



**ROCKBEARE
PARISH COUNCIL**

Chairman: Jeremy Wollen

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MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 20TH JANUARY 2021

**This was a 'Virtual' Meeting, conducted through the medium of Video Conferencing.
The Parish Clerk advised the Meeting that the proceedings would be recorded.**

PRESENT: Cllr Jeremy Wollen (Chairman) and Cllrs: Colin Please, Mark Readman, Ron Forrest, Susan Wollen, Phil Franklin, and Simon Brodie

Also: Cllr Randall – Johnson (Devon County Council), Cllr Kathy McLaughlan (EDDC)

Parish Clerk: Carolyn Y. May

APOLOGIES: Cllr R. Bloxham

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION: There were no requests to address the meeting.

AGENDA

555.0 MINUTES

555.1 The Minutes of the last meeting of Rockbeare Parish Council, held on Wednesday 16th December 2020 were considered. It was **proposed** by Cllr Susan Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Please, and **RESOLVED** that the minutes for the meeting of the 16th of December 2020 would be approved and signed as a correct record of that meeting. Unanimous. **Carried.**

552.0 REPORTS

552.1 **Chairman's Report** – None

552.2 **Cllr Kathy McLaughlan (EDDC)** – Cllr McLaughlan was welcomed to the meeting. She commenced her report by advising the Members that, in respect of Cranbrook Town Centre, a 'Memorandum of Understanding' had been agreed with the developers. A timeline for the

development has also been agreed. It is hoped that the matter will move forward once the same has been passed by the EDDC Planning Department.

- 552.3 Cllr McLaughlan added that it would be advantageous to be able to share some of the positive benefits that a town centre brings. It was time that the residents of Cranbrook and the surrounding areas gained something from the development.
- 552.4 Cllr McLaughlan also advised the meeting of the newly approved scheme that will permit the bank to be removed at Budleigh Salterton. The scheme will enable the reestablishment of the salt flats at the estuary of the River Otter. This scheme forms part of a climate change initiative. Funding of around £15 million was received from EU funding to enable the work to be carried out. A link has been placed on Cllr McLaughlan's report, which leads interested persons to the official document relating to the project. This is the first such project in Europe.
- 552.5 It was understood that several residents of the Budleigh Salterton area had expressed their concerns in relation to the potential flooding of their homes, because of the scheme. EDDC is working with this group. It was also emphasized that the scheme will prevent the Cricket Club at Budleigh Salterton from flooding.
- 552.6 **Cllr Randall-Johnson (DCC)** – Cllr Randall Johnson reported that Cornwall Council is currently engaged with its budgetary process at present. The Adult Care and Health element of the budget is to be increased (Adult Care by 8.3%). The increase will provide a sum of £282 million to spend on essential care elements for persons aged 18+. This sum represents almost 50% of the total budget of the County Council which, before adding in the grants from government, is just over half a billion pounds (£578.5 million). This latter sum, plus government grant, totals over £1 billion.
- 552.7 Currently, the major concern for all Councils (because of the extension of the furlough scheme, higher unemployment and the numbers of residents receiving Universal Credit) is the collection of Council Tax. EDDC has, previously, done well in that regard, collecting at a level in excess of 90% of the same. This achievement provides a small bonus for EDDC. However, with more residents receiving Universal Credit (the Council Tax rate for this group is either, very low or zero) and the loss of business rates for holiday accommodation etc., it is anticipated that the collection rate will be reduced. Therefore, the Government Council Tax Support Grant for Devon County Council will be £6.3 million.
- 552.8 There will be some investment into Highways, but this sum will be remarkably modest. This budget has been set at £57.5 million, for the coming year.

553.0 PLANNING

553.1 **Applications - None**

553.2 **Decisions – Noted.**

554.0 CORRESPONDENCE

554.1 **Devon Highways (Helen Selby)** – signposts at Marsh Green/ Westcott – Helen confirmed that Village Sign costs were now to be met by Parishes/ Towns.

554.2 Hydrologic – the Clerk reported that she had been in contact with Hydrologic, both by letter and by telephone. She had clearly set out the problems that had been experienced in respect of the Flood Warning system. The system has now been recalibrated and a test alert run. It was agreed by the company that a new contract would be issued, commencing at the end of April 2021. However, the alert was not received by the Chairman.

554.3 Cllr Readman believed the positioning of the early warning system at Gribble Lane bridge meant that any warning was received too late for Rockbeare Village. He suggested that, either the system is both recalibrated and repositioned at a point up towards Ottery St Mary (so that alerts are received in good time), or that the system is deemed inappropriate for the needs of the village. He added that the Environment Agency alerts were available free of charge and were substantially more reliable.

554.4 Cllr Wollen (Chairman) added that the Environment Agency system warns of a flood, whereas the Hydrologic system tells residents that they have been flooded. The former system is what is required. It was **agreed** that Cllr Brodie would ascertain the water level utilized by the Environment Agency which triggers their alarm system so that Hydrologic can be asked to match the same.

554.5 Cllr Franklin highlighted the fact that the Hydrologic system is reactive, based on river levels. Therefore, it cannot forecast flooding, therefore, we are discussing different levels. Cllr Susan Wollen highlighted the point that the water level at Gribble Lane does not reflect the water level in the stream outside her home. Therefore, despite the notification from the Hydrologic system, flooding has already occurred in the village.

555.0 BUSINESS AND FINANCE

heque	Payee	Sum
400834	TRIP	£6,250.00
400835	Clerk (Salary and Expenses)	£680.00
400836	HMRC	£377.00
400837	Wm Pollard Ltd	£357.50
		£7,664.50

555.1 Members considered the payment schedule provided within the Agenda papers. The Clerk advised the meeting that two further invoices had been received since the date of publication of the agenda and asked if these might be considered at this juncture.

555.2 It was **proposed** by Cllr Susan Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Readman and **RESOLVED** that the additional payments would be appended to the schedule and that all invoices presented thereon would be paid. Unanimous. **Carried.**

556.0 MEMORIAL BENCH

556.1 The Chairman advised the Members that, prior to proceeding further with the purchase on a memorial bench, it was incumbent upon the Parish Council to ascertain written permission from the Trustees of Manor Estates to place a bench at the preferred location (Bridle Path). It was **agreed** that the Clerk would correspond with the Trustees on this matter.

556.2 The Chairman added that, should permission be granted to site a bench, it is imperative that the structure is both vandal proof and theft proof.

557.0 DAMAGE TO WALL

557.1 Cllr Franklin reported damage to a wall, opposite the Primary School. The wall has a large crack in it and appears to be dangerous – particularly in stormy weather. There is also a concern that the wall is passed by many people with children on their way to, and back from, the school.

557.2 The Chairman advised the meeting that there are new owners in the house and, until recently, the wall had been totally obscured by ivy. The Parish Council had received many complaints about this because it impeded the walkway, forcing pedestrians onto the grass. Consequently, the wall itself could not be seen. However, the new owners have cleared the area and the wall is now visible.

557.3 It was **agreed** that the Chairman would provide the address to the Clerk, who should write an informal letter to the owners advising them of the Parish Council's concerns.

558.0 PARISH NEWSLETTER

558.1 Cllr Readman advised the meeting that the latest newsletter had been printed and delivered to those who were distributing it, last weekend.

558.2 Councillor Franklin raised the point of the advert for contributions to the non-profit COVID-19 brochure initiative approved in principle by the Parish council at November 2020 meeting had been omitted from the newsletter. His proposal that the newsletter be distributed to all Councillors a couple of days before going to the printer to avoid any possible future omissions was not thought to be necessary by other parish council members.

558.3 The next publication will be in April 2021.

559.0 UPDATES

559.1 Cllr Please reported that a vehicle had hit and damaged the wall at Palmer's Farm. The owner of the wall has asked if the Parish Council could place black and white half posts at the site.

559.2 The Chairman undertook to inspect the site.

The Meeting Closed at 19.02 hrs

Next Meeting – 17th February 2021 to commence at 18.30 hrs.