

# Drewsteignton Parish Council.

[Clerk.drewsteigntonpc@outlook.com](mailto:Clerk.drewsteigntonpc@outlook.com) / 07764 683412 [www.drewsteigntonparish.co.uk](http://www.drewsteigntonparish.co.uk)

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Drewsteignton Parish will be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm at Whiddon Down Village Hall.**

*The annual Parish meeting is open to the public and is authorised to discuss all Parish affairs. All members of the public present may express an opinion, make a statement or ask a question, however, only Local Government electors for the Parish will be entitled to vote on any issue raised at the Meeting. Voting on a question is done by a majority of electors present at the meeting and the decision of the person chairing the meeting as to the decision is final unless a poll is demanded LGA 1972 ss 18(2). No votes taken at this meeting are binding on the Parish Council although they may be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.*

**Cllrs present:** Peter Brennan (Chair), Anna Imrie, Andrew di Battista, Ian Rowe, John Redman, Julie Macey, Anna Imrie, Steve Guthrie (WDBC Cllr elect) & James McInnes (Devon County Cllr)

**Also present:** Alice Turner (Parish Council Clerk) & 8 members of the public.

### **The business to be transacted at the Meeting will be as follows: -**

#### **1.22: Welcome.**

The Chair of the Parish Council opened the meeting, thanking those in attendance and informed the meeting that an audio recording was in progress to aid in the preparation of minutes; noted the recording is deleted once the draft minutes are prepared.

#### **2.22: Minutes of the Last Meeting**

To consider the approval of the [Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022](#) the room agreed to the Chair signing the minutes.

#### **3.22: Local Government Reports:**

##### **a) County Cllr James McInnes.**

County Cllr James McInnes provided a verbal report as summarised below. DCC net budget had increased by 10.5% to secure £696m of funding for the coming year however, £47m of savings need to be found. Cutbacks in adult social care of £30m. Highways have received £9.3m from Gov.UK however, to restore the Devon network of roads to reasonable condition would require >£200m. Change in Chief Executive has brought energy & a sense of challenge to existing processes, deemed essential post the pandemic. DCC meetings are now being held F2F. Public perception has changed post-pandemic with increased demands on all spending areas. Lively Q&A discussed potholes, speeding, A30 diversions through the parish & concern regarding social care provision.

##### **b) Borough Cllr Report.**

WDBC elections delivered a change with Steve Guthrie (Green Party) elected. The Chair and the room agreed to recognise the significant effects of Paul Ridgers and his long service to the Drewsteignton Ward. Cllr Guthrie had provided his apologies in not be able to attend.

##### **c) Chair of Drewsteignton Parish Council.**

Cllr Peter Brennan as Chair of the Parish Council gave his report as can be seen in Appendix A.

**d) Statement of Parish Council Accounts by the Clerk.**

The Council opened the 2022-2023 Financial year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April '22 with £21,512 and throughout the course of the year received £13,951 of income. The precept was maintained from the prior year.

The Council spent £5,471 in staff costs and a further £5,772 maintaining parish assets. Planned expenditure to purchase a MVAS & legal cost associated with the lease of the toilet lock were delayed. The resulting underspend to budget increased reserves £24,221.

The AGAR was approved by the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May and the Exercise of Public Rights will run from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June to the 14<sup>th</sup> of July during which electors are entitled to request to inspect the Accounts for the 2022-23 Financial Year.

**4.22: Reports from local organisations:**

**a) Drewsteignton Village Hall**

Alison Chapman provided a verbal report which contained the following points:

Repairs to the roof had been completed & the building was now leak free.

New curtains & upholstered chairs have been well received.

Reserves of £7k noted.

Increased bookings have highlighted the need to maintain this village asset.

There is no intention to return the Lease of the Hall – 19 years remain.

Long held view that the hall can co-exist alongside the proposed developments at the Drewe Arms.

**b) Gardeners Club**

Alison Chapman provided a verbal report which contained the following points:

Successful year with 52 active members.

25-30 attend meetings with the majority Chagford based.

Autumn meetings held at Drewsteignton Village Hall.

Summer Show will not be held in 2023.

Cups have been returned to the original sponsoring families.

£5 membership fee has been maintained.

£3,600 in reserves noted.

**c) Playing Field Committee (DPFC)**

Alison Chapman provided a verbal report which contained the following points:

Bonfire fundraiser will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November.

2022 raised over £2,700 – a record – thank you to all who supported the event.

ROSPA Report assessed play equipment condition.

New equipment planned.

Water leak now resolved.

Playing Fields lease is no longer fit for purpose – agreed for DPC to arrange for the lease to be surrendered. Remaining Trustee agrees to formally surrender the lease.

The swings for older children have been removed on Health and Safety grounds.

**d) Whiddon Down Village Hall**

Jenny Turner provided a verbal report which contained the following points:

Successful year with a new, strong committee.

All windows replaced and the building is looking great, warm & dry.

External lights will be improved with PIR lighting for the entrance.

Anti-social behaviour remains a concern with traffic cones placed on the roof.

Fundraising events have been successful.

Car Parking donations are steady & welcome.

Reserves of £14k noted.

Resurfacing of the car park a future expense.

**e) Post Inn, Whiddon Down**

Lou Butler provided a verbal report on the changes in management. Two chefs, new menu and employment of local staff 7 days a week. New look & feel with planned entertainment and events for 2023.

**f) Stone Lane Gardens.**

Successful year with more events in 2023. Second trainee gardener has been taken on. Tea Rooms are open over the weekend. More volunteers needed – recruitment drive. New arboretum opened with two wildflower meadows and two beehives generating honey. Reserves remain healthy.

**5.22: Open Forum**

To receive questions and comments from the public concerning matters over which the Parish Council has control or some influence. No items raised.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm

-

-

**Appendix A – Parish Council Chair’s report.**

As a Parish we are fortunate in having knowledgeable and supportive Parish Councillors and am confident that we have a good understanding of the needs of the Parish and will work together, to the best of our ability. The Parish Council has operated without a full complement of Councillors for the year 2020/2021 and currently has 2 vacancies. I would remind you that a Parish Councillor is a voluntary position, there is no remuneration or financial benefits.

Next month we thank and goodbye to Alice Turner as our Parish Clerk. Alice has decided to step down on health grounds, which we fully support and understand. We have been fortunate to appoint Lou Butler who starts on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Alice will support the handover period and ensure Lou gets the best start in this challenging and varied role.

Speeding continues to be of concern to Parishioners. Our Mobile Vehicle Activated Speed sign, which is shared with Sticklepath, can now be located at 5 Highways approved sites within the Parish. The PC plan to purchase outright its own device to increase the time the unit spends in the Parish.

Devon County Council Highways Department have been very supportive in addressing incidents of potholes when reported to them. Budget constraints and a backlog of work continues to impact the time to conduct repairs. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to report potholes using the online tool.

Thank you to our Councillors for monitoring the condition of all local Footpaths. As a result, the Rangers have been diligently fixing and replacing all the issues found. Well done to Pete Rich and the team.

The precept for 2023/24 was reduced which resulted in a small decrease for Parishioners over the previous year. The major expense for this year will be securing the formal lease of the toilet block in Drewsteignton and thereby avoid its closure. The PC will continue to monitor costs and provide value for the public purse.

Finally, the PC would like to thank all the voluntary acts of kindness, help, expertise and support provided by so many parishioners during the last two years. Thank you for all you do. It is this spirit of generosity that often costs nothing but is essential to maintain the Parish.

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**