

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN  
LUPPITT VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY, 4 APRIL 2023, AT 7 PM**

Present: Parish Councillors John Thorne (in the chair), Michele Turner, Paul Prettejohn, Brian Pulman, Christine Ryder, Martin Summers, Rosalind Buxton (clerk) and 8 members of the public

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

John Thorne welcomed everyone to the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting for Luppitt. Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Beth Hooper and Andrew Tucker.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3 May 2022**

It was proposed by Christine Ryder, seconded by Michele Turner and carried unanimously that the Minutes of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday, 3 May 2022, were signed as a correct record of that meeting.

**3 Annual Report from the Chair of the Parish Council**

There have been 11 Parish Council meetings since the last Annual Parish Meeting. There have been 13 planning applications including an application for a large development at Higher Wick which resulted in a Planning Committee meeting open to the public.

After a considerable amount of time and work, Luppitt's Neighbourhood Plan finally went to referendum on 24 November 2022. I am delighted to say that it was accepted by the parish with 102 votes for and 13 against. The Parish Council is now able to use the Neighbourhood Plan as a benchmark when considering planning applications in the future. Several parishioners had contributed to the successful completion of the project. However, special thanks are due to the Chair of the Steering Group, Roger Hicks, for his enthusiasm and hard work.

The condition of our roads remains a priority. We have been able to access cold tar under the Road Warden scheme to fill potholes that do not meet Highways' criteria for repair. Andrew Tucker has carried out this work and continues to keep the ditches and gullies clear throughout the parish and, on behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank Andrew for this.

Thanks are also due to Chris Tottle who continues to look after the play area at Millrise.

Our three footpath wardens keep the Parish Council advised of any problem areas. The boggy area on Footpath 14 continues to cause a problem.

Donations from the precept totalling £555 were given to the following organisations:

- TRIP
- Devon Freewheelers
- Devon Air Ambulance Trust
- East Devon Citizens Advice Bureau
- Royal British Legion
- Luppitt Children's Christmas Party
- British Heart Foundation

The new play area at the Village Hall was officially opened in June 2022. The Parish Council is responsible for maintenance of the site and is in the process of buying a gate to provide extra safety.

The Parish Council held a very successful event with barbecue and firework display on Thursday, 2 June 2022, as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The success of the event was helped by the perfect weather and a memorable sunset over Hartridge. Sadly, the Queen died in September and the nation mourned the loss of someone who had spent her whole life in service leading by example.

Contact with our PCSO has still not materialised – a point that has been raised at each Annual Parish Meeting since 2019.

The Parish Council took part in a Free Trees Project. Two hundred trees were supplied free of charge and planted by volunteers in an area between Beacon and the bottom end of Hartridge Common which has been named Frank's Patch. The Parish Council is grateful to all the volunteers who turned up to help.

I would like to thank Michele Turner for standing in for me at meetings when I have been away, all the Parish Councillors and the clerk for their support over the last year. I would also like to thank our Ward Members, David Key and Colin Brown, and our County Council representative, Iain Chubb. David Key is retiring as a District Councillor. We have appreciated his advice and help during his time as Ward Member and wish him well for the future.

Finally, the Parish Council is organising a barbecue, bonfire and firework display on **Friday, 5 May**, to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III which will take place on Saturday, 6 May. It will be held on Hartridge again near where the shepherd's hut used to stand. Luppitt is lucky to have several local musicians who will be providing music throughout the evening. We hope that the weather will be kind again and look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible so please spread the word.

#### **4 Reports**

The clerk read out the following reports.

##### **Report from District Councillor**

I have enjoyed the last twelve months as your Ward Member seeing the village Neighbourhood Plan come to fruition. There have been one or two problems but hopefully coming to the right decision in the end on planning. As I am retiring from EDDC as your Ward Member in May, I would like to say how much I have taken great pleasure in representing Luppitt for 24 years and wish you all the best for the future.

##### **Report from County Councillor**

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

A 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, Dehenna Davison.

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.

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 present 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 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.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt announced the extra cash specifically to fund vital highways maintenance.

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, 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.

###### **Introducing the Transitions Adult Social Care (TASC) service**

There are many teams across the council supporting young people through their transition into adult care services. We are changing and improving the transition pathway for young people in Devon.

As part of this year-long transformation project, the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) service is going to be called the Transitions Adult Social Care (TASC) service from Saturday 1 April 2023.

###### **DCC have secured additional funding to help households weather the rising costs of living, to help pay for food, energy and other essential items.**

This is the fourth tranche of the government's Household Support Fund that we've been able to secure. The latest bid amounts to a little over £10 million, to cover the period from April 2023 until March 2024. It will take Devon's total level of Household Support Funding received so far to just over £25 million. The funding is to support households in

most need that are struggling to pay for food, energy, water bills and other related essentials. And specifically, those households that may not be eligible for other support that is already available from the government.

We have to submit plans mid-May to the Department of Work and Pensions, setting out how we, with our Team Devon District and City councils and other voluntary and community partners, will make the latest funding available. Plans are expected to include:

- a funding allocation to specifically support families in receipt of Free School Meals, to provide food vouchers that can be exchanged at supermarkets to buy food during school holidays. 20,000 children in Devon were eligible for free school meal vouchers during the last holidays
- some funding will also go to provide financial support for food, energy and other essentials to eligible low income households with children and young people, via the County Council's Early Help service.
- Team Devon's District/City councils will plan to continue helping households that are in greatest financial need and struggling to pay for food, energy and other related essentials. They will publicise further details soon, once plans have been finalised
- Citizens Advice Devon will continue to receive funding to support households that are using pre-payment and credit meters, to help with energy costs
- working with the Sustainable Warmth project, the fund will also be used to pilot a scheme to provide minor but rapid energy efficiency improvements to the homes of eligible households
- and the Devon Community Foundation is exploring how best to deploy funds to voluntary and community organisations that support specific groups who may struggle to access the help and support they need

The Household Support Fund is one aspect of the support that councils across the county are making available to households. [For more information about the range of support available, visit our website.](#)

### **New roadside posters encouraging road users to slow down for horses and their riders are being displayed in parts of Devon.**

We're supporting [The British Horse Society's \(BHS\)](#) "Dead Slow" road safety campaign, teaming up with the [BHS, Horses & Road Safety Awareness \(HRSA\)](#) and [Vision Zero South West](#) to promote the campaign in the county.

The aim is to educate motorists on how to approach and pass horses safely on the county's roads, with the posters advising drivers to reduce their speed to a maximum of 10mph and leave at least two metres space.

Since 2018, around 375 incidents involving equestrians on Devon's roads have been reported to the Police and the BHS. These collisions have left 19 horses injured and three dead, while 29 horse riders have been injured and one rider killed.

**Alan Hiscox, Director of Safety at The British Horse Society, said:** "Horses are still being killed and injured on our roads, riders continue to be seriously injured and too many drivers underestimate the importance of driving carefully around horses. This is detrimental to the safety of equestrians. You only have to look at the two horses who were tragically killed in the space of just two weeks at the beginning of 2023.

"Together, we can stop these tragic incidents from happening over and over again. To do this, it is essential that we all follow the Highway Code guidelines in place, which are aligned with our key Dead Slow behavioural messages. Collaborating with Devon County Council, and displaying these posters, will be a critical step towards driving greater awareness and ultimately improving the safety of all vulnerable road users."

### **Voter ID Requirement**

From 4 May 2023, voters in England will need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections. This will apply to local elections, police and crime commissioner elections, UK parliamentary by-elections, recall petitions and, from October 2023, it will also apply to UK General Elections. If you do not have accepted photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate, from EDDC or register for a postal vote.

### **Report from the Hall Committee**

The most spectacular achievement in the past year has been the building of the children's playground; this was due to the efforts and tenacity of a group of local young mums led by Mrs Lucy Murray, crowdfunding, grants from East Devon Council, Devon County Council, The Communities Fund, The Lions in Honiton and the National Lottery. The playground was opened at H.M. Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Picnic on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 by Mrs Olive Clapp M.B.E. and Miss Katherine Summers.

Efforts have been made to make the Hall more heat efficient and new fire doors have been installed to cut draughts and allow easier access for wheelchair users. We are grateful for a £10,000.00 National Lottery Grant, which enabled us to do this work. Further work to fit under floor insulation and better loft insulation is under way. The electrical

system has been upgraded with new safety lighting, smoke and fire alarms.

Mr Steve Berry, Mr Phil Smith and Mrs Stephen Smith sanded and varnished the wood strip floor in the main hall, and Mr Summers repaired the field drainage system, which was causing flooding under the stage. We are very grateful for their endeavours.

The Hub Pub is open on Wednesday and Friday evenings, and bowls is played once a week. A coffee morning is run on a Friday except for the last week of the month when there is a coffee morning on a Saturday. In addition to this the Entertainments Committee has run numerous events including two Bingo Nights, a St Georges Day Fun afternoon, an End of Summer Bash, a Quiz Night, the Christmas Party, a Children's Party, a Hub Pub Games Night and The Flower Show and Fete.

More recently the Hall hosted the very successful and entertaining pantomime 'Robin Hood', although this is run by a separate committee.

Looking forward we have plans to purchase a projector and drop down screen in time for the Coronation of King Charles III, as well as install an internet connection, and put up a gate at the end of the building to make the play area safer.

### **Report from the Chairman of Luppitt Commons Trustees**

We are now in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of our Natural England Countryside Stewardship agreement for the Commons. As in previous years, we have again topped the bracken and gorse on Hense Moor, and on Hartridge we will shortly be erecting temporary fencing using a 6 month Section 38 exemption under the 2006 Commons Act, to facilitate grazing by cattle. As before, all such works have been undertaken with the full support and knowledge of Natural England. We have continued with our ongoing programme of maintenance around the various Commons, repairing fence lines, installing new gates and undertaking tree works, repairing tracks and ditch clearance where required. Ash dieback continues to be a major problem. We have had our contractors remove trees on the Commons side of the road from Luppitt Common Crossroads towards Jacks House, alongside other roads, tracks and various footpaths.

Quite a few environmental projects are ongoing on the Commons right now. The Westcountry Rivers Trust research project on Hense Moor, the SSSI, to understand the impact of different types of land use on water resources, is ongoing, and parishioners who walk the Commons may notice the small fenced enclosures dotted around containing scientific monitoring equipment. The Hense Moor valley is one of three pilot catchment areas that will be subject to detailed monitoring of flow, groundwater levels, soil moisture and rainfall.

Natural England has also recently commissioned a pilot study to look at the feasibility of creating a "soil trail" in the Blackdown Hills, involving sites on Hense Moor and Hartridge among others. This would be for soil scientists, students in higher education and interested members of the public and would involve a range of publicly accessible sites which demonstrate the range of soil types in this part of Devon.

### **Report from the Police**

No report received.

### **5 Questions**

There was a general discussion about potholes in the parish. It was agreed that it is an uphill battle to keep on top of the problem. It was hoped that the extra Government funding allocated to Devon would help the situation. The state of the roads has not been helped by the very wet weather.

There were no further questions. John Thorne thanked everyone for attending. Refreshments were served and the meeting closed at 7.40 pm.