



**ROCKBEARE  
PARISH COUNCIL**

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## **MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON**

**WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Jeremy Wollen (Chairman) and Cllrs: Ron Forrest, Simon Brodie, Susan Wollen and Phil Franklin

**Also:** three members of the public

**Parish Clerk:** Carolyn Y. May

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Colin Please, Sarah Randall-Johnson (CC) and Richard Lawrence (EDDC)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:**

### **Ford Oaks Solar Farm Proposal**

Mr Julian Turnbull and Mr Paul Jefferson attended in order to raise questions relating to the proposed solar Farm at Ford Oaks, Marsh Green, and requested to know what the Parish Councils thoughts were in respect of the same.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council had not, as yet, been provided with an opportunity to discuss the matter. No planning application had yet been submitted. He alluded to an email received from another resident of Marsh Green, which had stated that the Parish Council should be more 'proactive', in respect of opposing the proposal, which was listed on the agenda, at Item 10.

Mr Turnbull asked if the matter could be discussed immediately. The Chairman agreed to use his power to alter the running order of the agenda, and agreed to the request, after consulting with the Members present.

The Clerk advised the Meeting that three objections to the proposal had already been received from Parishioners. The basis of each objection was that the project was of no benefit for the local community.

Mr Turnbull asked what support the Parish Council would give to any campaign, mounted by the residents of Marsh Green, to oppose the solar farm. Members felt that it was too early in the process to consider that matter.

Mr Turnbull requested to know if the Parish Councillors knew what the grade of the agricultural land proposed for use was. He was advised that the land had been graded at 3. Mr Turnbull pointed out that grade 3 land was divided in to two sections (a and b), and asked which section applied. Members could not answer this question and it was **agreed** that the Clerk would attempt to ascertain the information.

Cllr Forrest advised the meeting that even where the land is graded at 3, the majority of food produced in the UK is grown on grade 3 land. Indeed, there is very little grades 1 and 2 land in the UK. He added that the proposal (for this solar farm) goes against government policy and the intentions of Cop 26. The last thing that the country needs is to lose productive land.

Cllr Forrest added that the claim, that the land in question is only of use for the cultivation of maize , is erroneous. Maize has only been grown there on one rotation (this year). Prior to that, the land had been used for cropping.

Mr Turnbull added that the majority of the land at Marsh Green farm has, for at least two generations, been used to graze cattle and that a unique selling point is, that the whole process is entirely organic, with no pesticides or fertilizers having been used. Therefore, in terms of biodiversity, the land must sit high on the scale. The proposed project will ruin, rather than enhance, the biodiversity of the same. Mr Turnbull had been in contact with the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). It was **agreed** that the Parish Council would correspond with the organisation.

The Chairman acknowledge that the majority of the residents of Marsh Green, and Members of the Parish Council, appear opposed to the proposal. He added that the next step was to determine the precise grading of the land and take the matter from there.

Mr Alex Blest commented that there was an EU initiative being brought into force, to combat the practice of 'greenwashing' projects. This legislation regulates how initiatives are promoted as being 'environmentally friendly'. Mr Blest agreed to forward the information to the Clerk.

Mr Turnbull suggested that it would be advantageous for the residents of the Parish to be advised of the stance of the Parish Council on the matter.

**619.0** It was **proposed** by Cllr Forrest, **seconded** by Cllr. Brodie and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council strongly opposes the Ford Oaks Solar Farm proposal. **UNANIMOUS. Carried.**

### **Rockbeare Rockets Funding Application**

Mr Alex Blest addressed the meeting, in respect of his application for a grant to support the Rockbeare Rockets junior football team.

Mr Blest explained that towards the end of the first lockdown, local parents were looking for ways to get children to interact again. It was decided to start coaching children to play football, with sessions being held on Saturday mornings. The initiative was successful, and numbers grew over the summer. Initially, it was intended to stop the project in October, but the demand has remained steady, and the children wished to continue. Between 12 and 25 children (boys and girls), aged 4 – 16 years, attend sessions.

The project is entirely parent run and, at present, self-funded. The charge is £1 per week, per child.

The project has built up a really nice community spirit. The group raised some funds to purchase second-hand goals. The team is not FA affiliated, nor do any of us hold coaching qualifications (but Mr Best is CRB registered). The group is looking for any available funding, which will enable them to purchase equipment and to establish an identity. The group does have a bank account, in the name of the Team.

The Chairman stated that the work being undertaken is admirable and is to be encouraged. Members discussed the application, thanking Mr Blest for his work.

620.0 It was **proposed** by Cllr Jerry Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Susan Wollen, that a grant of £1,000 would be made to the Rockbeare Rockets football group.

620.1 Cllr Franklin proposed an amendment:

620.2 It was **proposed** by Cllr Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr Susan Wollen and RESOLVED that a grant of £1,470 would be made to the Rockbeare Rockets football group. UNANIMOUS. **Carried.**

### **Millennium Field**

Mr Paul Jefferson advised the meeting that a survey of Marsh Green residents has been undertaken, in respect of their ideas for the Millennium Field.

So far, the feedback indicates that parishioners wish the Parish Council to maintain the area to a standard that makes the site useable. The Chairman stated that whilst the Council would take the comment on board, at this time of year, nothing can be done. The Council will look at getting some order into the site in the early spring, addressing the access.

Cllr Forrest stated that strimming the area/ clearing the area, goes against everything that we should be doing to enhance the wildlife/ insects etc. There is a legal obligation to protect some species and the one thing that works against that is strimming.

Mr Jefferson stated that he would summarise the feedback and provide the same to the Council.

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**AGENDA**

#### **621.0 MINUTES**

621.1 The Minutes of the meeting of Rockbeare Parish Council, held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021 were considered. It was **proposed** by Cllr Susan Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Forrest, and RESOLVED that the minutes for the meeting of Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021 would be approved and signed as a correct record of that meeting. Unanimous. **Carried.**

#### **622.0 REPORTS**

##### **622.1 Chairman's Report**

622.2 The Chairman reported that it had been a privilege and an honour to lay a wreath, on behalf of the Parish Council, at the War Memorial in Rockbeare on Wednesday. The service was attended by children from the school, residents of the Care Home and members of the public.

622.3 **District Councillor Report** – none

622.4 **County Councillor Report** – none

622.5 **Cllr Please** - the Clerk reported that Cllr Please had been taken back into hospital. Members expressed their sadness at this news. It was acknowledged that Cllr Please had served the Parish, as a Councillor, for a great number of years and that his contribution had been substantial. It was suggested that, as a means of acknowledging his dedication, Cllr Please should have the title conferred upon him of ‘Honorary Councillor of Rockbeare Parish’.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Jerry Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Forrest, and RESOLVED that Cllr Please that the title of ‘Honorary Councillor of the Parish of Rockbeare’ would be conferred upon Councillor Colin Please, in recognition of his long and faithful service to the Parish.  
UNANIMOUS. **Carried.**

Arrangements are to be made to mark this decision.

622.6 **Parish Council Website** - The Clerk reported that the Parish Council website is no longer fit for purpose. She is experiencing loss of correspondence and non-delivery of the same. Enquiries with ICT have highlighted that the site is now nearly ten years old and requires either replacing or upgrading.

Members discussed option for renewal/ upgrading and it was **agreed** that Cllr Franklin would engage in discussions with the current provider, in order to determine our options. It was also **agreed** that Cllr Brodie would arrange for the purchase of the new PC Laptop.

## 623.0 **PLANNING**

623.1 Planning Matter 21/2916/FUL- The Parish Council does not object to this application.

623.2 Planning Matter 21/2917/FUL- The Parish Council does not object to this application.

623.3 Planning Matter 21/2918/FUL- The Parish Council does not object to this application.

623.4 Planning Application 21/2821 - The Parish Council does not object to this application.

623.5 Planning Application 21/2855/CPL - The Parish Council does not object to this application.

623.6 Planning Decisions - Noted

## 624.0 **CORRESPONDENCE**

624.1 **Email Correspondence from Mrs Annette Bassett** – this relates to a request to place a small stone plaque in the Churchyard, in memory of her father, who was born and was a lifelong resident of Rockbeare. Mr Frederick Harris died in June 2020, aged 89 years. Enquiries made with the Vicar resulted in my being advised to contact Rockbeare Parish Council for permission to place such a plaque in the churchyard.

Members discussed the application. It was, generally, something that the Parish Council did not determine upon. However, Members felt that they would have no issue with the proposal.

Members of the Parish Council determined that they would support the request.

624.2 **Email Correspondence from Mr David Stamm** – Mr Stamm submitted a request for financial assistance to clear the culvert that runs under the garden of Danson House, under a shared

driveway, and into a stream. The culvert section, that runs under the road, is the responsibility of Devon Council. If this is not maintained, there is a risk that the road will flood and some properties in the village may be affected.

The cost of the work is £475.00 (plus VAT).

Members discussed the request, highlighting that the Parish Council had just spent £1,500 having the adjacent 'No Man's Land' cleared. Under the provisions of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the PC is not permitted to provide funding for the enhancement of privately owned properties. The culvert, which flows onto the PC's land, was cleared last month. The culvert section, that runs under the road is the responsibility of Devon Highways. The part that runs under private properties is the responsibility of the property owners.

Members were of the opinion that the work carried out to 'No Man's Land' had been extensive and had enhanced surrounding properties. It was suggested that Mr Stamm should contact Devon Council to request that they clear their portion of the culvert (ensuring that no debris is deposited on Parish Council land).

- 624.3 **Mrs Jane Stocker** – 1,000 years of Rockbeare – Publication Project. This project is being undertaken to raise funds for the Village Hall. Members felt that the publication would benefit the Parish and would be educational.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Susan Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Jerry Wollen and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would donate the sum of £150.00 towards the project. **UNANIMOUS. Carried.**

## 625.0 **BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

- 625.1 Members considered the Schedule of Payments and Bank Reconciliation.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Susan Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Forrest, and **RESOLVED** that the schedule of payments would be accepted, and the liabilities discharged. **Unanimous. Carried.**

- 625.2 The Bank Reconciliation was accepted.

## 626.0 **BUDGET & PRECEPT SETTING 2022/23**

- 626.1 Members considered the current budget on a line-by-line basis. It was acknowledged that earmarked reserves had been extended to include a sum of £20,000 for projects at Marsh Green, £5,000 for the TRIP project if required, £80,000 for a capital project, and an 'emergency' fund of £10,000.

- 626.2 The Clerk advised the Members that earmarked reserves do not have to be spent but that it is an effective means of compartmentalising the funds held by the Council and ensuring that project costs can be met, without impacting adversely on the agreed running budget.

- 626.3 It was **proposed** by Cllr Forrest, **seconded** by Cllr Jerry Wollen and **RESOLVED** that the budget proposal for fiscal year 2022/23 would be adopted. **UNANIMOUS. Carried.**

626.4 It was **proposed** by Cllr Forrest, **seconded** by Cllr Susan Wollen and RESOLVED that the Parish Precept would not be increased for the fiscal year 2022/23. UNANIMOUS. Carried.

**627.0 UPDATE**

627.1 Village Lights – The Clerk to contact Devon Highways to request an additional streetlight at the school.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Next Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021