

**Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**  
**Held On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 1830 hrs in the Parish Hall**

**Present: Nigel Woollcombe-Adams, Cllrs. Bartlett, Evans, Fielding, Purcell, Rood, Trebilcock and 14 members of the public together with the clerk**

**PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW PARISH WEBSITE: [lydfordonfosse.co.uk](http://lydfordonfosse.co.uk)**

- **Apologies for absence**  
County Councillor Nigel Hewitt-Cooper, Guy Drury, Ralph Berry, Jennie Cooper
- **Minutes of previous meeting**  
The minutes of the meeting held on ednesday 11th April 2018 were signed as a correct record
- **Chairman's Report**  
Cllr Bartlett summarised the year and thanked his fellow councillors and the clerk. Full report attached (A1)
- **Financial Report**  
The Clerk submitted the Receipts and Payments Account. Attached (A2)
- **Mendip District Council Report**  
Nigel Woollcombe-Adams summarised the year at Mendip District Council. Attached (A3)
- **Somerset County Council Report**  
Nigel Hewitt-Cooper sent his apologies and the attached report (A4)
- **Community Policing**  
Guy Drury sent his apologies and emailed April's police report.
- **Neighbourhood Watch**  
Lynne Mitchell's round up is attached (A5)
- **Local Plan**  
Cllr Purcell reminded us that Local Plan Part I (adopted Dec 2014) classified the Lydfords as a Secondary Village with a requirement for 25 extra homes (upto 2029). This has since been ratified by Local Plan Part II which is currently undergoing examination by an external Examiner. Full report attached (A6)
- **Footpaths**  
Cllr Fielding summarised the last year and the number of emails sent to Mendip.

- **Planning**

Cllr. Trebilcock summarised that it has been a busy planning year.

- **Highways**

Cllr Evans looked back at past years' Reports on Highways matters. The common theme was issues linked to Dimmer and Virador. This year is slightly less so but local road capacity and safety continue to be an concern. Please see attached full report (A7)

- **Speedwatch**

Last year Speedwatch managed 112 monitoring sessions. Nine were on the A37 and the other 102 on the B3153. A total of 1137 vehicles were reported to the Police. The fastest speed recorded in the 30 limit was 58 mph and in the 40 limit was 74 mph. The average number of speeders per session was ten. In addition to recording the total number of vehicles they have also been counting the numbers of large goods vehicles (LGVs). Last year 12.6% of the vehicles were LGVs. The upward trend in vehicles is reflected by the other districts in our area, it is not just Lydford. There is a possibility of borrowing a Speed Indicator Device (SID) from Avon and Somerset Police free of charge. Additionally, we are investigating joint ownership of SIDs with other Parish Councils. The team will monitor and collect data from the A37 once the agreed changes in the speed limit have been implemented.

- **Mead Lane Bridge**

Cllr Rood explained last year's delays and announced that demolition was due mid July of this year. This is according to Rachel Pearce the Bridges Warden.

- **Ultra Fast Broadband Update**

Sue Jameson's full report is attached (A8)

- **Parish Hall**

Sue Jameson's full report is attached (A9)

- **Lydford Sports & Social Club**

Linda Foote confirmed that the lease had been secured for the next 25 years. Her round-up of the year is attached (A10)

- **St Peter's Church**

Neither Ralph nor Jennie could attend the meeting because of Mournday Thursday church commitments, Their written report is attached (A11)

- **Pubic Discussion**

Various questions and comments were asked/aired during the session.

Meeting finished 2025

## A1 Chairman's Report

- The Parish Council have been active in a number of fields of which you will here more detail from the individual reports.
- There have been a considerable number of planning applications through the year, the vast majority of which have been approved by this Parish and subsequently by Mendip.
- As a Parish Council we have tried to look at all applications objectively and have listened to the broader opinions of our community. Where vocal opposition to an application has been received then we have reacted accordingly.
- We have had a number of enforcement issues. Again where reported to us these have been passed on to Mendip. Happily, most are resolved amicably albeit we still experience difficulties with one or two parties. Where Mendip inform us that they are within the terms of their consents then we are unable to take further action.
- Financially, the Parish has adhered closely to its annual budget and we stick within our spending limits. Costs are not getting cheaper and with the additional costs of running the impending election we will struggle to be within budget for the next fiscal year without having to shave back donations and some other expenditures elsewhere.
- Your Councillors have done everything they can to cover their individual areas of responsibility. I am very grateful to them all and especially to my Vice Chairman, Tim Evans, who gives much of his time to Parish needs and to our new Clerk, Julie Nicol who has thrown herself into the role and keeps us all on our toes!
- We have for the first time in many years a larger number of the Parish who would like to sit on the Parish Council than seats available. This means that we will, post May 3<sup>rd</sup>, have an elected Parish Council. I personally very much welcome this development. I am particularly pleased to see that a number of the candidates are resident in East Lydford, which I feel has been under represented in the past. I hope that as a Parish we support the need to vote for our Parish Councillors. I do not see this is a Party Political matter but more of having a band of Parishioners' who care for and wish to enhance the Parish for all its residents.
- Finally, I would like to thank all those who are reporting to us this evening. I reiterate that I

would like to have greater inclusion of our other Parish groups - PCC, Hall committee, Sports Club and others in the broader workings of the Parish Council. Perhaps, with our newly enhanced website (thank you Clerk) we can use this as a greater tool to build a more interested and cohesive Parish life, especially as we will all hopefully soon benefit from the dedicated activities of the Super Fast BroadBand Committee.

### A3 Nigel Woollcombe-Adams - District Councillor

- \* A new Waste collection contract is due to incept from March 2020 which would mean all plastics would be recyclable thus freeing up space in the wheelie bins which would then only need emptying every three weeks as opposed to two. It is anticipated that this new contract will prove cheaper than existing.
- \* Mendip has one of the lowest rates of hospitalisation due to misuse of alcohol in the country.
- \* Mendip DC is in a strong financial position with good reserves.
- \* As the government rather support grant is being withdrawn MDC have had to look for an alternative income. Commercial property with good covenants has been purchased using loans from the Public Works Loan Board. These properties have been selected with great care from a number shown to the Council by our professional advisers-MDC rejected 9 out of every 10 offered.
- \* The Planning Department now has a full compliment of staff which should improve speed and efficiency.
- \* Housing have a record low number of persons in bed and breakfast and the Council exceeded its target for causing affordable housing to be built over the last five years.

### A4 Nigel Hewitt-Cooper's Report - Somerset County Council

Again, this has been a challenging year, and one which has seen criticism of the council at fever pitch, generally by those who were the architects of the financial problems we face. But, we know it's easy to cause an issue, and then spit venom from the sidelines.

Despite our financial difficulties, which I shall touch upon later, some very good work is carried out by the County, much of it ignored, as it doesn't tick the 'insalubrious' box which so many facets of the media prefer to indulge themselves in.

Back in July, we took the decision to become paperless for our meetings. Printed agendas were costing the council in excess of £60k per year. The payback for the tablets we use is around 18 months, meaning this simple operation will save the council £150k in this quadrennium.

Our Children's services, deemed inadequate in 2015, continue to improve, with all aspects monitored turning the corner and now moving towards a further improvement at the next inspection. A recent spot-check inspection highlighted this.

In September we were forced to make another £19 million of savings. Remember, our annual grant from government has reduced over the past decade, and is expected to be zero by next year. There is only so much you can do with the money you have, and borrowing for everyday services is no longer allowed. This hard decision meant that the county finances are back on track for this year. Money is, I believe, going to be a perennial issue at the county council, as I feel there seems to have been a lack of forethought and thinking ahead in years gone by, a situation we considered

to our advantage at Mendip. For now though, we are heading in the right direction, but are still far from being 'out the woods'.

The library consultation was a successful exercise, with many respondents. Our nearest libraries in Shepton and Street are safe, though the decision whether to move the Shepton library is pending. Castle Cary has been successfully taken over by a community group.

Council tax has again risen by the maximum 2.99%, with an extra 3% for adult social care. We sit on a social care time bomb, with an aging population, and a lack of families in the villages is exacerbating this problem. 70% of our council tax received at county goes on this, 30% for children, and 40% on the adult provision. If we don't get more families in our villages soon, we are all destined to suffer. Indeed, West Somerset was recently one of the 12 most socially deprived districts in the country, and has received government money to help with this. It ranked at number 1.

We still grit over 720 miles of roads on a precautionary basis, and after the September tranche of cuts seems to have placed us back on a firm footing, these will again be reviewed for next winter. I am hopeful of some of those routes removed from this programme to be re-instated. I should add that there were no routes in Mendip South affected.

Following the announcement late last year of an additional £9.9 million pounds to maintain roads in Somerset the following resurfacing and improvement schemes have now been announced and will be implemented by the end of March.

Here are a few figures concerning finance:

- £780m gross spend on services in the county for the next financial year
- 2.99 percent increase in the County Council's element of Council Tax
- 91p per week rise in Council Tax for Band D
- General Fund reserves to double to £19m by the end of the next financial year (previously £5.6m)
- Ringfenced £1m to develop preventative work that will reduce demand on services.
- An extra £200,000 made available for winter maintenance in 2019/20.
- Savings proposals on gully clearing and jetting dropped
- Delay on proposals to make savings in flood water management (£80,000), Dementia support (£100,000) and support to help vulnerable young people in to work (£50,000).
- £224m in capital projects in the County over the next four years

## A5 Neighbourhood Watch

- The last 12 months have been relatively uneventful crime wise in the Lydford's. However, what is becoming increasingly prominent are email scams purporting to be from HMRC, TV Licensing, UK Passport, BT and others.
- The NHW scheme coordinator based in Bridgwater has recently retired and as yet her post has not been filled.
- The Police Contact Van will be in West Lydford on Sunday 21 April between 11.00 and 12.30.
- Mark Nicholson, the Neighbourhood Team Inspector, came along to the October Welcome and Pop In Café.

- Police resources continue to be stretched so
- It's important for our community to be vigilant and report suspicious activity to 101 - what we see as vaguely odd or suspicious might in fact fit into a bigger picture.
- NHW is an important aspect our village life providing support, reassurance and information.
- Information placed on village notice boards
- Information in the Parish Magazine each month
- Information exchanged by email (please let me have your email addresses
- Thanks to both my NHW colleagues and the Parish Council for their support over the past year.

## A6 Local Plan

As a reminder - Part 1 was adopted in Dec 2014 - covers strategy & policies and sets out a development framework for the whole of Mendip from 2006 - 2029

It provides for the delivery of a minimum target of 9,635 homes from 2006 to 2029 which equates to the development of 420 homes per year from 2011 to 2029

The bulk of the new homes to be centred around the five main settlements - Frome, Shepton, Street, Glastonbury & Wells

It classified the Lydfords as a Secondary Village with a requirement for a further 25 houses over the period

Since then work has continued on Part 11 which identifies additional housing and employment sites to meet the needs of the district.

This culminated in a pre-submission consultation document Feb 2018 to which the PC responded.

It confirmed that the Lydfords remain a secondary village with a requirement for 25 additional houses mentioned earlier. Included in the statement it said.....

'As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 22 houses had been completed or consented. As the residual development has the potential to be accommodated over the plan period, no sites will be allocated in the Lydfords' (Ref. 11.17, Mendip Local Plan part 11: Pre-submission consultation)

During the Pre-submission consultation there have been further submissions from local people including potential land for housing. Details can be found on the Mendip website under 'Pre-submission: Issues raised and Council response'

Local Plan 11 is now in the hands of an external Examiner Mike Fox. During 2019 He will be carrying out a very thorough examination - some several dozen different topics - will also involving hearings and consultations with the objective of the plan being approved early in 2020.

He will be testing the soundness of the plan - of particular interest may be.....whether:

- All of the homes can be delivered in the time span

- Five year housing supply of specific, deliverable sites in the form of housing allocations
- Enough provision for affordable homes, older persons accommodation, care homes, accessible housing, student housing, accommodation for gypsies and travellers
- what weight if any should be given to the second version of the NPPF (Part 11 was submitted prior to 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019)

## A7 Highways

Looking back at past years' Reports on Highways matters, the common theme was issues linked to Dimmer and Virador. This year is slightly less so but local road capacity and safety continue to be an concern.

We all approve of green, renewable and sustainable energy I'm sure, but there is a consequence. The biodigester at Wyke Farms has been expanded and so has the need to 'feed' it! There was a sudden increase in tractors hauling very large tankers at speed through the village. Along with other PCs, we wrote to Wyke Farms expressing concerns and about the volumes and speeds and a visit was arranged including representatives from all the Parishes . Consequently, contractors were asked to keep to the limit (recently raised from 25 to 30 for tractors ) . Our Speedwatch Team are also able to log speeding tractors separately on to the police data base = Ken may have more on that shortly. Also issue of damaged verges along length of road. Most trailers take up more than ½ the road!

More concerning is the decision by MDC to permit first the sighting and now the enlarging of a new Anaerobic Digester at Evercreech., As with the Bath and West Showground expansion, we weren't consulted either when the Application was first made in 2013, or prior to February 2019 when the variation of conditions was granted. We understand the amount of 'Foodstock' planned for delivery onto the site has nearly doubled to 95,000 tonnes p.a., and another 80,000 + tonnes of product will be taken out. The facility will take 'Foodstock' from a 30 mile radius and nobody seems sure where it will be taken to following processing.

As for the Bath & West, around this time last year, MDC confirmed the decision, again made without consultation with any Parish along the Cary Road , to use the B3153 as the main feeder route on and off the B&W site. Again, all the PCs and Cary4Cary and individuals made submissions to Mendip. Myself, local residents, PC representatives, and C4C attended planning meeting last April, but to no avail. There was support among members to halt the decision until more consultation could take place but this was defeated by a block vote.

A positive development has been the setting up of the B3153 Traffic Management Group, comprising representatives from the 4 parishes along the route, with the objective of ensuring we all work together to try to find solutions to the issues of traffic capacity and management on local road networks. Alford has commissioned an independent firm of consultants to identify issues and solutions there available, and I hope you'll have seen in the Lydford Bulletin and the Parish Newsletter, as well as on our own website, the system for reporting traffic incidents along the road. This will help produce real-time data as evidence as required.

Last year I reported on the approval of a 30 year contract to Viridor to build a WTS. So the site, which we were promised would be closed once landfill use became full or uneconomic, is being re-

purposed and will operate until at least 2050. That building has begun and is expected to be completed by the summer.

Our PCSO, Guy Dury, has again provided us with collated information on traffic accidents and related incidents on the local roads . In the year to early April there 11 accidents that the Police are aware of, and 13 instances of reported dangerous driving. There were also 10 instances relating to animals, excessive mud on the road and so on. These figures are broadly in line with last year.

We lost our SIDs last year because of cuts but we, along with other PCs are continuing to look at possible alternatives and collaborative solutions. . We do still have our CSW and we nominated the core team for the Somerset Chairman's Award last summer . Unfortunately we weren't successful , but that hasn't dented our appreciation for what they, and other members of the Team, do. Some of us support when we can but week in, week out, Ann & Ken Emsley commit themselves to trying to keep our community safer.

As a community we are trying to maintain the integrity and value of our environment and I hope that the PC will continue to play a positive role in doing that. To help we are continuing to develop strong links with neighbouring councils but we can't, and don't want, to do it alone and we need individual residents to take responsibility too, to get involved and challenge and support where needed.

### **A8 Ultra Fast Broadband**

The Directors of the CIC would like to thank everyone who has given support to the project. At the Parish Assembly last year, we reported that we had made good progress towards meeting the contract price but were still actively pursuing further donations. A small group of villagers did great work applying for grants and funds outside the village. The Lydford Fundraisers offered to run two events in the village in April and May to support the project. In May we received a contract from Openreach, but it had a 30-day validity. The Directors decided that it was in the interest of the community to enter the contract and continue to raise funds. The contract was signed in May with the first payment made in June.

Connecting Devon and Somerset, the organisation set-up to provide internet to the community, had contracted with Gigaclear to install an infrastructure including our villages but the Directors were not confident that this would be within an acceptable timescale or cost to individuals.

By October, Openreach were nearing completion of the survey stage and they released work instructions to their contractors to commence the 'build' phase. In October, Connecting Devon and Somerset announced a major delay to the Gigaclear program, such that all the areas covered by our project and many more besides were removed from the Gigaclear schedule. As of 16 April 2019, no revised schedule has been published and we believe this supports our decision to go with BT/Openreach.

In January, there was good news to start the year as there had been progress in West Lydford with fibre cables being installed and some connectors attached to them.

In February and March Openreach activity in West Lydford continued - some poles are defective and need to be replaced.

Our fundraising activities have continued and while we now have sufficient funds available to meet our contractual obligations with Openreach, we are still accepting donations to cover

administration costs such as fees levied by Companies House.

At present work continues with planned road closures and traffic management in order to replace defective poles and complete overhead cabling. This work will continue into June. Openreach have advised us that there will be some delay to completion because of problems of arranging road closures and Traffic Management Activities (TMAs) with Somerset County Council. Because the situation is very fluid, we are not able to give a precise date for going live. However, the information we have at present indicates that the live date will be towards the end of June, although this is subject to change due to matters over which we have no control. In this context, project completion or "going live" means completion of the infrastructure and an ability of residents to then order the fibre service from their chosen ISP who will then arrange the connection to their house. We will issue further updates if and when more information is available.

Sue Jameson  
Director Lydford Broadband Community Interest Company  
Company number 10931631

## A9 Parish Hall

Joining the Parish Hall Management Committee as Chair last Summer, I have been immediately impressed on two fronts. First the quality of the work carried out during the 2003 refurbishment and the improvements since, second by the stalwart dedication of the committee and community who seamlessly ensure this fantastic facility is available to all and runs so smoothly. This was epitomised by the recent spring clean of the hall where all the committee volunteered to help and, in the true spirit of the Lydfords and in only a short time, it was gleaming, thank you.

Fundraising has been steady through regular and occasional bookings which totalled 600 hours this financial year but slightly down on chargeable hours at around 435 hours in FY 2018/19 compared to 470 in the FY to 2018. Notable successes are the many clubs and societies which meet each month, Scrapbags and Yoga which meet weekly and sterling work to bring Moviola films to the community but film attendances were down on previous year. In addition, it was such a shame the freezing weather at the start of February thwarted the safe delivery of the film equipment to what would have been a great turnout. Who knew we have so many ABBA fans?

Moreover, we have focussed on trying to be here for the community. There was a very well supported Advent gathering to meet the Rev Jane, the hall has been used regularly in 2019 by the church whilst work was ongoing on St Peter's and recent electrical blackouts brought some chilled residents to the hall so they could make hot drinks. Helping with the community resilience is exactly what the hall should be about.

Spending within our means and having seen major maintenance and improvements over the past few years, this year attention has turned to the "little things". Documentation has been updated, more is going online (yes please see details of events, let us know of others and like us on Facebook [@lydfordparishhall.org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/lydfordparishhall.org.uk)), the stage tidied, snags identified for maintenance, obsolete electrical items removed, but notably a new kettle was purchased which brings me to a key point. The kettle was bought in Castle Cary and as a Committee we agreed it was important that the hard-earned funds raised to maintain the hall should support local businesses, as much as possible, when we need to spend. Of note it cost the same as online or from a national retailer so was an

easy decision to make.

To continue to expand this policy of supporting our community we can better appreciate the expertise in our midst. According to the last national census over half the adults in the community are still working so events during the working day will not be accessible to everyone and it is clear many of us know many others in the locality but not all know the totality of talent that exists. The aspiration is that the hall reaches out to current and new potential users alike so during the next year the committee will be considering a variety of opportunities to inform community what this hall can offer, listen to what the community needs this place to be in the near and longer term and examine how the community's expertise can support us too. The hall AGM at the end of May will provide more information. I reiterate my predecessors' comments that we do need the support of everyone to keep this asset in shape for the benefit of the community and urge all to take every opportunity to use the hall whenever possible to bring in the necessary revenue.

In the meantime, it has been a pleasure to take on the Chair of the Charity and Management Committee with such a lovely and dedicated team. My sincere thanks to them for the past year and to the Parish Council for the opportunity to speak this evening.

Sue Jameson - Chair, Lydford Parish Hall Management Committee. Registered Charity 1099268

### A10 Lydford Sports & Social Club

- The Sports Club is still fielding a First and a Second Eleven cricket team in the Somerset Cricket League. This is quite an achievement for a small village as Yeovil now has only one team and Glastonbury has none.
- We have a fairly large very active junior section with teams aged 10-16. We arrange coaching for them
- and they play junior league matches. We are very grateful to those who help to run this section of the club and would like to stress that we welcome girls as well as boys.
- we have a skittles team that does quite well in the local league. For the last two years we had had a ladies rounders team but unfortunately they will not be playing this year.
- The club has applied to several organisations for grants.
- The England Cricket Board has small grants (£1000 -£4000) for clubs affiliated to Somerset Cricket Board. We have applied for a grant to repair our roll on roll off covers
- We have applied to Mendip Council community based funding for a grant.
- Virador has awarded us a £14,000 grant towards the cost of installing new practice nets
- The annual East v West cricket match will be on Friday July 12th and the Gala is on Saturday the 13th
- July.
- The club will be helping with security at the Glastonbury Festival again this year to raise funds.
- The Sports Club Committee would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support and their help financing the grass cutting and arranging and paying for the ROSPA report.

- I would finally like to mention Patrick Harland who died this morning. Patrick was a true gentleman
- and a very staunch supporter of the club. He will be sadly missed by us all.

### A11 St. Peter's Church Report

After four years of Vacancy a new incumbent was Licensed to the Wheathill Benefice at the end of October 2018. The Reverend Jane Durham has joined us having previously worked for several years in Liverpool. It was the wish of Jane to work in this area as her family live in Draycott which is near Langport. We are grateful for the help we received over the past four years and both agree that it is good to have someone to lead us and, most importantly, come with new ideas. Jane has worked with young people and it is both her, and our, wish that we will be able to get younger people involved in the life of the local Church. They are the future and, without them, it is going to be very difficult to keep the rural churches open as we know them today. Though the attendance at the larger Services i.e. Christmas, Easter and Remembrance is amazingly good the Church has to be kept for the villagers for the remainder of the year and, with costs increasing, it is, at times, difficult - but we must look to the future and that is what we are planning.

A decade ago the Church was left a Legacy on the undertaking that improvements were made in the Church. This has enabled the PCC to go forward and work has now been completed on the Chancel. We were also fortunate to obtain a Grant from the National Lottery and also Tesco Bags Of Help. To enhance the Church for the future it would be good to go forward with re-ordering the remainder of the building but this will entail raising a considerable amount of money and a lot of expertise with the initial plan.

The Churchyard has been kept in good condition with regular cutting of the grass to enhance the area which is enjoyed by many. Not always an easy task as there are still people who consider it is the correct place for their dogs to both walk freely and then cannot be bothered to pick up what they leave behind. Whatever is said to them appears to fall on deaf ears, but they are quick enough to tell us what they think of us when we ask a reasonable request - please keep your dog on a lead and pick up the poo!!!!

The CCTV cameras have been an asset and, though the swimmers have been a nuisance at times, we have not had any serious problems - thank goodness.

We have maintained the planting area round the War Memorial and thank the Parish Council to helping with the cost of the autumn planting. We will plant again for the summer. We do notice that there always appears to be new dents in the railings - some of which members of the PCC have repaired - and, in one case, the perpetrator, when approached by the Police, came back and carried out the repairs!!!!