



**ROCKBEARE
PARISH COUNCIL**

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**MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 17TH APRIL 2019
AT
ROCKBEARE VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Cllr Jeremy Wollen (Chairman) and Cllrs: Colin Please, Jonathan Allen, Ron Forrest, Mark Readman and Simon Brodie

Also, in attendance – Cllrs. Ray Bloxham and Sara Randall-Johnson (Devon County Council); two representatives from East Devon District Council (EDDC) Planning Department and ten members of the public.

Parish Clerk: Carolyn May

APOLOGIES: none

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest made at the commencement of the meeting. Cllr Forrest later indicated an interest in the matter relating to Westcott Green.

Public Participation Session:

Cranbrook Extension Plan

The meeting commenced at 7 pm, in order to allow Members of the Public to discuss the proposed Cranbrook Expansion Plan with the two representatives of (James Brown and Ed Freeman) EDDC (Planning Department). The Chairman advised the meeting that this was the final opportunity for questions to be put to the Planners in respect of the proposals.

The following points were discussed:

- **Flooding Risk** - one members of the public asked why Planners had elected to build on the south side of the A30, as the area was prone to flooding. The proposal to build on the green wedge was also alluded to.

EDDC Response: *The construction work, initially planned for the green wedge, has been re-sited to an area adjacent to the green wedge.*

- **Tresbere** – It was pointed out to the Planners that there was a proposal to build on part of the green wedge, at Tresbere (close to Clyst Honiton). Therefore, the proposal to build on the green wedge remains in situ. Cllr Readman stated that Clyst Honiton did not have a Neighbourhood Plan and that fact had left the village open to being developed.

EDDC Response: The Planners openly stated that they 'did not believe that the proposed development would adversely impact on the green wedge'.

- **Inconsistencies with the Local Plan** – one member of the public pointed out that there were inconsistencies with the Local Plan, in relation to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGS). It was pointed out that the area of a SANG is based on hectares per level of population and that the SANGS proposed in the Cranbrook Plan were inadequate.

EDDC Response: EDDC Response; Tresbere/ Grange areas are those which are closest to Rockbeare. The proposal for the Tresbere provides for the creation of Employment Land/ Sports Hub, The Grange area (which will cover 30 hectares and accommodate 800 dwellings) will be provided with Community Buildings/ Play Areas and Allotments.

- Attendees asked **why they should attach any significance to what is put on paper and what is said by Planners at the meeting?** (in light of the perceived fluidity of the plans and the stated, intended, encroachment on the green wedge, despite undertakings to the contrary.

EDDC Response: The plan has evolved over the past years, therefore earlier proposals have changed. However, this is the final plan. The Planners are not aware of any contradictions in the plan.

- **Percy Wakely Wood** – It was pointed out that the wood supports a substantial amount of wildlife that will be compromised with the development proposed. It was also stated that, originally, Cranbrook was not intended to spread further than Gribble Lane, now some Rockbeare residents have a view of the whole town. It was asked 'what consideration is being given to Rockbeare residents and the wildlife in the woodland.

EDDC Response: Nobody is entitled to a view. EDDC wants to protect the area but has to undertake development as well. We cannot promise that we will never encroach on the green wedge at Rockbeare – the current plan runs to 2031.

Cllr Readman stated that the 'promises made (by EDDC Planning) are not enduring'.

- **The choice of the Grange Field** – It was stated that there are currently 16 ancient oak trees on the field. TPO's for the trees have been requested but EDDC have not responded to this request. The presence of wildlife at the site was also alluded to. A member of the public queried the purpose of setting up new green areas with saplings when there are such magnificent trees already on an existing green area.
- **The Grange / Rockbeare Boundary** – there was a discussion relating to the Grange falling within the Rockbeare Parish Boundary, despite assertions by EDDC Planners to the contrary. It was proven that the area falls within the Parish of Rockbeare.

EDDC Response: The assertion is denied; we have checked the boundary. Administrative boundaries are not important in planning matters, we put developments where we feel they are appropriate. We can look at the trees with an EDDC officer, but they will not impact on the building. In relation to the question about the creation of a new green area; we do things in planning to protect biodiversity, whilst accommodating the constraints in the planning process.

- **Rockbeare Identity** - Cllr Readman stated that, whilst the green wedge could not stop development, it does create an identity protection. Another resident added that EDDC Planners were failing to respect the village identity and are intent on swamping the village with new developments, shifting the proposed building from the green wedge at Rockbeare into neighbouring areas but on the boundary of Rockbeare Parish.
- There was a general feeling that EDDC Planners were dedicated to putting forward the plan, irrespective of the public view. This was being done to meet the shortfall arising from Exeter City Council and Devon County Council. Queries were raised in relation to the failure to build in Sidmouth/ Ottery St Mary and to the practice of concentrating all of the development in one area, rather than around several settlements. Why is development not being limited to local needs?

EDDC Response: Parish boundaries are not our first priority. The planning for development was agreed in our local planning process. We place developments where there is a framework and existing infrastructure. The Cranbrook expansion will not place additional burdens on local primary schools as no more than 30 new homes should be permitted without the provision of a new primary school

- **SANGs** – a discussion relating to SANG’s ensued. A member of the public asked if SANGs were more vulnerable to development than the green wedge?

EDDC Response: These (SANGS) are natural areas designed as managed green spaces for leisure.

- Sustainability - It was suggested that there was no sustainability built into the Cranbrook plan. EDDC was accused of planning to fragment current wildlife highways and was asked if there were any plans to address this. Cllr. Allen raised the issue of bat boxes, which had previously been requested to line the then ‘bat-corridor’. He added that the scheme had frightened the bats off and commented that the stated aim, to make the existing development eco-friendly, had not succeeded.
- One Member of the public stated that EDDC now had an opportunity to pass land to the parish which could never be built on and which could effectively be utilised to address flooding issues.
- A question was raised about the legal status of country parks and queried how Cranbrook has managed its green spaces.

EDDC Response: Country Parks do not enjoy the status of National Trust Land. A Country Park has been handed over to Cranbrook and more land may come under discussion. Such land would have to be held in perpetuity.

Further Discussions involved:

- The process for submission of comments relating to the consultation;
- Traveller sites – 50% of the required sites to fall within the Cranbrook boundary;
- Infrastructure Levy – zero rated for Cranbrook;
- Monitoring the quality of buildings erected.

400.0 MINUTES

400.1 The Minutes of the last meeting of Rockbeare Parish Council held on **Wednesday 20th March 2019** at Marsh Green Village Hall were considered.

400.2 It was **proposed** by Cllr Please, **seconded** by Cllr Wollen and **RESOLVED** that the minutes for the meeting held on 16th February would be approved and signed as a correct record of that meeting. Unanimous. **Carried.**

401.0 REPORTS:

401.1 Cllr Bloxham (DCC) reported on the Bus Service Review. He advised the meeting that bus services were to be increased from 26th May 2019. Extra busses would be provided during the morning and evening and the Sunday Service would be extended to cover Ottery St Mary and Honiton. Busses will run every 20 minutes, instead of every 30 minutes.

401.2 Cllr Wollen reported that he had attended a meeting with Mr Peter Prior (DCC) relating to the Parish Council’s bus shelter at the top of Clay Hill. It is planned to place a new bus stop/ shelter on either side of the road. Work on the project will begin within three months, with temporary bus stops being provided until the work is completed. The bus shelter owned by the Parish Council will be demolished as it cannot be moved and has reached the end of its economic life.

402.0 Youth Service Provision - Deferred

403.0 PLANNING

403.1 There were no Planning Matters to be considered.

404.0 FINANCIAL REPORTING

404.1 Members were provided with a draft copy of the External Annual Review Accounting Statement for 2018/19; a list of all payments made during the 2018/19 financial year and a schedule of all income received during the same period.

405.0 BUSINESS & FINANCE:

405.1 **To approve payment of Invoices as follows:**

400753	RVH (M&T)	15.00
400754	Expenses	82.70
400575	Salary	382.68
400576	Simon A. Martin – Payroll Services	233.64
400757	DALC (Received after the publication of the Agenda)	196.53
Total		910.55

405.2 It was **proposed** by Cllr Please, **seconded** by Cllr Wollen and **RESOLVED** that the payment schedule would be approved. Unanimous. **Carried.**

406.0 CORRESPONDENCE

406.1 Rockbeare Primary School – request for funding to assist with the development of a gardening area and sensory garden. Members considered the application. Whilst keen to support the project, the Parish Council would require accurate costings and quotations for the work, prior to considering the application further.

406.2 Friends of Rockbeare School Association – Request for funding for hire of bouncy castle, for School's Summer Fayre. Members considered the request and approved the same subject to the provision of a properly constituted invoice and production of insurance documents from both the FRSA and the provider of the bouncy castle.

407.0 Updates

407.1 **Village Signs** – on-going.

407.2 **Telephone Box Usage** – now operational

407.3 **Southwood Cross Marker** – Cllr. Brodie reported that the pointer towards the airport and Clyst Honiton is missing from the marker post. This will be reported to highways.

407.4 **Westcott Green** - The Clerk reported that there had been a substantial amount of correspondence between herself and Helen Selby. Ms Selby had issued a notice to the Parish Council, requiring the removal of the stakes at Westcott Green, within a period of 10 days. Should the posts not be removed within the stated period, Ms Selby intended to have the posts removed at the expense of RPC.

The Clerk had then spoken with Ms Selby and negotiated a reprieve until the Parish Council had been provided with an opportunity to discuss the matter at its meeting on the 17th April.

Cllr Forrest stated that he had taken legal advice on the matter and can confirm that the posts do not obstruct the highway – as had been stated in correspondence by Ms Selby. He added that any prosecution on those grounds would fail.

It has now been conceded by Ms Selby that DCC does not own the land in dispute. A plan provided by Ms Selby was, he states, erroneous as Ms Selby has indicated DCC ownership of verges and hedges owned by householders in the hamlet.

The posts placed on the edge of the green are legal and removal of the same would amount to criminal damage of private property. This method of protection is used all over the country.

Cllr Readman suggested that the Parish Council should step away from the situation.

It was **agreed** that Cllr Bloxham, Cllr Wollen and Cllr Forrest should seek a meeting with Ms Selby, in order to settle the matter. The Clerk to make the arrangements.

408.0 Flooding Update

408.1 Mr. Ivan Randall provided Members with a report, which he and Cllr. Allen had compiled following a meeting and area inspection with Ms. Helen Selby of DCC Highways Department.

408.2 The Clerk highlighted the fact that the report contained a reference to the prevailing situation at Westcott Green, stating that the said matter did not form part of the flooding discussion. Cllr Allen advised that Ms Selby had referred to the matter whilst passing the area and that the report submitted referred to the whole of the meeting discussions.

408.3 Cllr Readman commended both Mr Randall and Cllr Allen on the quality of their report.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 20.45 hrs