

MINUTES OF YEALMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 10th 2023 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Craddock (Chair)	*	Cllr Durman	*
Cllr Endicott	*	Cllr Hopkins	@
Cllr Thomas	*	Cllr Tucker	*
Cllr Baldry	@	Cllr Barton	*
Cllr Mckay	*	Cllr Guy-Fierens	@

* Denotes attendance

@ Denotes absence

Also attending:

Members of the public: 1

1. APOLOGIES: Cllrs Hopkins, Guy-Fierens & Baldry.

2. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Thomas reported:

Devolution deal for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay moves a step closer

The new deal that will transfer money and powers into the hands of local Leaders across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay has moved a step closer with the backing of the Government's Levelling Up Minister.

Outline approval has been given for a Devon-wide devolution deal which could bring greater local control and allow partners to tap into additional resources to help tackle key local priorities, such as affordable housing, better public transport and connectivity and providing for the skills that the local economy needs.

In short, Cllr Thomas summarised the deal as giving power into local hands, greater local control and better resources. It would also hopefully create a better environment for councils to work together.

The deal wouldn't require a change to the established democratic structures across the area, or the need for an elected Mayor. Instead, new powers would be devolved to a partnership of existing local councils who would deliver on a joint programme working alongside a wide range of other local stakeholders. Local partners across Devon have now been invited to work together to prepare a final business case to be presented to Government, for approval later in the year.

Any final deal would require local consent with the full agreement of all the constituent councils as well as Parliamentary approval.

Every penny of the extra £9.4m announced in the Chancellor's budget will be spent making our roads more resilient

Every penny of the extra £9.4 million for Devon, announced in the Chancellor's budget recently, will be spent on improving our roads and making them more resilient. Most of it will go towards the Local Area Capital Programmes, which will reflect local priorities identified through our elected members and Neighbourhood Highway Officers.

Using inspections and survey data, the remaining funding will be directed to preventative works to stop potholes forming in the first place. Prolonged spells of very wet weather and freezing road temperatures this winter have been hugely detrimental to the condition of our 8,000 mile road network.

To tackle it, over the past few months, Cllr Thomas advised we doubled the number of pothole teams, introduced weekend working and extended working hours across the network. That resulted in up to 2,200 potholes being repaired each week.

In response Cllr Tucker voiced his concern that the current repair of potholes is erratic and often a single pothole is filled, whilst other potholes in the same part of the road are ignored; it would make so much more sense to address all the potholes in each sector of the road- in short repair all the potholes in a whole section of road, rather than “1 off” repairs. He added decisions should be made by the repair crew whilst operating to avoid a patchwork approach.

Cllr Thomas replied, agreeing, but advised the current DCC outsourced contract for road repairs requires the operatives to select potholes for repair using defined criteria and thereby ignoring those potholes which do not. As much as there is a case for asking DCC to review/renege its outsourced repair contract, the contract was put in place as recently as last year and will have a minimum period of 3 years, and hence there is little likelihood of variation or the repair work brought back “in house”.

3. REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Baldry submitted a written report:

On April 13th Cllr Baldry will be recommending to the South Hams Executive and to Full Council a further and improved change to the way the waste and recycling service is operated across the District. Cllr Baldry added he was confident that the change would be agreed.

Cllr Baldry added the service having been brought back in house since October last year, since when, the team have improved the service. In February, for the first time in over 3 years, SHDC achieved the national industry performance standard. Having achieved that the team are now ready to make improvements.

At present about half of the District is not offered a full recycling service and food waste is not collected separately for nearly 40%. Instead, it goes for incineration. Not only is this not equitable for all residents, but also there is a cost to the District, in that the District pays Chelson Meadow (Plymouth) to separate the materials and it is they who get the recycling credits.

The proposal is that from October 98% of the District will receive the full service, including weekly collection of food waste and recycling paper, card, plastics, metal and glass. Cllr Baldry added he would prefer to make the change earlier, but 10 additional vehicles need to be purchased and there is a lead in time for this. The change will bring revenue costs back to budget and will noticeably improve recycling rates.

The meeting expressed its thanks to Cllr Baldry for his considerable endeavours on behalf of the District and the Parish in addressing and resolving these issues and the very obvious benefits he has achieved.

Cllr Baldry added that we will have seen that his team are once again street cleaning and also this week are litter picking on the A38.

Cllr Baldry who is not standing for District on May 4th added that he had been District Councillor for Yealmpton for 16 years and before that was County Councillor in the 1990's. Cllr Baldry added throughout his time Yealmpton Parish Council has always been supportive for which he expressed his thanks.

The meeting asked the clerk to put on record its appreciation of the considerable endeavours and diligence of Cllr Baldry as a Parish Councillor, District Councillor and County Councillor. We have been extremely fortunate to have had the privilege of working with Councillor Baldry who has for such a lengthy period selflessly served Parish, District and County Councils and who has always been available to support colleagues and parishioners, 7 days a week.

Clerk The clerk was asked to write to Cllr Baldry expressing the appropriate thanks.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

5. MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of March 13th were approved unanimously, proposed Cllr Durman and seconded Cllr Tucker.

6. REPORT FROM COUNCILLORS/CLERK IN RESPECT OF RESPONSIBILITIES/ ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a) Clerk/ Councillor Thomas: Distortion to northern side of the bridge at Yealmbridge and weathering of rumble strips approaching the village from the eastern direction.

Cllr McKay
Cllr Thomas Cllr Thomas advised that the bridge was last surveyed in July of last year. He added DCC suggest that photographs be taken of the bridge to demonstrate the distortion and these be submitted to DCC for review and as appropriate reinspection by a member of the Bridges Inspection team. Cllrs Thomas and McKay to undertake this.

Cllr Thomas advised DCC has noted the weathering of the rumble strips and the appropriate repair is on their "list to be undertaken".

a)Cllr Thomas: Monitoring the frequency of commercial vehicles accessing Stray Park sewerage works

Cllr Thomas had discussed this with Nick Colton, DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer and it is acknowledged that so long as the vehicles are within weight limits they are of course permitted to use the public highway and access the Stray Park sewerage works.

clerk The more telling issue is why the frequency of the vehicles has increased- in short why is more "to be treated" sludge being removed on a more frequent basis? The Clerk was asked to start a dialogue with South West Water to establish why the frequency is increasing and the related issues of the capacity of the Stray Park system.

c) Councillor Durman /clerk: RiverFly project, April payment and guarantee

Cllr Durman reported the clerk has provided the guarantee and the first invoice for delivery of SmartRivers training is expected shortly.

d) Councillor McKay: Cost analysis of battery options to maximise the use and operation of speed signs

Cllr McKay had provided a very comprehensive report setting out options that have the potential to improve the availability of the automatic speed signs currently installed around the village. Cllr McKay added an initial response was provided at the last council session and this assessment provides some additional information.

Acknowledging the comprehensive and detailed nature of Cllr McKay's report, this is now reproduced as follows:-

Cllr McKay's assessment was presented as a series of options which were:

1. "Do nothing".

Councillors are aware of number of parishioner comments about the current availability of the automatic speed signs and improvement should be addressed. The "do nothing" option is not thought to be reasonable and some effort and potentially investment has to be made to improve the situation.

2. Purchase additional batteries.

The purchase of additional batteries would reduce downtime when installed cells are removed, charged, and then re-installed. The current arrangement requires two visits to made to each sign for a single charging cycle. Poor weather conditions can restrict the opportunity to conduct battery maintenance, as the internal electronics of the sign are exposed when the sign is open, further reducing operational availability. The ability to remove and replace batteries during a single visit would provide improved availability but would still require a battery maintenance visit to be conducted approximately every three weeks to maintain the power to the new signs currently positioned on the A379 on the western and eastern approaches to the village.

3. Purchase solar panel charging.

This is an option that has the potential to reduce the frequency of battery maintenance visits, and improve operational availability, is offered by the installation of solar panels to provide battery charging to individual signs. There is a degree of uncertainty about how effective this charging arrangement would be, and maintenance visits may still be required to top up battery charge, especially during winter months. An additional impact on their effectiveness is the immediate environment at the location of current sign on the A379.

Western approach location

The western site by Milizac Close looks promising, but the trees that are positioned across the road directly to the South (the recommended orientation for installed panels), will reduce the amount of direct sunlight during the summer months.

This situation may be balanced by the higher elevation of the sun's day arc through the summer which may minimise the level of shading.

Therefore, the combination of no foliage in winter and higher day arc of the sun in the summer may not have a significant impact on charging efficiency.

Eastern approach location

The sign currently positioned by the Garage is in full shadow of the forecourt canopy. The current length of the solar panel connecting cable provided by the sign manufacturer is 2 meters. This would not allow a solar panel to be positioned above the elevation of the canopy.

This is not a practical location for a solar powered sign.

A possible alternative site that would have better (but not ideal) positioning for solar powered operation is the lamp post that sits next to the garage sign. Not an ideal position as a sign and its solar charging panel would be in the shadow for at least some part of the morning at all times of the year.

Summary

No clear guarantee can be made about the effectiveness of a solar panel power arrangement for any of the speed signs at, or close to, their current locations. The most promising site is the location at Milizac Close, but solar powered operation would have to be sustained for at least 12 months before its effectiveness could be assessed.

Conclusions

1. The most immediate improvement in availability would be achieved by the purchase of additional batteries for the “new” style signs. It would have a purchase cost of £480 to buy two sets of batteries. There will still be an ongoing operating cost for the charging and swapping of batteries every three weeks (as weather permits).
2. The purchase of one solar power unit (£834.00) and installation at the Milizac Close sign will provide an improvement in availability, but the full benefit will not be known until a full operating cycle of least 12 months has been completed. Occasional maintenance to clean the solar panel will be required.
3. If an initial trial of solar power at the Milizac Close site is successful, it might be support a decision to buy another solar panel assembly to be fitted at the alternative Garage location.

Clerk
Cllr McKay

After discussion, the meeting resolved that the solar power unit be acquired at a cost of £834.

e)Councillor Craddock: Contact with Brixton PC in respect of their solar powered speed signs

Cllr Craddock informed the meeting that BPC longer retained their solar systems which had been disposed of.

f) Clerk/ Councillor Thomas: Lack of a direction sign for Yealmpton, at Kitterford Cross roundabout

Cllr Thomas has actioned and indeed resolved this matter and commented that he had spoken with the signs designer, who agrees there should be the appropriate signage for Yealmpton on the A3121. The designer added he was proposing to alter one of the existing signs and add an additional one so it will be signed in advance and also off the roundabout

too . The Work Order will be issued fairly quick, but contractors are busy this time of year, so it may be a few weeks or longer before the signs are erected.

g) Clerk: *Trees obstructing the River Yealm*

The clerk had prepared a photographic survey of the trees which had been submitted to Kitley Estate which had replied by return via Cllr Baldry that the trees would be removed and this has taken place.

h) Clerk: *Wildanet and choice of preferred location for fibre optic installation*

Wildanet had offered to provide free of cost, fibre optic connection to a nominated location in the village.

The meeting recapped that the Parochial Church Council has made representation that the provision of optic fibre to the Church would have the considerable benefit of enabling the Church provide services by Zoom to those unable to attend and the ability to take cashless payments for weddings and other functions. The meeting also discussed the provision of fibre optics for the Community Centre.

Cllr Endicott reminded the meeting Wildanet are offering free connection and not free wifi.

Following discussion it was agreed unanimously, St. Bartholomew's Church be nominated for the free connection, being proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr McKay.

Clerk to liaise with Wildanet

Clerk

i) Councillor Craddock/clerk : *MUGA*

Several concepts were recognised by the meeting:

1. The MUGA is at the heart of the community
2. It would be beneficial to the School if a new, direct access, were to be derived to the MUGA by the community, thereby preventing those using the MUGA having access to the wider school site/ playing fields.
3. The current booking system is restrictive and "doesn't work" in practice and has created an unrealistic administrative burden for YCA.
4. The use of the MUGA by the community has in all likelihood reduced which is regrettable- this needs to be addressed and indeed questions the extent to which the community is actually aware of the MUGA's availability.

Cllr Craddock felt that a direct gate/access system to the MUGA could be put in place without incurring material cost.

The meeting agreed as an interim step that:-

Clerk

1. The clerk review the Parish insurance policy to ascertain if the use by the community of the MUGA is covered under the policy and if necessary contact the Parish insurers to discuss if further clarification is required.

Cllr
Craddock

2. Cllr Craddock obtain a quote for the creation of a direct access/gate to the MUGA removing/ re-using the existing community gate.

7.REPORTS ON ALLOCATED AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

a) WORKS:

Cllr Craddock reported there has been further vandalism of the bus shelter at the Yealm Park side which had been repaired by replacing a panel and repainting.

Parish room door: Cllr Craddock also advised he had looked at the door and he considered both keysafe and door were “working” but one does need to close the door firmly and lift the handle firmly.

b) FOOTPATHS

Cllr Barton reiterated both she and Cllr Thomas had reported the hole in the bridge at Pimple rock to DCC.

c) ROADS & PAVEMENT

Cllr Tucker reported concerns that drains be cleared at Waye Farm and Butland adding this has been ongoing and requires remedying.

It was agreed the clerk write to Cllr Thomas accordingly.

clerk

There was further discussion about the ongoing issue of overgrown hedges. As much as remedial works should not be undertaken during the current period of birds nesting, it would be preferable that those locations requiring remedial work be identified now so the clerk could contact the householders in September to get the works underway. So rather than leave identification to then to get on with it now.

Cllr Tucker
Clerk

d) ENVIRONMENT

Acknowledging the comprehensive and detailed nature of Cllr Durman’s report, this is now reproduced as follows:-

River Yealm

Monitoring for pollution; Hydrocarbons, metals, pesticides and surfactants can now all be monitored in response to an alert from the Continuous Water Monitor if necessary in addition to taking photos at key vantage points. The newly established Response Team was mobilised on 8th March in both the upper and middle catchment. A peak in dissolved solids alongside a rise in turbidity suggested slurry or sewage rather than just soil alone. No specific source was identified. On 9th March the tributaries running down from the moor turned a deep orange colour, this being most likely from the peat. On 16th March there was a China Clay spill from a lorry EA reference no 2136985. Photos confirm the presence of the spill in the Piall.

River Fly Project – Yealmpton Parish Council has agreed to allocate the £1950 necessary to fund the CSI training by WildFish of up to 10 volunteers, from S106 allocations. Further funding will be sought for equipment and laboratory sample processing. The Professional Baseline survey (funded by Wildfish) will take place in Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024. This is funded by WildFish. Recruitment of CSI volunteers has commenced.

Run off secondary to heavy rain – advice on limiting additional run off from roofs, driveways and parking areas, has been sent from River Yealm Water Quality Group to Parish Councils. In addition, remedial methods considered include:

- promoting use of water butts to attenuate the flow of surface water to sewage plants; uptake may be enhanced if help is offered fitting the water butts
- preparation of advice leaflet on installing a soakaway
- preparation of an advice leaflet on use of grasscrete or plastic porous grass / gravel pavers as an alternative to Tarmac or concrete.

A YEG member gave a 5 minute Measurement & Data presentation covering the different forms of complementary data being collected by the Yealm Dippers including the Continuous Water Monitor, to the Sustainable South Hams River Assembly on 18th March 2023.

Trees

Consultation with the community will take place in advance of autumn planting: an article has been submitted for the May Yealmpton Press and includes a link to a survey, in which people in the village can express their views and ask questions. The link will also be posted on the village Facebook page.

FWAG has completed 7 farmer advisory visits, 3 farmer events and 3 YEM advisory visits. Interventions following visits are funded by ELMS. The Local Nature Recovery Scheme is to pay farmers for locally-targetted actions, such as creating wildlife habitat or creating wetland habitats.

DWT (Devon Wildlife Trust) has undertaken eight comparable visits with smallholders. Interventions following these advisory visits are not funded.

A **micro nursery for local trees** is planned to ensure continuing availability and affordability of local tree planting. The nursery will be part of the newly planted Kitley Woodland, in Lodge Gate Field in partnership with Volunteers Outdoors. Funding for the structure – raised beds – for the nursery and adjacent wildflower meadow, and for the fencing to enclose them, is being pursued.

S106 funding

Income under the S106 agreement was received by the Yealmpton Parish Council for the first time in 2020. The total amount received to date is £14,016.67. The budget headings for this income were 'Creacombe' and 'Marlands'. No effort has ever been made to make it clear that the intended use was for environment projects in Yealmpton. A decision on use of these funds is needed as soon as possible as additional funding is needed in the coming financial year for local environment projects including:

- structural costs for the local tree nursery in Lodge Gate Field
- baseline survey; biodiversity Ruby's Wood and New England Quarry

The clerk reminded the meeting he had been asked by Cllrs Durman & Thomas to quantify the amount of the past Marlands and Creacombe S106 monies and in conjunction therewith the past environment related expenditure, the intention being that once these parameters were quantified, the Meeting could consider the ring fencing of the net balance for future environmental projects.

Cllr Durman has done some sterling work to analyse the receipts and expenditure and some £14,016 has been received and at this stage she thought £3,835 has been expended on environmental projects. So a net balance of at least say £10,000 looks realistic.

The March meeting wasn't able to take forward the ring fencing of the net balance because at that point the amounts had not been analysed, but this could now be followed up.

The clerk will assist Cllr Durman finishing the analysis using the vouchers etc which supported payment for environmental projects, albeit at this stage we can identify a figure of some £10,000 being a starting point for the meeting to consider, as requested by Cllrs Thomas and Durman, ring fencing for environmental projects.

Cllr Durman felt there was a moral obligation to ring fence these monies; Cllr Craddock didn't consider there was the necessity for restricting funds. Cllr Thomas reminded the meeting that Cllr Durman's environmental projects had always been supported by the meeting and he felt sure that "the door would remain open" irrespective of not ring-fencing the historic S106 monies. This matter of the past/historic S106 monies was left on that basis.

In contrast, contemporary S106 monies are ring fence for a period of 12 months, and as an aside, the meeting agreed the cost of the solar panel system (£834) be allocated to the current, ring fenced, S106 monies, which were received last month.

e) EMERGENCY

Again acknowledging the comprehensive and detailed nature of Cllr Durman's report, this is now reproduced as follows:-

Emergency Alerts

This is a new UK government warning set up to allow the government and emergency services to send out immediate warnings to the public via all mobile phone networks if there is a risk of life-threatening situations such as floods and wildfires.

The alerts include a siren sound blasting out, will render phone users unable to use their devices without acknowledging the alert. Even if your device is on silent, or the volume has been turned all the way down, the alert will still sound.

If there is a life-threatening emergency nearby it will also send a message telling you what to do. The system will be **tested on Sunday 23rd April 2023. You do not need to take any action.**

In an actual emergency, follow the instructions in the alert to keep yourself and others safe.

Visit www.gov.uk/alerts for more information.

If you have an additional/spare mobile phone for occasional use, you can disable the alerts on that phone:

Emergency Plan

A request for people with First Aid, healthcare or nursing skills to have their contact details added to the version of the Emergency Plan available only to councillors, has been placed in this month's Yealmpton Press and posted on the village Facebook page. The updated plan will replace the 2021 version in councillors' Dropbox when complete and a redacted version will replace the 2021 Plan on the Parish Council website. Full plan will be registered with the Devon Community Resilience Forum

f) COMMUNICATION

Cllr Barton reported there was nothing of note to be reported other than a parishioner had expressed concern on line that the footpath between Ben's shop and the Kitley Commercial units was very muddy. Cllr Endicott had recently walked the path and had not noticed it being muddy and quite possible the recent heavy rain had washed the mud away.

The clerk to write to the parishioner accordingly.

h) SPEED ISSUES

Cllr McKay reported:

1. He has sent the requested “speeding” data to the “20s Plenty” representative
2. One of the speed signs has been defective and he was “working on it”.

7 LOCAL ISSUES

Planning guidance from River Yealm Quality Working Group for Riparian Parishes

The River Yealm Water Quality Group (RYWQG) had circulated explanatory/guidelines concerning new Builds and new extension and recommended that each and every planning application submitted for newbuild/ new extensions, is scrutinised for details on how the build proposes to mitigate the roof drainage connections to the foul sewer, for example, soakaways or storm tank provision.

The guidance added insufficient detail given in the plans should return an OBJECT from the parish council citing that: “The major contributing factor to many foul sewage spills into water courses comes from roof and surface water to connections to the foul sewer and the plans submitted fail to address this issue. If there is not room for a soakaway, there is not room for the extension.”

Cllr Thomas recommended that those councillors undertaking Town Planning Law & Procedure training which is being arranged by SHDC after the elections in May raise this then and report back to the meeting.

8. PLANNING MATTERS.

The following new application was noted:

0957/23/ARC

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 (landscaping) of planning consent 4071/20/FUL

Halls Torrs Farm, Yealmpton, PL8 2LW

The following applications were withdrawn:

0253/23/HHO

Householder application for single storey detached garage

Battlehayes Dunstone Yealmpton PL8 2EL

0015/23/HHO

Householder application for first floor side extension and replacement porch

10 Ploughman Way Yealmpton PL8 2JE

The following SHDC planning decisions were noted:

0018/23/HHO

Householder application for single storey side extension, replacement of bay windows & some internal re-arrangement

Conditional Approval

The Firs Bowden Hill Yealmpton PL8 2JX

1615/22/HHO

Householder application for proposed single story extension

Conditional approval

50, Stray Park Yealmpton, PL8 2HF

The following planning guidance decisions were ratified by the meeting:

3453/22/HHO

Householder application to build a solar car port on the side of the existing house.

Torla Chapel Road Yealmpton PL8 2LZ

YPC-PG decision: No objection

Proposed by Cllr Craddock, Seconded by Cllr Durman

Cllr Thomas abstained.

0181/23/HHO

Householder application for single storey side entrance/utility extension & new garage with office above

West Park Yealmpton PL8 2HP

YPC-PG decision: No objection

Proposed by Cllr Craddock, Seconded by Cllr Durman

Cllr Thomas abstained

0353/23/HHO

Householder application for proposed additional storey to existing dwelling

16 Church Way Yealmpton PL8 2LA

YPC-PG decision: No objection

Proposed by Cllr Craddock, Seconded by Cllr Durman

Cllr Thomas abstained.

9. Finance

The Monthly Financial Statement was approved.

Cllr Craddock noted the clerk had reported encountering issues with various aspects which had been time consuming, but had now been resolved. Cllr Craddock also commented that it was recognised that the time expended by the clerk on behalf of the Parish was greater than had been envisaged when advertising the clerk's appointment, this being realistically 60 hours per month, rather than the advertised 45 hours per month; this was also more in line with the contractual hours of other local parish clerks. Cllr Craddock added that he and Cllr

Endicott would meet with the clerk as the month goes on to amend the clerk's contract accordingly.

10. Correspondence

There was no correspondence other than that covered earlier in the meeting

11. Date of next meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting was set for Wednesday, May 10th in the YCA Community Room at 7.30pm

The AGM was set for **Monday, May 15th** at a venue to be booked

The meeting was closed at 9.30pm

