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## Minutes of a meeting of the Community Wellbeing Committee held remotely on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 commencing at 19:00 hrs

### Present

**Chairman:** Councillor J. Johns  
**Committee Members:** Councillors J. Buczkowski, G. Guest, M. Rowe  
**Officers:** Joy Norris (Town Clerk) & Maria Weston (Deputy Town Clerk)

Mr. N. Savage – Cullompton Footpath Warden.  
5 no. members of the public attended the meeting

**CW 53. Chair's Announcements:** There were no announcements from the Chair.

**CW 54. Apologies for Absence.**  
No apologies for absence were received.

**CW5 55. Declarations of Interests.**

- i) A personal interest was declared from Cllr. Guest in respect of agenda item 8. Public Rights of Way - as he is a member of the Devon Countryside Access Forum;
- ii) A pecuniary interest (potential) was declared by Cllr. Johns in respect of agenda item 9. Community Engagement - as she operates a Foot Care Practice.

**CW 56. Public Participation.**

#### Speaker 1:

Christmas Lights: Suggested that if the Council is thinking of replacing the Christmas tree lights, rather than having spiral lights around the town's lime trees, why not just have warm white, constantly lit twinkly lights.

A response was given:

That discussion on this topic will take place later in the meeting. The speakers comment was noted.

#### Speaker 2:

- i) Website: The home page of the Council's website is not showing the link to upcoming meetings which is easier for the electorate to access meeting papers.

A response was given:

That the website is not dealt with by the Community Wellbeing Committee.

- ii) Christmas Committee: Spoke about the delay in arranging the Christmas lights and stated the report (supporting paper H to the agenda) that had been written was limited in its scope. Due diligence had not been given by the Committee in planning for the lights. The £8,100.00 charged by the contractor is excessive - there is a local company that could have done the lights for a quarter of the price. The Council had not approached local contractors and companies for sponsorship -£16,00.00+ paid is a disgusting amount for less lighting than previous years. The Council does not seem to have obtained value for money and the Committee needs to look at saving money.

A response was given:

That an e-mailed reply had been given to the speaker's comments/questions as received in relation to the lights. The delay in arranging the Christmas lights for 2020 had been due to the Covid-19 pandemic and not being aware of what would have been possible until quite late. The cost of the lights had partly been down to damage of some of the lights and as the lights installation can take a whole week.

Note: Speaker 2 then raised further questions/comments but a point of order was raised by Cllr. Buczkowski – The Public Participation item of the agenda is for members of the public to ask questions, not for debate. The Chair advised that if able, a response (of further information) would be given directly to the speaker.

**CW 57. Minutes:** Consideration was given to the minutes of the Community Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (Supporting Paper A to the Agenda) which were approved as a correct record.

**CW 58. Action List:** The Action List relating to the Community Wellbeing Committee was reviewed and noted. (Supporting Paper B to the Agenda).

NOTE: The question was asked as to whether the owner of the chimney at Middle Mill had been established. The Footpath Warden explained the owner had not yet been identified and that attempts to get action on the chimney through the following two routes had been attempted:

- i) Devon County Council – Report as a health & safety issue.  
If it could be demonstrated that the structure was dangerous (e.g. bricks were falling onto the Public right of Way) appropriate action to address this could be taken;
- ii) Mid-Devon District Council – Report through the 'dangerous buildings' route.  
Warden had previously tried this, however no response had been received.

It was

**RESOLVED:** To suspend Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak on the topic of the chimney located at Middle Mill. (Footpath no. 1 Public Rights of Way)

The member of the public advised it is believed that the Diocese of Exeter Board own the land adjacent to the chimney and it may well know who be who the owner is.

The Chair thanked the member of the public and it was:

**RESOLVED:** To re-instate Standing Orders.

Note: Administrator to write to the Diocese to clarify if they own the chimney stack and to advise this is in a state of disrepair.

NOTE: The Committee's Action List was noted.

**CW Financial Monitoring:**

59. Consideration was given to the financial reports relating to the Community Wellbeing Committee income, expenditure and commitments, compared to the 2020/21 budget estimates (Supporting paper C to the agenda)

**RESOLVED:** That the financial monitoring papers of the Community Wellbeing Committee are noted and accepted.

**CW Public Rights of Way:** The summary of the current Public Rights of Way (P3) position was noted  
60. (Supporting Paper E1 -Report & E2 -P3 Financial Information Sheet to the agenda) together with the oral report as given by the Volunteer Footpath Warden, as follows -

1. Footpath survey:

This has been completed. To get a P3 grant next year we now need to also complete the financial reporting and report of work carried out. This must be submitted by 15th February.

2. Faults: Some were reported to Devon County Council, responses as follows:

- a) Cullompton Bridleway 14 (Russell Park Lane going from Colebrook to road from Cullompton to Bradninch).  
The new culverts installed in the autumn have been overtopped in the heavy rain before Christmas and the path surface significantly eroded. *"Thank you for your comments regarding the damage to recent works on the bridleway. The contractor has been back and has made the site safe, and hopefully we will be able to carry out some improvements early in the spring during better conditions."*
- b) Cullompton Footpath 25 (Near Langford).  
A broken sign reported. *"I have arranged for two signs to be repaired and a stile tread to be replaced, along this path"*
- c) Cullompton Footpath 1. (Leat):  
*"I would be happy to take this on, and make a bid for some capital money, and get the necessary permissions from the Environment Agency, these will depend on how they class the Mill stream. Would be very happy to meet you."*
- d) Cullompton Footpath 20. Near Weaver – a fence has been erected across the path. Devon County Council's Public Rights of Way Warden has briefed Cullompton's Volunteer Footpath Warden about this path, who has been in contact with the landowner. *"The intention is re-instate the definitive line, which the landowner will undertake. This will require, not only new gates, but cutting back a hedge, excavating the ditch, and then new fencing. Unfortunately, the ground conditions are not suitable at the moment and would result in quite a mess, so the intention is to undertake these works as soon as ground conditions allow."*

3. Public Rights of Way (P3) Provision: Attended a discussion in relation to P3 provision - Thursday 7th January 2021. (Supporting Paper E1 refers).

It was further advised that there is a large surplus of funds currently in the P3 budget and a backlog of work that needs to be carried out and so it is proposed that the Town Council does not bid for further P3 monies this year (2021). Consideration was given to the way forward with Cullompton's Public Rights of Way. Discussion ensued which included stile provision and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cullompton Town Council should remain as a member of the Devon County Council's Public Rights of Way (P3) Scheme and an associated application for the Devon County Council Public Rights of Way annual grant (based on the total mileage of Cullompton's footpaths) is submitted.

**RESOLVED:** That following consideration of the Public Rights of Way (P3) scheme and the works required, the Community Wellbeing Committee approve:

- i) Work to be undertaken to address the issues with the overgrown vegetation (hedges) both on the Leat path (Footpath no. 1, close to Station Road) and on the pathway running behind the Bell public house (running down to Crow Green);
- ii) Work to extend the wooden fencing on the Leat path (Footpath no. 1) at Higher Mill to address this potential health and safety issue where there is a high drop into the water from the public footpath.

*NOTE: 50% of the available P3 funds of £2,774.00 (i.e. £1,387.00) should be used to carry out these quick P3 repairs (needing to be done now, routine maintenance jobs)– ii & iii as above.*

**RESOLVED:** That the Community Wellbeing Committee give delegated authority to the Town Clerk, following consultation with the Committee Chair and the Mayor, to spend further funds as required and within the budget available, on any P3 works as deemed necessary.

**NOTE:**

- i) The P3 works and monetary position to be reviewed in July 2021.
- ii) Grateful thanks for continued hard work, were extended to Cullompton's Volunteer Footpath Warden.

**CW 61. Community Engagement: Help @ Hand App.**

**NOTE:** At this point of the meeting, the Chair, Cllr. Johns (having declared a pecuniary interest (potential) in the following agenda item 9. Community Engagement – help @ Hand App) was placed into the waiting room and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr. Guest is elected (temporary) Chair whilst agenda item 9. Community Engagement – Help @ Hand App is considered.

The Help @ Hand Report was noted and consideration given to this initiative (Supporting Paper F to the agenda). It was:

**RESOLVED:** That following consideration of the Help @ Hand App, the Community Wellbeing Committee recommend that the Town Council trial a subscription of the Help @ Hand App for a period of one year at a cost of £850.00 (+ VAT, based on a charge of 10p per resident per annum)

**NOTE:**

- i) Feedback should be given after this trial period has elapsed;
- ii) Cllr. Johns was re-admitted to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

**CW 62. Allotment Provision:** Consideration was given to the Town Council managing the proposed allotment site at the planned Culm Valley Park Development, near Siskin Chase. (Supporting Paper G to the agenda). It was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Community Wellbeing Committee are, in principle, happy with the proposal to manage the proposed allotment site at the planned Culm Valley Park Development, near Siskin Chase but that it would like confirmation:

- i) of the tenure of the site: Is it freehold or leasehold?;

- ii) that this will be a 'finished' site i.e. The Town Council would be looking for a fenced site (boundary) with access gate/s, water supply (with a means for the Council to turn the water on/off) and sturdy paths;
- iii) of any financial settlement that the developer is going to provide in order for the Town Council to take on this site.

**CW 63. Christmas 2021:** The Christmas Report was noted and consideration was given to future Christmas lights provision (Supporting Paper H to the agenda). Discussion ensued and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That quotations should be sought (preferably from local companies) for the 2021 contract to supply and to install Christmas lights within the town as follows:

- i) Provision, installation and removal of lighting column features/stand lights in Station Road;
- ii) Provision and Installation of the Council owned Christmas lights in the High Street lime trees – with lights remaining in situ unless in a year where the trees are due to be pollarded (when they shall be removed);
- iii) Provision and installation of RGB (red, green & blue) lights in the two large fir Christmas trees (Higher & Lower Bullrings)
- iv) Provision, installation and removal of Christmas lights in the 4ft artificial Christmas trees and the installation of said trees (above shops/businesses)

NOTE: If possible, the 2020 Christmas lights which are still in the High Street lime trees should be left in place in order to save some money. This will be arranged if possible – as the awarded contract included the removal of these.

Discussion ensued regarding PAT testing of the lights and also Council equipment.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That following consideration of future Christmas lights provision, the Community Wellbeing Committee would like to refer the matter of PAT testing of the Christmas lights and Council equipment to the Policy Finance and Personnel Committee for serious consideration, including the feasibility of staff undertaking appropriate training to carry out this testing and the purchase of the necessary equipment.

NOTE: The Christmas Lights (future provision) report to be supplied to the Community Wellbeing Committee together with any quotations, should also include details of the costs associated with PAT testing.

**CW 64. Members Questions:** No questions were raised by members.

The meeting closed at 8:34pm.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_