

DRAFT

MINUTES OF MANATON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MONDAY 20th MAY 2024

1 WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed those attending

2 APOLOGIES

Received from District Cllr John Farrand

3 MINUTES OF THE 2023 APM

The minutes of the 2023 meeting having been posted online and available for inspection in the hall, a proposal to accept them was proposed, seconded and passed nem con and they were signed by the Chair.

4 CHAIR'S REPORT

Cllr Boughey reported as follows:

Composition of Council: at the annual meeting of the Parish Council on 13 May 2024 he had been re-elected chair and Cat Frampton vice-chair. Cllr Beyts had resigned with effect from 8 April 2024 and Cllr Keene with effect from 13 May 2024, and the Chair thanked them both for their service to the parish and the Council. Cllr Beyts had served both as chair and vice-chair and had for some years been very active as councillor with responsibility for planning matters. There were therefore two vacancies for councillors although it was anticipated that one would shortly be filled by Mr James Kidner under the co-option procedure. Other councillors were also continuing with their responsibilities unchanged: Cllr Mount, highways; Cllr Warne, assets south; Cllr Wylie, PC representative on the parish hall committee; and himself, PC representative on the Games Court committee and for the time being assets north. The Council had had a new clerk, Lucie Moore, since September 2023.

Events during the year: the Chair noted the National Trust's intention to sell Half Moon. North Bovey and Manaton would be joining forces to light a bonfire on 6 June as part of the D-Day 80th anniversary commemoration. Thanks to Robin Moore for organising the litter picking session which took place in February. The Council did not have a proper website but only a blog, which was not particularly suitable for its purposes and had been advised that a website was likely to be a legal requirement in the future, it had been decided to look into setting one up. The cost was at present not known, but anyone with a view for or against was invited to make it known.

Accounts for 2023-2024: copies of the Council's draft accounts for the previous year were available in the hall. Total income was £8,779, of which £980 was a grant from the Show and Fair specifically for improving the Mellowmead boardwalk and £175 was advertising income for advertising in the Bulletin in the year 2024-2025. £258 had been received from the sale of coronation mugs, which had not been budgeted for. Expenditure was £7,214. Taking these amounts into account, income and expenditure had been pretty well balanced.

Budget for 2024-2025: the Council had requested a precept increase of 7%. The unavoidable large items of expenditure were clerk's employment followed by grass cutting, both of which included a large element of labour costs which had increased. Insurance had been a large item in recent years but it had been possible to reduce the premium by several hundred

pounds by ceasing to insure via the insurance brokers. General maintenance and repairs, £1,696, was another large unavoidable expense – for example, in 2023-2024 emergency tree work had cost £850 before vat. The Council had also decided to establish sinking funds for election costs (payable to Teignbridge DC) and defibrillator costs (battery and pads for the defibrillator need to be replaced regularly at quite a high cost). It was expected that the standing charge for electricity for the air ambulance light would increase substantially when the three year contract ends in December 2024.

5 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Assets North: The Chair reported that: assets were in good shape, the Jubilee oak was doing well, now enhanced by a handsome plaque carved by David Pirkis; the daffodils planted in autumn 2023 had flowered and enhanced the Green; the playground was in reasonable condition with the grass cut regularly by the Council's contractor and a general tidy up having been carried out by volunteers earlier in the year. The annual report from RoSPA had shown up some minor defects not requiring immediate attention.

Games Court: the Chair reported that the Games Court sub-committee of the Council had decided in 2023 that the aim should be to have the court resurfaced in 2025 with fund-raising to be done in 2024. The membership was 25 as at November 2022, compared with 28 in 2022.

Planning: former Cllr Beyts reported that 17 planning applications had been lodged during the preceding 12 months, as against 15 in the previous year. He noted that in some cases the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) was slow in deciding on applications, which had led the Council to write to the chief executive officer a number of times during the year to attempt to have planning issues resolved, but without success. James Aven had succeeded Chris Hart as head of development management at DNPA. Outstanding applications related to Sandy Meadow, Soussons Farm, a new barn on Swinedown and the Devon Horse and Pony Sanctuary (where the planning process had been continuing for three years and five months). The Council did consider all applications and commented where it thought appropriate, even though its ability to influence decisions was very limited. He noted that he had been responsible for planning matters for nine years and wished his successor good luck in the role.

Assets South: Cllr Warne reported on the cider apple picking and juice making afternoon in autumn 2023. A new bridge had been installed on the western of the new boardwalks in Mellowmead. Parishioners reported to the meeting that on occasion machinery on the South West Water sewage works had been heard making a noise which caused concern – such events should be notified to SW Water so that they could respond and avoid a breakdown in the equipment.

Highways: Cllr Mount reported that most of her attention was given to reporting potholes, and some progress had been made over the year, but Devon County Council lacked funds to do all that was necessary. New potholes should be reported to her or directly to Devon CC.

6 REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

No councillors were present and no written reports had been received.

7 GUEST SPEAKERS

DNP Ranger Rob Steemson: over the year with the help of volunteers he had erected seven signs on public rights of way and a further fourteen were on order, together with three for permissive paths on Holwell Lawn. Work would be done on the bridleway over Houndtor Down. The DNPA's policy is to replace stiles with gates where possible, and the stiles into the Becky Falls estate from Mellowmead and on the path to Manaton Rocks had been accordingly replaced with gates, and a gate to replace the stile at the road junction at Becky Falls had been ordered. A gate for Slinkers Lane had been ordered and would be put in position in due course. Under the management agreement with Devon CC, DNPA was responsible only for the surface of paths, the landowner being responsible for everything else. The yellow signs about no camping or stopping overnight were put up around Easter and taken down in October. A question was asked about hang gliding and para gliding and it was confirmed that in the national park these were only permitted from authorised sites. In reply to a further question about the greatest problems faced by rangers, he said that these were presented by the public, in particular litter and the aggressive attitude of some people, requiring body cams to be worn sometimes.

Churchwarden Rose Underhill: Chris Butcher had retired as churchwarden, replaced by Tim Baily. Various permissions were still awaited before the extension to the church could be built. There is a new priest in charge of the North Dartmoor group of parishes of which Manaton is part, the Right Revd Nicholas McKinnel, retired bishop of Plymouth, who was licensed on 30 April 2024.

8 Matters raised by residents

Mr N Beyts expressed concern at the proposed change from analogue to digital phone signal, even though he understood that the changeover was now to be postponed from September 2025 to 2027. About 75% of residents did not have a mobile signal. He had registered as wishing to keep his analogue line, but was not permitted to register anyone else – everyone who wishes to keep their analogue line must register individually. He suggested that it should be made clear to Openreach by as many people as possible that many in the village did not have a mobile signal and were elderly and vulnerable and wished to stay with analogue. Those who were vulnerable, especially those with aid calls, should be encouraged to register.

It was reported that at times in the recent past a car had been parked on the road from the village hall to Neadon in such a way as to obstruct the highway. However the general view was that there was no obstruction at the present time and that there was no action to be taken beyond monitoring the position and considering action if the problem recurred.

The question of upkeep of parking areas on the lane to Water and Beckhams was also raised. Cllr Warne confirmed that these were not on parish council land and so not the responsibility of the parish council. He felt that any upkeep works would best be carried out by local residents.

The meeting closed 7.57 pm.

