Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting of Mortehoe Parish Council held at Mortehoe Village Hall on April 27th 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

Present Members: (Chairman) S Woodman, K Cook , J Richards, M Wilkinson, D Duffield, D Barron, O Bell, Ron Ley,

Clerk: Mrs S. Hocking and Mrs Keiff, Mr D. Bleasdale,
Also Present: 1 member of the public and Councillor Andrea Davis

72/2022 Apologies for absences: J Dicker

72/2022 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May Via Microsoft Teams at 7 p.m. . *Noted (the minutes were approved in May 2021)* ***Proposed APPROVAL. Seconded, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY***

73/2022 Matters arising from the Minutes – None

74/2022 District Council Report from Councillor Malcolm Wilkinson.
Covid 19 Councillor Wilkinson complimented the council and officers regarding their handling of covid but cautioned against complacency.
Tarka Leisure Centre - The brand new centre due to open in June will have a large range of facilities for all ages. Facilities include three group exercise studios and dedicated virtual indoor cycling studio, 25 metre swimming pool, separate 20 metre teaching pool, four court sports hall, six indoor tennis courts, four outdoor tennis courts, a full-size floodlit 3G. pitch, indoor endless ski slope, soft play, community room and café.
Coastal Communities Group - Councillor Wilkinson reported on his involvement with this group, there are currently two motions under discussion, regarding the discharging of wastewater in to the sea, and the climate emergency.
Compliments - Councillor Wilkinson complimented councillor Cook for getting North Devon recognised as a World Surfing Reserve
Affordable Housing Scheme – The affordable housing scheme is moving forward.

75/2022 National Trust - Mr Fairhurst reported a busy year, 23,000 trees have been planted without plastic guards. Cattle are now grazing on Morte Point using a new-collar system

76/2022 Finance Report – Mrs Keiff (Responsible Finance Officer) gave a résumé of the main points of the accounts. A copy of the report is available for inspection in the Minutes.

77/2022 Chairman's Report – the Chairman gave a report of the main activities of the council over the last year.

Chairman's Report 2022

Many thanks to everyone for coming this evening. It is very good to be meeting in person again after two years of 'Teams' or 'Zoom' They are never quite the same.

My twelve months as Chairman have seen many challenges and some exceptionally busy times for us all. The Parish Council activities have proved no exception and the very high numbers of visitors over the last year/18 months have brought not only record years on the car park but other issues to deal with.

2021
At the start of my year as Chairman, Covid was still an issue and the barriers were reinstated in the centre of Woolacombe as part of our ongoing efforts to keep everyone as safe as possible whilst queuing for shops although they were also used for additional seating!

The Council continued to meet via 'Teams' until May when we resumed 'normal' face to face meetings albeit, inside and outside the Meadow Pavilion. We continued our regular Monday Morning updates, which have continued through to the present time, and proved to be a valuable way of maintaining contact and discussing ongoing problems.

Parking in the Parish - the greatly increased number of 'staycation' visitors to the whole of the West Country, whilst welcome for businesses, proved challenging to all or us with the huge pressure on parking issues. Over the past two years, the Parish Council have continued in very lengthy meetings with Devon County Council into ways of improving and adapting the existing parking legislation within the Parish. These have resulted in changes currently being introduced now in several areas in the two villages. Our thanks must go to Councillor Davis for her patient and, some would say dogged, determination to try to resolve some of the many problems that occur.
Wardening - whilst the legislation is present to curtail the abuse of parking regulations, recruiting problems to ensure the regular monitoring of parking (particularly along the Esplanade) has lead, once again, to large numbers of vans parking overnight. In recent weeks however, night-time patrols, have taken place with 88 vans receiving a parking ticket over the Easter weekend.
If you know of anyone looking for well-paid work, vacancies exist this year for Civil Parking Enforcement Officers.

Affordable Housing - as Chairman of the Woolacombe and Mortehoe Community Land Trust, I am pleased to say that meetings and in depth discussions have taken place throughout the year with all parties involved. The new scheme is in the final stages of preparation before going through the planning process and will supply 21 units of rent-only properties in Woolacombe to help meet the demand for housing.
If you know of anyone who is in need of housing, please urge them to register with North Devon Council's housing register. .Only those with a proven link to the Parish (under North Devon Homes criteria) will be eligible for the scheme
The strictly limited number of houses will remain as housing stock in perpetuity for this community and will always remain as rent only.
In the near future, there will be a public meeting in which all those interested in the scheme will be able to join the community endeavour, view and comment on the plans.
This scheme has been the result of over 20 years of work by the council to try and resolve the growing problems in this and many other communities in tourist areas in Britain caused by the unprecedented demand for second and holiday homes. The diminishing stock of local housing and rented accommodation has had a real effect on the community and businesses within the community who find the lack of a labour force a challenge. It has also affected our community organisations and retained crews for emergency services within the Parish.

Neighbourhood Plan – there will also be additional public meetings this year as the Council embarks on the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. This plan has legal status within the planning system and is important for us a community to examine our priorities for the future and to protect the things that really matter.

Meadow Sports Field - the Council will, shortly, be embarking on a scheme of work to improve the Pavilion and sports pitches. The Pavilion have proved a popular and valuable resource for the Community and a wonderful and safe place to hold pre-school activities and sports events.

Platinum Jubilee Events - the Meadow will be the venue for many of the community events for the Jubilee. This include:
Please get involved, the Jubilee committee would welcome as much help as possible.

Skateboard Ramp - The easing of Covid restrictions during 2021 meant that the ramp could be fully operational and proved to be phenomenally popular amongst its many users. Skateboarding competitions held last year saw big crowds coming to the Meadow to support the many participants (many very young).
Plans are afoot to improve this very popular facility. Special thanks to Councillor Dicker for all his work in obtaining and setting up the ramp.

Other Initiatives – the two Council owned play areas in the Parish have seen unprecedented use since the Covid restrictions were eased. In a joint community and council work party, 40 cubic meters of bark (two very big piles of bark) were installed in the Woolacombe and Mortehoe Play areas.
Installation of Bike Rack – a grant has been obtained for the provision of the new bike rack in the centre of the village which has already proved very popular since its installation in February

Marine Drive - had a record year last year. It was also a year that proved challenging with the record numbers of visitors to the area. Thanks are due to all the staff involved including two new staff members to join our long established staff member, Mr Roy Walker. They are Elaine Hedger and Gary Rodgers. Thanks are also due to Vanguard Security and the National Trust.

Death of Councillor Richards – members were greatly saddened with the untimely death of Jon last year. He had served on the council for 26 years and was behind many of the practical projects and schemes over those years including the Meadow Sports Pavilion.
New Councillor- the council were delighted to be able to co-opt Jon's daughter Jodie who joined the Council last summer.

Thanks due to:
Special community pulling together in times of difficulty – e.g. Ukraine and other emergencies

Fellow Councillors; Andrea; National Trust; N.D.C. and D.C.C.
Staff etc.

78/2022 Devon Council Report Councillor Davis reported.
Covid Vaccinations - Fourth vaccinations are now available across Devon.
Refugees - Devon is hosting many Afghans and at least 400 Ukrainian families, more are expected throughout the year, Devon Council is providing support during this difficult time.
Parking Restrictions - New restriction come into effect in May.
Skateboard Ramp - The new skateboard ramp in Woolacombe has been accomplished and proved highly popular.

BDUK – The community broadband voucher scheme has been cancelled, because the vouchers are going to Airband, BDUKs website is currently incorrect, Councillor Cook stated that "BDUK has let us down and we deserve an apology" this was agreed, and Councillor Davis stated that a letter would be forthcoming.

79/2022 Community Award Nomination

Two candidates for the award had been nominated. The Chairman presented the first to Mrs S Hocking for her 22 Years long service as Clerk and the second went to Mrs Keiff for her 22 years services as the responsible financial officer.

80/2022 Any Other Business –

Tarka Trail - Councillor Ley Asked Councillor Davis for more information on the possible completion date of the Tarka cycle trail. Councillor Davis informed council that due to funding issues the completion had been delayed. Work is ongoing to secure further funding.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 7.55pm