

# Northleigh Parish Council

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## Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 at the Village Hall

Cllrs Lear, Driver Workman; J Nicholls, A Cornish, S & G Allen, L Wallace, A Wood, S Boyd, Estelle Bailey, R Smith, N Clegg, J Workman, M Pendrick

### Chairman's Report

The chairman, who was appointed at the last AGM in May 23, introduced the new format for the APM, separating it completely from the parish council AGM. He thanked the councillors for their assistance and support throughout an active year. With 10 meetings during the year, several activities were involved, summarised below.

**Coronation of King Charles III.** The council acquired a bench with a commemorative plaque which is positioned outside the village hall.

A new Parish Council dedicated noticeboard was purchased and erected above the bench to replace a very old and delapidated one.

### Fibre Broadband

The installation of fibre has taken 9 years from its inception. There were several people involved with this campaign, Jem Nicholls and Andy Cornish who set up a company in order to do anything at all, and then Andrea Wood, together with Laura Wallace have all jumped through hoops to ensure that Northleigh had fibre. Involvement of the local MP, Richard Foord, culminated in a visit to the village in August 2023 and a national newspaper article in March 2024. The last properties were able to be connected in April, 2024. All those involved with the delivery of fibre were thanked with a gift of appreciation to Andrea Wood. Without the tenacity of these people, the village would still be without fibre broadband.

### South West Water

A concerted effort was maintained to achieve new pipework in 2 areas of the village that were not re-piped several years ago. Work is continuing to get the restoration work promised but which has been delayed by the very wet winter.

### South West Highways (DCC)

A continuous stream of correspondence has been maintained to correct and improve the road conditions, verge maintenance and safety issues. This continues with pressure to achieve completion. A new under road drain from St Giles Cottage to Suddons Farm has been earmarked. They always say the quickest way is to report potholes online at [devon.gov.uk](http://devon.gov.uk), (3 days).

### Planning

There have been 4 new applications for the council to comment on: 2 of these had been approved and 2 caused objections. EDDC planner supported the council's recommendations. There have

been 2 occasions which needed the involvement of the planning enforcement officer, and these are still under review. One has been served with 2 notices of non planning consent, each with a possible £2K fine.

### **Precept**

An announced and anticipated increase was necessary to the council precept this year. This was needed to cover new charges for elections and increased wages for the Clerk. The matter of the charge for election expenses has been ongoing since June 2023 and is still not resolved to the council's satisfaction. (£427 has been paid from a charge of £915).

### **Emergency Plan**

The Chairman explained the advantages of an emergency plan for the parish in light of the fact that there are more extreme weather events all year, and the geographical anomalies of the parish. This would be run by volunteers. The co-ordinator is Sheena King. They have 6 volunteers currently but more are needed.

### **Affordable Housing**

The council-owned land at Chilcombe field was offered for this in 2015, accepted and terms agreed in 2017 and culminated on 25 April 2024 when contracts were signed. The capital receipts will be placed into a reserve until their use on a suitable capital project can be decided after public consultation.

### **Village Hall Report**

The hall has had a very positive year.

The NVHC has welcomed two younger members, their input will be invaluable. There has been a recently added Facebook page to publicise events and to develop more interaction between residents.

A business plan has been completed to enable an application for solar panels (which will partly power the hall in the event of a power failure) for the hall from the Gov/DCC. This would make the village hall an electricity hub in an emergency. A survey of local residents has been carried out.

A regular coffee morning is now running on a weekly basis.

A monthly event for people with young children is now being held.

The Sunday bar opening is continuing, now with the option of using the Table Tennis equipment.

The Arts group and the indoor Bowling are continuing.

Norley Nosh continues to be successful and is a real benefit to the community.

Film night is ongoing.

The monthly quiz has operated once again with good attendance levels, thanks to Tony Lear for all the work he has put into it.

There is a table tennis table in the hall should people be interested in playing.

An additional notice board to publicise events is planned.

Ongoing annual events were very successful in the last year, craft fairs, Harvest supper, Christmas lunch, BBQ/bike ride.

Unfortunately the Spring drama was cancelled this year, we hope it will be revived in 2025, but more support is needed. Contact Ba Faraday.

Maintenance in the hall is ongoing, including a new baby changing table, emergency alarm in the disabled toilet, repairs to leaking radiators, new water heaters in the toilets. The Tractor event, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 will finish in Northleigh village this year.

## **St Giles Parish Church**

The Church continues to enjoy the voluntary support of many in our community; both inside, on the flower and cleaning rota, and outside in maintaining the churchyard. Although over the years we inevitably lose some, we continue to see fresh volunteers come forward. To all, a big thank you. As elsewhere in the village we have enjoyed the impact of families establishing themselves in Northleigh. Both Christmas and Easter services were transformed by the significant presence of small persons, and their parents of course! We continue to support the Village donation to Devon Air Ambulance every Christmas and support a charity with the St Giles Bike Ride every summer.

We are small in number, in terms of regular parishioners in Sunday services, but we are aware that many are pleased that the Church is open every day (thanks to keyholders) and are happy that our Parish Church is well loved and so often visited. We face a big bill on the church roof this year (work will start later this summer) and hope we can meet the costs with our savings and kind donations.

## **Other Reports**

There were no annual reports from our county councillor or from our Ward members of the District Council.

There being no other business the meeting ended at **8.20pm** followed by refreshments.