

Draft

**Minutes of the meeting of Shirwell Parish Council
held on the
10th November 2022 in the Village Hall**

Present

Cllr J Friend (chairman)
Mrs C Parkhouse
Cllr R Pelling
Cllr Mrs S Pine
Cllr S Shortridge
Cllr J Watts

Also present County Councillor A Davis, District Councillor J Tucker and 1 member of the public

Officer

G Dwyer

Nov22/1 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Mrs L Campbell. It was noted that Cllr Mrs Campbell had resigned from the Parish Council due to relocation.

Nov22/2 Public Question Time

- A member of the public drew the Councils attention to the poor condition of the road marking in the village adjacent to the Church. In particular it was noted that this was causing problems for a partially sighted Parishioner.
- A member of the public drew the Councils attention to the poor road markings on the Abbey Road Xing which was heavily used by school pupils, including those from the Shirwell area.

Nov22/3 Minutes of the meeting held on the 13th October 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes as previously circulated be approved

Nov22/4 Matters arising from the minutes

There were none

Nov22/5 Inspection of Defibrillator

The defibrillator had been inspected and cleaned.
It was noted that the letter from the manufacturer detailing a potential fault on the defibrillator was for a different machine and thus not relevant.

Nov22/6 Report of the County Councillor

County Cllr Mrs Davis had forwarded her report and a copy is attached to these minutes. She highlighted the pressures on the County Council budget, so far savings of £36m pound had been identified in the current year and a further £37m was needed. In addition the budget for 2023/2024 needed to be reduced by an additional £75m

Nov22/7 Questions to the County Councillor

There were no questions

Nov22/8 Report of the District Councillor

District Councillor J Tucker briefly highlighted the budget problems facing the District Council. He also highlighted the key staff problems facing the District Council although the Planning performance was improving.

- Elections will be held on the 4.5.23 and an open meeting for existing and prospective Councillors would be arranged for January
- The hotel in Ilfracombe was housing 150 migrants against the wishes of the district council with obvious adverse effects on an area that relied heavily on tourism.
- Problems were still occurring with refuse collection due to staff shortages

Nov22/9 Questions to the District Councillor

There were no questions

Nov22/10 Correspondence

The following correspondence has been circulated

- DALC newsletter
- Election timetable

Other general correspondence was noted

Nov22/11 Planning Applications

Planning Application 76102 Land Adjacent to Southlands. Outline application for erection of a dwelling with some matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout & scale) **RESOLVED** to make no comment

-Planning Application 76205 Tarega Muddiford Barnstaple Devon

Extension and conversion of garage to provide additional accommodation at EX31 4EY **RESOLVED** to recommend **APPROVAL**

Nov22/12 Planning Decisions

There were none recorded at the meeting

Nov22/13 Cheques for Payment

A cheque for £125.00 to G Dwyer (Clerks salary) was signed at the meeting

Nov22/14 Reports from Councillors

Members quesried whether it would be possible for the Parish Council to repair the road surface markings **RESOLVED** the Clerk to make enquiries

Nov22/15 Clerks Report

The Clerk reported that the cheque signatory mandate was finally in order and that the Bank had made an ex gratia payment of £150.00 to the Parish Council as compensation

The Clerk tabled a financial projection to the year end outlining the expected outturns. After discussion and consideration of aspects affecting the Council it was **RESOLVED** to maintain the precept for 2023/2024 at the current level of £2710

Nov22/16 Public Questions regarding business on this agenda

There was none

Nov22/17 Urgent Business

There was none

The meeting closed at 7.52 pm

Chairman:.....

Dated:.....

County Councillors report

November 2022

Financial position of Devon County Council

Devon County Council provides vital services to over 800,000 people from a net revenue budget of £630 million. Devon has the largest local road network in the country and a larger proportion of older people compared to the national average. In the eleven years up to and including 2021/22 the authority's core funding from Government reduced by over £180 million or 72% in real terms. The County Council ended the 2021/22 financial year with a £3.3 million overspend, the first time this had happened in 30 years. We are not alone. New research by the County Councils Network shows 17 English authorities face a combined deficit of more than £500 million in 2023/24.

This year, next year – the mounting overspend

The uplift in funding provided by last year's Spending Review has been wiped out by rising inflation and increasing demand in Adult Social Care and Children's Services. It reflects unprecedented pressures throughout local government. The County Council - already budgeted to make £36 million of in-year savings - must somehow find a further £37 million by the end of March.

Inflation is in excess of 10% this year, reflected in ever increasing prices for supplier services and impacting on construction costs where inflation is even higher. Some 80p in every £1 the Council spends is with external suppliers. This is particularly the case with social care services which are already under huge pressures and recruitment challenges.

In 2023/24 the savings required will be £75 million. Savings on this scale mean a choice between previously unthinkable cuts to vital local services or financial failure within 12-24 months.

The risk of reductions to a bare minimum level of service required by law is now very real.

In addition, like many councils, we face a worrying SEND overspend in the Government's Dedicated Schools Grant driven by rising demand for special needs places and increasing cost of placements in independent schools. In a number of councils, including Devon, the Government has instructed that the deficit be placed in a special adjustment account and rolled over each year in accordance with a Statutory Override which is due to expire after this financial year.

In Devon's case, 41 children requiring additional special needs placements in independent schools since September, the start of the new academic year, means our projected overspend is currently showing a rise of over £2 million to £37.2 million which would take our accumulated deficit to £123.8 million at the end of this financial year. This is well beyond our reserves balance. If the deficit were required to come onto the Council's accounts, it would place Devon in immediate financial jeopardy.

The County Council is continuing to take action to reduce the overspend as much as possible. Our own special school capacity is planned to increase by 129 places this year which will reduce the need for more expensive

independent placements. We are directing mainstream schools to provide more placements where appropriate and also exerting firm management on the Education, Health and Care Plan process to ensure quicker decision-making, improved communication with families and approving plans only where it is really necessary and in line with statutory guidance.

However, just like other councils, we do not have the money to overcome a total deficit of this scale. At the time of writing, we are awaiting a decision from Government on whether half the deficit will be met from the national Safety Valve Fund and if the County Council will be allowed to spread the cost of repaying the remainder from additional borrowing. We urgently need a decision or at least the temporary respite that Government intends to roll the deficit forward a further year.

The Chancellor has warned all Government departments to look for further efficiency savings. If that translates into funding reductions for local government coming on top of soaring inflation it will create a perfect storm in council finances. We are supporting the County Councils Network and LGA in lobbying Government for additional funding for local government. The Leader, John Hart, is asking Devon Members of Parliament to support Devon with the following actions.

Devon is not just calling for financial support and doing nothing to help itself.

The council had already put a freeze on staff recruitment in non-frontline areas, delayed planned investment in IT and infrastructure projects, cut its heating and lighting bills, squeezed all external contracts, stopped some routine road maintenance and reduced winter gritting routes as well as reviewing its school transport contracts and public transport subsidies.

Devon MPs were being briefed so they could champion the county's case at Westminster and the authority was working with the County Councils' Network and the Local Government Association on national lobbying.

**Reminder of how to report a Highway issue;
Report a problem - Roads and transport (devon.gov.uk)
0345 155 1004**

Live chat is available on the Highways website Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 4.30 pm (4 pm on Fridays). To report a problem with road maintenance, traffic management and parking, streetlights and signs and public rights of way

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