Minutes of the meeting of Mortehoe Parish Council held in the Council Chamber, The Esplanade, Woolacombe, on Monday February 20th 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Members: D Duffield (Chairman), M Wilkinson, D Barron, J Richards, K Cook(Vice Chair) , O Bell, S Phillips, J Dicker, Andrea Davis
Clerk: D Bleasdale
Also Present: 5 member of the public.

20/2023 Apologies for absence: S Woodman

21/2023 Public Speaking: Molly Bower Reiterated the concerns of her letter, the Clerk will respond to this letter.

Mr Michael Whipp came to thank the council for their support regarding the building of his new house.

Rob Joules, Kelly Bezer, came to discuss Marine Drive and that the National Trust will not be renewing the lease with the Parish Council in March 2025.
Mr Joules reiterated the letter he sent out in December 2022 (see attached)
Mr Joules stated this was a national decision and that the National Trust needed to know what its decision was before coming to inform the parish council.
Asked by councillor Barron if this decision had taken into account the wider community, the income the Parish Council make and reinvest into the area.
Mr Joules claimed the whole picture was presented and the decision was made, because the National Trust has to make a decision its own interest.
Mr Joules stated that 50 percent of the users are expected to be members anyway that won't pay, when asked if it can be proven that it is more profitable to the National Trust the way things are now and less detrimental to the local community in terms of services, Mr Joules stated it was not about profit and spoke of the "process" that he could not elaborate on, and that the chances of overturning this decision was very slim because the information he had provided had been discussed by senior executives that had arrived at the decision.
Councillor Bell asked why the council couldn't be involved in the discussion at an earlier stage as it relates entirely to the councils function in the community, Mr Joules responded by stating that there is no point in discussing this locally when the National Trust are making decisions centrally.
Councillor Bell summarised that there was no point at which the council could feed into a decision before it was made, Mr Joules confirmed this was the case.
Miss Bezer then spoke of the "process" this did not elaborate on earlier "process"
Councillor Dicker asked if Mr Joules put anything forward or did he just gather financials and make assumptions, Mr Joules replied "No, we gathered a range of options" talking of the "process" once again, Mr Joules also said that you (the council) weren't pushing for getting the lease back.
Asked if Mr Joules had considered the detrimental effects for the community and the parish, he responded "you will have less money than before and have to spend less" he did not seem able to mention any specifics, and directed the conversation to how the National Trust looks at its charitable purpose.
Councillor Barron asked if the National Trust is willing to take on the additional costs of maintaining areas beyond marine drive, this question was not answered, Miss Bezer went on to talk about Marine Drive maintenance.
Councillor Richards asked what was the point in building a carpark at the top of Challacombe Hill when their purpose was always to take back Marine drive, Mr Joules responded with talk of more access to nature and didn't mention access to the Spring Classic.

Councillor Wilkinson asked if the National Trust had considered that due to the lose of income the area will not maintained to the standard that it is now and if the National Trust are going to keep the carpark open all year instead of it being free in winter, how are you going to sell this to the public? Mr Jules said those two points were factored in to the decision-making process.
Councillor Barron said that as a council we should have had some representation at that decision stage to the executive committee as he does not believe the detrimental impact that it will have on this community was relayed adequately, because the impact is going to be quite dramatic.
Miss Bezer stated the impact to the Parish Council as the National Trust understands it was put forward in the options that were presented, Councillor Dicker said it would be nice to see what the National Trusts understandings are, and to allow us to see a copy of that, to see if the National Trusts understandings are the same as ours.
Councillor Bell asked if any option or alternative lease or terms can be negotiated? eventually Mr Joules said No, Miss Bezer said yes, because they can't stop anybody presenting a case if they so wish, (however it was not said who this was to be presented to)
Councillor Cook stated that we should be discussing the exact opposite to this, because unlike the National Trust take on it, this area is not comparable to other parishes, this place has a significant relationship that is at the heart of the National Trust, the streets in Woolacombe reflect the names of the founders of the National Trust in this area, it is such a significant land holding that you have and it has been managed in a way to create a flagship for the National Trust, it is a great disappointment that we can not maintain this symbiotic relationship we have had for years and now it will become a parasitic one, and that we should be working better together allowing the community to maintain its present functions and not the detriment to all the people around but how we can come with other innovations that tie ourselves together and explain to the wider public why this is such a special place, and that is the great disappointment that this opportunity has been lost to reflect all the work that has been put into this special place, the history of it, we are now reduced to falling back, reducing what we are as a community, reducing the view of the community on the National Trust and the way the National Trust will now be seen as the robbers, when it could have been maintained as the special relationship that we have got, which was something that we where all so proud of.
Councillor Phillips made the point that the National Trust talk of charity while taking things away from others and looking after themselves and not the community. The area will go downhill rapidly as things are not maintained.
Asked if the Mr Joules and Miss Bezer will feed back what the have heard today, Miss Bezer said that notes would be fed back.
Councillor Bell asked to see the options paper and Miss Bezer said she would send it.

22/2023 Police Report: Less serious violence 3, Burglary 2, Stalking 1, Theft 1

23/2023 Declaration of Interests: none

24/2023 Minutes: It was Proposed to APPROVE as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on January 16th at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

25/2023 County Council Report: See Attached

26/2023 Planning

76458 Siting of non illuminated Orientation Panel at Field to the West of Challacombe Road and Georgeham Road Junction Opposite Little Roadway Farm Camping Park Woolacombe Devon. Approval proposed by councillor Wilkinson, Seconded by councillor Barron, all in favour, approved unanimously

76640 Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) and 3 (schedule of materials) attached to planning permission 74144 (alterations and extension to dwelling) to allow for amended rainscreen options at Combesgate House Mortehoe Woolacombe Devon EX34 7EB.
The council stated this is an over development of the plot and doesn't take parking into consideration, they also feel that this will cause a loss of amenity. Refusal proposed by councillor Wilkinson, Seconded by councillor Dicker, all in favour, approved unanimously.

76553 Extensions, raising of roof & conversion of loft space together with internal alterations to dwelling and associated works at 63 Chichester Park Woolacombe Devon EX34 7BZ. Approval proposed by councillor Barron, Seconded by councillor Cook, 7 in favour, 1 abstaining, Approved.

Planning Approved.

74921 Erection of 1 agricultural-tied dwelling at Ivycott Farm Access to Ivycott Farm Woolacombe Devon EX34 7HL

76291 Conversion of redundant agricultural barn into a single dwelling at Highridge Barn Woolacombe Devon EX34 7HL

76330 Proposed new balcony at Gordon Lodge Mortehoe Woolacombe Devon EX34 7DZ

76260 Application for a lawful development certificate for existing residential dwellinghouse at Little Phares Cottage Road From Lower Claypark To Mortehoe Station Road Mortehoe Devon EX34 7DU

76255 Demolition of conservatory together with erection of rear extension to dwelling at 16 Hartland View Road Woolacombe Devon EX34 7HB

WITHDRAWN
75642 Variation of condition 2 (use restriction) attached to planning permission 44691 to allow for a 5 year temporary change of use to a workshop & storage of machinery for personal use at Land at Station Road Mortehoe Woolacombe Devon EX34 7HD

PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED
76347 Prior notification for the erection of a polytunnel at Land at Warcombe Lane Station Road Mortehoe Devon

8/2023: District Councillors Report: S106 funding is going before North Devon Council's Strategy and Resources Committee

27/2023 Spring Classic: The Council decided not to object to the licence application.

28/2023 Correspondence i) Molly Bower, Mary Lethbridge

29/2023 North Devon Surfing Reserve: Councillor Cook informed the council of the dedication ceremony to be held Friday, 12th May, reception and official presentation on the

Greensward at Woolacombe, overlooking the sea with a commemorative plaque at Combesgate.

30/2023 The Pavillion/Meadow and Ramp: We are still waiting for a price for the internet installation, the Parish Clerk will chase this.

31/2023 Matters Brought Forward with the Consent of the Chairman:
Citizen of the year award nominations are open for this year.
The Hedge on Ossaborough Lane needs cutting back, the clerk with contact Verdant leisure about this.

32/2023 New Marquee: The council gave their approval for the purchase of a new Marquee.

33/2023 Cheques and payments for approval and Signature. The following payments were approved and signed at the meeting. The R.F.O. provided a list of payments in conjunction with bank statements which were also checked and approved at the meeting:

Payments for Authorisation

A/C	Name & Contact	Balance
BG	British Gas	625.54
BLOOM	Bloom Brothers	540.00
DALC	Devon Ass of Local Councils	72.00
FIR	Fircroft Signs	144.00
JEW	Jewson Ltd	366.91
LR	Lee Rulton	300.00
NDDC	NDDC	229.40
RICHWATH	Richard Wathen	0.00
RICOH	Ricoh UK	106.09
STAFF	Emma Stafford	200.00
STAPLES	Staples Direct	-0.01
STAR	Pete Starbuck	2083.33
SWW	SWW	327.97
Janet Keiff		208.00
Daniel Bleasdale		2753.89
Paye		1157.41
	Totals:	9114.53

Part 2
Correspondence not requiring discussion is available in the Council Chamber
Part 3
Confidential Matters

24/2023 The waffle house: Staff have been observed putting the rubbish by the public bins, the Clerk will raise this issue with them privately.

25/2023 Public Conveniences: No decision has been made. There is legislation coming up that will make public conveniences a district council responsibility.

26/2023 Kings Coronation Event: The council would like more information about the type of event that Mr Starbuck and Mr Woodman have in mind.

27/2023 Spring Classic: It was agreed to invoice them prior to the event for the use of Combesgate.

Yours faithfully ***Daniel Bleasdale***
The meeting ended at 08:55 p.m.

Mortehoe Parish Council
County Councillors Report

February 2023 New Chief Executive at Devon County Council
Donna Manson joins the County Council from her role as Chief Executive of The Highland Council, Scotland's largest rural authority.
There since 2018, Donna led the Highland Council in developing an ambitious, sustainable, and connected vision for the Highlands during a time of immense change and challenge. Prior to this, Donna was a Director of Children's Services and a Head Teacher. Her top priority for Devon is to deliver significant improvement to Devon's Children's Services. But more broadly, Donna wants to re-energise Devon as a caring and inclusive place for young people and families, the elderly and vulnerable, and as a forward looking place to work and do business with opportunities for all to thrive and do well.

£2 Bus fare until June 2023 Bus passengers in Devon can take advantage of a cap on single bus fares as part of the Department for Transport's new fares initiative, through the Government's Help for Households campaign. Bus users will pay no more than £2 for a single journey when boarding the bus anytime in February, March, April, May and June. With people up and down the country facing the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, many can save money whilst choosing a more sustainable method of transport. A recent report by Stagecoach found that motorists replacing some journeys by bus and active travel could save consumers up to £6,000 a year. In addition, the report found that having the right measures in place to encourage people to make the switch, including cheaper fares, could help remove one billion miles of car journeys each week and cut CO2 by nearly 400,000 tonnes per week.
Why not try out the bus, for £2 return a day out in Barnstaple would be bargain, or catch the bus to the railway station in Barnstaple and have a day out, it is a lovey trip to Okehampton. For more information on the £2 singles fares scheme, terms and conditions and exclusions, visit the Travel Devon website.
DCC Council tax 2023-2024
DCC council members have agreed a 4.99 per cent increase in council tax for the coming financial year.

It comprises 2.99 per cent for general services with an extra two per cent for adult care. It means an extra £1.49 a week for the average Band D householder.
There will be increases of 18.4 per cent in spending on children's services and 8.8 per cent on adult services to keep up with a rocketing rise in demand.

Councillors also agreed an extra £2 million for roads and drainage since the target budget was set last month to tackle the increase in potholes caused by this winter's icy spells and torrential rainfall.
The revenue spending on services will increase from £629 million to £696 million in 2023/24. That's an overall rise of 10.5 per cent in spending. In addition, councillors approved a capital budget of £172.5 million for investment in infrastructure such as schools and roads.
The council tax for an average Band D home will rise by £77.67 to £1,634.13 – an extra £1.49 a week.
The budget includes savings, alternative funding and additional income of £47.5 million

Highways update
This winter has posed challenges for the Highways and Traffic Management Service. The mix of prolonged sub-zero temperatures and heavy rain led to a rapid deterioration in the condition of the network highlighting the fragility of the asset following decades of under investment. Since April 2022 highways inspection team have assessed over 27,000 reports of potholes from members of the public. Over 10,000 reports were assessed in January alone, we were receiving as many as 500 reports per day. The team have been working hard to get on top of the backlog with a focus on the safety of the travelling public. Milestone, our term maintenance contractor, has increased their resources which has seen weekend working and over forty gangs working across the county. At the beginning of the month there was 3,000 potholes waiting to be repaired, this has reduced to approximately 2,000.
Following a quiet November, in which we saw very little in the way of gritting treatment, the extended cold snaps in December and January has seen us use over 15,000 tonnes of salt across 2,094 runs (the equivalent to 55 full, Countywide treatments on our Primary Salting Network). The average across the last four winters for the same period has been 8,919 tonnes and 1,597 runs.
This additional work has a knock on effect with the planned improvement works. Gritter drivers are limited in how many hours they can work which often means planned improvement works have to be deferred. In addition, with the safety of the network taking priority, a number of the patching gangs have been redeployed on to pothole repairs. Again, this means planned improvements will have been deferred.
The resolution of drainage assets referred for additional maintenance has slowed in the last few months to support the corporate financial challenge. However, over 10,000 defects have been addressed so far this financial year which clearly demonstrates the benefits of funding a focused programme of drainage asset defect identification.

We still have over 14,000 outstanding drainage asset defects across the county and works are continuing to resolve them.
The Traffic Team are reviewing the requests for new 20mph speed limits. To help determine which schemes are prioritised and to ensure consistency they will consider the new requests by applying
the same scoring matrix agreed at Cabinet. In addition to the speed limit requests the team are building an evidence base to support community consultation on the roll out of pay and display restrictions.
The new Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan is nearing completion. This document is important as it sets the future approach to the maintenance standards and strategies the County
adopts. Officers are planning to bring it to Cabinet in April for Member comments.

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

Andrea Davis
Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk

Nation Trust Letter

rob.joules@nationaltrust.org.uk
Direct line: +44 (0) 01271 891970
19 December 2022

By email

Dear Andrea,
Change at Marine Drive, Woolacombe
I am writing to you to let you know about a change that is happening at Marine Drive in Woolacombe in 2025. I wanted to share this information with you directly, explain the reasons behind the decision, and offer the opportunity to discuss this with me in person or by phone should you have any questions or comments.
In March 2025 the lease between Mortehoe Parish Council and the National Trust for the lease of Marine Drive and running of Marine Drive car park (behind Woolacombe dunes)
comes to an end. From this date the National Trust will manage Marine Drive in a similar way to other National Trust car parks in the area including Baggy Point and Heddon Valley.
Background to the decision
The National Trust acquired Marine Drive in 1984 from Devon County Council and the Personal Representatives of Miss RC Chichester. On acquisition, a fully repairing and maintaining (1954 Act) protected lease was granted to Mortehoe Parish Council for 25 years. In 2009 a new 16 year lease was signed with the Mortehoe Parish Council and this lease ends in March 2025.
Why has this decision been taken
Operating Marine Drive will help us deliver the three objectives of our National Trust mission in the 21st century: The act of preservation, how we deliver benefit to the

nation, and the promotion of our cause. There are four main reasons behind our decision:

1. Uniting the Woolacombe beach, dunes and coast site

Woolacombe is one of the National Trust's most significant coastal nature conservation and visitor sites, yet we currently have no visitor welcome presence. Our staff and volunteers look after 2000 acres in the Woolacombe area, including Woolacombe Down, Woolacombe Dunes and the surrounding coastpath. Over the past 3 years the National Trust has invested £150,000, including EU grant funding, in upgrading the Porthole and public toilets/showers.

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The Porthole is the only commercial asset on Marine Drive and now a key attraction for visitors. We are proud to have built a successful partnership with our tenants, who provide public toilets and showers for the site also. We have also invested in access and paths around Woolacombe, including additional tramper routes and new fully accessible paths at Woolacombe Down.

There is now an opportunity to unite the site and make more of these investments by bringing Marine Drive into National Trust management so we can deliver a bigger, better, more coherent visitor offer across our Woolacombe sites.

2. Improving visitor welcome and increasing public engagement

Over the past 10 years the number of visits to Woolacombe have grown significantly. Woolacombe has been recognised as one of the best beaches in the UK, attracting surfers, families, walkers, runners and people who enjoy its wide beach and coastal landscape.

Managing Marine Drive will enable the National Trust to put in place a branded presence and welcome team to orientate visitors to Woolacombe Dunes, Woolacombe Down, the wider coastline and Woolacombe beach. This team will offer a warm welcome and touch point for exploring Woolacombe and the local area, including advice on walks and wildlife to spot, as well helping to manage the car park.

We see this visitor presence as a major opportunity to engage the hundreds of thousands of people who visit Woolacombe each year in the natural world, and to encourage more people to care and get involved in conservation wherever they live. A key part of our charitable purpose is to promote the preservation of places of natural beauty. Welcoming and engaging visitors to our sites is a big priority for us and this is the main reason why the National Trust will operate Marine Drive from 2025. The car park will provide a hub where we will be able to talk about our nature conservation work, playing our part in climate action and encourage access into the outdoors for everyone.

3. Generating income for conservation

In the Woolacombe area the National Trust spends £200,000 per year on conservation. A

huge part of our ranger team time is spent on maintaining the 40 miles of paths in Woolacombe and playing our part in managing the 800,000 visitors to Woolacombe each year. Over the past 5 years we have delivered a major conservation project in Woolacombe

Dunes, introducing cattle-grazing to improve the dune habitat. We have recently announcedthe most ambitious grassland creation project in the UK, with large areas of land in Woolacombe oversown with wildflowers. We are continuing with our national

pledge to establish 20 million trees by 2030, including a new commemorative woodland at
Combesgate. We are using our land to both tackle climate change and mitigate its worst impacts.
All the money raised through income generation at Marine Drive will go into supporting this important conservation work, now and for ever. Our management of Woolacombe Down and the Woolacombe Dunes is guided by our response to the big three challenges of our time:
biodiversity loss; the climate crisis; and people's disconnection with nature.

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4. Provide additional benefit to National Trust members
The National Trust is a membership organisation, and we work to continually improve our offer to our 5m members. Year round free parking at Marine Drive will be another benefit
that local members can enjoy. Woolacombe Dunes will join a network of National Trust coastal car parks that members can park at for free along the Exmoor, North Devon and North Cornwall coast, such as Baggy Point, Sandymouth, Godrevy, Crantock. This will complement free entry that members enjoy to local Devon and Somerset pay-to-enter sites such as Arlington Court, Dunster Castle, Killerton, Castle Drogo and Knightshayes. Income from National Trust membership is critical to looking after these special places, for everyone, forever.
What this will mean
Over the next two years we will be working with Mortehoe Parish Council to work through the transition period to 2025. It will involve close and detailed discussions with the community as we are very aware that Mortehoe Parish Council has relied on the income
from Marine Drive to help provide some of the parish services. We will be exploring with the parish council how they might seek to close this funding gap and how we might be able to work in partnership going forwards. The National Trust wants to play its part as an integral part of the community. We will be looking to build on areas where we already work closely, such as Woolacombe Dunes, the allotments and community facilities such as the sports
pitches and pavilion.
What will change
From March 2025, there will be a branded National Trust presence on Marine Drive and National Trust welcome staff operating the car park. There will be year-round charging for parking, with free parking for National Trust members. We will continue with some of the current practises such as locking the car park at night and ensuring no overnight parking, as well as regularly maintaining the car park and working in partnership with the Porthole which provides public toilets and showers, as well as partners who regularly use this space such as parkrun, walkers and surfers.
Current National Trust car parking rates in North Devon range from £5 - £9 per day according to the time of year with annual passes available in the form of membership. Current prices for annual membership are £76.80 a year for an adult and £38.40 for a young person (18-25 years). This represents good value for many visitors, especially young people, compared with current and neighbouring annual passes: Mortehoe Parish Council currently charges £50 for seasonal permits (Mar-Oct) for residents and

£120 for non-residents; season tickets are £200 at Saunton Sands and £200 at Putsborough beach; and all of these provide access to one beach only.

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Thank you
Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your support for our work restoring the natural environment and opening up access for visitors to Woolacombe. I want to assure you that the decisions detailed above have not been taken lightly and have been approved at the highest level in the National Trust. I am passionate about making Woolacombe and the wider North Devon coastline the best it can be for our visitors – both tourists and our local communities - and to giving our visitors as many opportunities as we can to enjoy its spectacular landscape, nature and beauty.
We know our natural environment is under threat. From the ravages of Storm Arwen and this summer's extreme heat and drought - to the awful job of dealing with avian flu, our teams have faced huge challenges this year. The COVID pandemic showed us the value access to nature and greenspace for health and well-being, and we are seeing more people, particularly younger generations, committing to play their part to protect nature, help it heal and tackle climate harm. We believe that this decision will enable the National Trust to offer much more over the long-term both to our visitors and to this beautiful and much-loved
place.
Yours sincerely

Rob Joules
General Manager, North Devon