

# INWARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL.

Clerk to the council: [Inwardleighpc@gmail.com](mailto:Inwardleighpc@gmail.com)

Minutes of the meeting of Inwardleigh Parish Council held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Folly Gate Parish Hall.

In attendance:            Cllr. Dennis (Chair)                            Cllr. King (Vice-chair)    Cllr. Timms  
                                 Cllr. Piddington                                Cllr. Henderson            Cllr. Ions  
                                 Cllr. Hooper                                        WDBC Leach                WDBC Dexter  
                                 Clerk: Mrs. Clarke

## Minutes.

- 01/11/24            There was one apology for absence from Devon County Cllr McInnes who is currently at a Mid Devon District Council meeting.
- 02/11/24            There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.
- 03/11/24            As there were no members of the public, there was no public participation period.
- 04/11/24            Reports from Councillors: Cllr Dexter's report can be read on our website it will be attached to the end of these minutes online, but will not be placed on the noticeboards due to its size.

### Cllr Leech report:-

Cllr Leech kindly followed up our enquiries as regards the s106 monies and the developers.

Further to this he has been able to report that the 23 houses will be taken up by Rent Plus these are the affordable / social properties on the site

On other matters he has kindly dealt with a variety of queries from us, ranging from allotments to pot hole related problems on Prism Lane. Cllr Leech mentioned West Devon's new **Community Development**: a section which has held meetings with members to try to find out ways to help the team work closer with their existing partners, and all other organisations working within our communities. Hopefully detailed plans can be developed quickly before winter sets in, as he envisages a lot of people might need help through the winter period.

### **Second Homes revenue:**

It seems that towns and parishes can receive some money from the new system where second homes pay twice the price for council tax now. The amount available is based on the number of second homes in the parish. So if you have say, 20 second homes, you can now claim for 40 properties as part of your precept money. West Devon will save up the extra money for social housing. However, this extra cash can't be relied on, as people may sell their second homes. Any extra cash that is received treat it as a windfall for something special in the community.

Speed watch was briefly discussed, as this was placed on hold due to personal circumstances. Cllr Timms will refer to the others involved. Cllr Leech wants to move this forward due to speeding near the school.

Housing and standards were discussed. Cllr Dexter mentioned that lack of standards and how should this be maintained and/or enforced. Comparison with cob walls was raised. Along with the necessity for more one bedroom houses.

- 05/11/24            **Minutes of the last meeting** of Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were approved and signed.

06/11/24

**Matters arising:-**

6.1 - Allotment query, WDBC Solicitor, about transferring these to us. Two documents were received from Cllr Timms, letters from 2006 and 2008, renewals received for occupants. Appears there are two small and two large allotments. Councillors queried the conditions that may be applicable. Query raised over Misdon allotments Cllr Leech (*Subsequent to the meeting the Misdon Allotments were transferred to Live West years ago*). We need to see the full contract that WDBC has with the current occupiers on the others.

6.2 - A TPO on 14 trees backing onto Brandize to Butterford. A discussion was held on the name of the field behind. Cllr Henderson has carried out a lot of the work particularly the Bank and ditch principal even if it is filled in now, so there is ownership of the extra 3 foot the other side of the bank.

6.3 - Licencing application in a neighbouring area in Okehampton was detailed. No objections and all agreed.

07/11/24

**Updates on matters from the last meeting.**

7.1 - Highways reports - Prism Lane, an update was provided to Cllr Leech, who had contacted Cllr McInnes as this has been put forward as an urgent issue. The chair and clerk have been contacted by a parishioner, who also contact Mel Stride MP. The clerk provided a list of those reported and the results sent back, which includes the following responses on a number of them "not found and/or doesn't meet their criteria".

It was stated as regards Prism Lane "Its where the road is, rather than the pot hole that is of importance, being on a junction on a main A road".

08/11/24

**Planning Applications:**

8.1- 3359/24/HHO Oak Gates Farm, Inwardleigh - a discussion was held, currently they are empty. The council are in support of this application.

8.2 - 3354/24/FUL at The Barn Farleigh Farm, this is for a change of use of the barn into accommodation, but it has to be as an ancillary building to the main house. The council supports this application.

09/11/24

**Finance**

9.1 - Budget - aspects were discussed in particular with asset replacement and the amount of new houses/people in the area. £5700.00 was approved. Proposed by Cllr Hooper seconded by Cllr Timms, all in approval.

9.2 - Payments for authorisation were approved, HMRC, Salary £423.00 and Election Expenses £66.86

9.3 - Current Balances £9600.91 and the Bank reconciliation for September and October were provided. Discussion was held about the bank charges of £4.25 per month and how another council have a reserve account that pays interest to counteract the above fees.

Lloyds are altering the types of account, which may affect us in January. The Council will wait to hear from the bank over the next month.

9.4 - Nalc pay increase, the council discussed this and settled on pay scale 12. Two points above. All in favour.

10/11/24

**Matters brought forward by the Chairman:**

Signpost at Crossways (A386) marked up as Folly Gate, points towards Hatherleigh 6 miles, and Okehampton B3260, invisible due to hedge growth, a request to highways to cut this back and clean the signs in the village has been sent. Cllr Dennis has cleaned a number of signs in the area.

11/11/24

**Matters brought forward by Councillors:**

Poor condition of road between Folly Gate and East Town Cross, which is severe road the road is cambered away, dangerous throughout, needs resurfacing approximately 1.5 miles, *since the meeting this has been reported to highways*. The area around Padson the potholes have nearly join up together.

The ditch at East Town Cross also needs cleaning despite a request some months ago. *Since the meeting this has been reported to highways*.

Village hall committee - survey has been completed, the hall has foundations. Therefore a refurbish rather than rebuild. Roof will be phase one needs - replacement, it will be pitched. The council may have to apply for planning permission, the Village hall committee will deal with a problem a drain problem. The clerk has contacted planning / historical specialist as advised by Cllr. Leech with regards any planning permission requirement.

Architect has suggested, selling the grass for two houses and re-build the village hall. Parking was raised. Cllr leech mentioned national grants for village halls. There are also schemes in WDBC if an area is used for social housing, they would help to fund some of the hall refurbishment.

12/11/24

**Correspondence received/clerks report:** Dates for next year were listed. Administrative update provided on emails received. Airband contracts have been cancelled across Devon and Cornwall. Cllr Leech pointed out this is the third time a company due to provide Broadband has failed. Is there a clause in the contract they may allow funds to be returned? Clerk has discovered Allied Dunbar specialist hall insurance and will enquire about this.

13/11/24

Date of next meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

14/11/24

The meeting closed at 21.43pm

**Inwardleigh Parish Council**  
**George Dexter: November 2024 Report**

**Devon Housing Commission Report**

I attended the WDBC member briefing on the Devon Housing Commission Report. This report brought together a great deal of data which explains what I believe is well known anyway. A few of the key points are summarised below.

- About 30% of West Devon do not meet the decent housing standard. This means that authority ranks as the third worst in the country (out of 297 authorities).
- We have an increasingly aging population, with an average age of about 51, which is the highest in Devon.
- Our population is growing due to internal migration from other parts of the country.
- People leave the area when they are young and people come here when they are in late middle age.
- The percentage of affordable homes in Devon is about half that in the rest of England.
- There are more homes being built, but the proportion of affordable homes is falling.

It is clear that housing is a key issue for all authorities in Devon.

As well as an overarching recommendation "... to give urgent attention to the need for affordable housing..." the report made a number of recommendations to Devon's local authorities, the proposed Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, Homes England, the Government, and 'Other Bodies'.

WDBC has responded to the recommendations for Devon local authorities. Two of the recommendations and responses are shown below.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
That local planning authorities are consistent and insistent on planning requirements being reflected in the price paid by developers for land, rather than "viability" being used as grounds for negotiating reductions in developer contributions (specifically for affordable housing, which should be non-negotiable) after consent is granted.	Agreed The draft NPPF consultation suggests golden rules for the release of greenbelt land, that caps land value at 3 times the existing value. Opportunity to lobby for this to be extended to all greenfield developable land, regardless of 5 year land supply position
That Local Plans should specify a requirement for older people's housing – perhaps 10% of strategic developments – and should allocate suitable sites for such schemes	Good placemaking principles should address this, however if the market doesn't deliver then an intervention is required. Should be restricted to local connection and principal residency, to address the increasing aging demographic. Would help to free up family accommodation and increase stock of smaller accommodation (If restricted to local).

**Cost of Living Update**

Devon County Council has been provided with £5m from the Household Support Fund (HSF) from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, of which West Devon will receive £151,354. The funding is intended to support households who would otherwise struggle to buy food, pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs.

**Inwardleigh Parish Council**  
**George Dexter: November 2024 Report**

WDBC previously provided the following support for residents through its HSF from its previous allocations.

Type of support provided	April 2023 – March 2024		1 April to 30 September 2024	
	Number of households helped	Spend (£)	Number of households helped	Spend (£)
Food	102	19,765	36	12,550
Energy and Water	214	42,690	83	26,050
Essentials linked to energy and water	34	7,050	15	6,320
Wider essentials	751	158,309	191	63,815
Housing costs	92	21,000	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>248,814</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>108,735</b>

For the period of October 2024 to March 2025 WDBC is proposing to provide support in different ways to individuals and households, including continuing to provide further financial support to Devon care leavers. So, to the next 6 months the council plans to:

- Write to all residents who may be entitled to Pension Credit Guarantee Credit to encourage them to apply, meaning they will still receive winter fuel payments;
- Update and distribute cost of living leaflets to partners;
- Support residents with advice and signposting to partners tackling issues such as fuel poverty; and
- Work with Community Development and Environmental Health colleagues, as well as partners, to take a more strategic approach to identifying those residents struggling financially and requiring support.

**BT Analogue to Digital Switchover**

I attended the webinar set up by the Rural Services Network where BT presented the plans to transfer the whole telephone network from analogue to digital. The key points were as follows.

- Digital Voice is the name of the new home phone service, where digital calls are made over the broadband network rather than the old analogue network which has been around for over 40 years. (BT runs the network and owns EE mobile provider, however, the switchover affects all 690 current providers.)
- The current network is becoming increasingly unreliable as well as consuming about 1% of the total electricity produced in the UK. Digital Voice will give clearer call quality as well as helping to prevent most scam calls.
- Customers will keep their own landline telephone numbers and most phones are already compatible with the digital network.
- The landline is being upgraded not taken away. For most customers it will just mean plugging your phone into your router rather than the phone socket on the wall.
- Digital Voice will not work without power. There was general concern about this in the webinar, and BT said that they propose the use of hybrid phones with built in batteries which switch to a mobile network connection as necessary; or a battery backup unit for your router so that you can still make calls.

**Inwardleigh Parish Council**  
**George Dexter: November 2024 Report**

For people who don't want or don't have broadband will be moved to BT's new 'dedicated landline service', which will be available from October 2024 to 2030, until such time they can migrate to Digital Voice.

The timetable for moving customers to Digital Voice is:

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| - New customers sold Digital Voice  | From April 2023 |
| - Customers who have not used their landline for 12 months and have no additional needs or telecare | From April 2024 |
| - Customers without broadband   | Autumn 2024     |
| - Customers who have used their landlines and have no additional Needs or telecare                  | Autumn 2024     |
| - Customers considered vulnerable or with additional Needs / disabilities                           | Spring 2025     |

The whole process must be completed by 2027.

For those people with telecare will be supported through the switch over to make sure that their telecare device is working. If it does not work, they will be switched back to the analogue landline until the problem is sorted.

There was widespread concern from the webinar about very poor mobile connections and the effect that this will have on the switch to the digital network.

BT wants local authorities to help them to:

- raise awareness of Digital Voice; and
- identify people who need additional help and encourage them to register this with their customer service team on 0800 800 150.

A 'BT roadshow' will be visiting about 800 locations over the next year to explain this. The details are on their website. They are however happy to arrange virtual presentations if councils ask for them.

### **Citizens Advice**

Vicki Rowe the CEO of our local Citizens Advice provided an update on the CA's activities and challenges. In Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon they helped 15,222 people with 49,907 problems generating £12,023,460 additional household income. She said that she was extremely proud of this achievement which reflected the hard work and dedication of all their staff and volunteers. They have reintroduced face to face services because not everyone is able to access their services online. (They are committed to redesigning their website so that people who are comfortable with technology can access self-help advice directly as well as booking an appointment online.) Vicki did however emphasise that the organisation was short of both paid and volunteer staff. This resulted in long waiting times for people to attend a face-to-face session. In addition, they have simply not been able to help to resolve a significant proportion of clients due to the intractableness of their problems.