of VAT (which the Parish Council can recover).

- b. **Abandoned Vehicle** – The Clerk has reported the vehicle to Cornwall Council. Apparently, the vehicle belongs to village residents, who are currently attempting to repair the same, prior to it under-going an MOT examination. However, Members acknowledged that the vehicle is currently illegal and should not be parked on the public highway. The way the vehicle was left (jacked up, without wheels) was a cause for concern.

It was acknowledged that the Parish Council, for its own protection, was obliged to report the presence of the vehicle. The lack of an appropriate, private, area upon which repairs could be safely effected, did not negate the illegality of the vehicle, nor the potential danger which it poses to the public.

23-08/16 **First Aid Training** - addressed at 23-08/4(1) (ibid).

23-08/17 **Communications**

Notice Board - Deferred to October 2023 agenda.

Mailing List Update – Cllr Stansfield reported that there are now 155 people on the mailing list, and 158 households (less the duplicates (8)).

23-08/18 **Training & Meetings Attended** – none.

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was **proposed** by Cllr Trevarthen, **seconded** by Cllr Lowden, and RESOLVED that the public meeting would be closed and that the Parish Council would enter into confidential discussions. Unanimous. **Carried.**

CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS

The Members engaged in discussions relating to the appointment of a new Parish Clerk.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Dickin, **seconded** by Cllr Meads that the recruitment process would commence, utilising the usual channels. The opportunity is to be advertised using Facebook, CALC and local press. Closing date 29th September, interviews in October. Unanimous. **Carried.**

The meeting closed at 20:40 hrs.