



**ROCKBEARE  
PARISH COUNCIL**

Chairman: Jeremy Wollen

Clerk: Carolyn May  
A2, Victoria Advent House, Station Approach. Victoria,  
Roche, Cornwall PL26 8LG  
Telephone: 01726 210135  
Email: [clerk@rockbeare.eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@rockbeare.eastdevon.gov.uk)  
Web: [clerk@rockbeare.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://clerk@rockbeare.eastdevon.gov.uk)

## MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

**WEDNESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

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

**Also:** Cllrs. Sarah Randall-Johnson (Devon CC) and Richard Lawrence (EDDC)

**Parish Clerk:** Carolyn Y. May

**Also:** Three members of the public

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Colin Please and Simon Brodie

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:**

-----  
**AGENDA**

**611.0 MINUTES**

611.1 The Minutes of the meeting of Rockbeare Parish Council, held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were considered. It was **proposed** by Cllr Susan Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr. Forrest, and **RESOLVED** that the minutes for the meeting of Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 would be approved and signed as a correct record of that meeting. Unanimous.  
**Carried.**

**612.0 PROPOSED FORD OAKS SOLAR FARM AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME**

612.1 Mr Philip Cookson, representing Low Carbon Alliance, addressed the meeting in respect of the proposed Ford Oaks Solar Farm and Green Infrastructure Scheme, which is intended to be sited at Marsh Green.

612.2 Low Carbon Alliance is a Chartered Surveying and Engineering Consultancy, which represents investors in property and businesses, providing services that assist in the mitigation of risk,

to protect the value of their clients' property portfolios. This company also works in partnership with others, to create new businesses that are referred to as 'Low Carbon Enterprise'.

- 612.3 Mr Cookson provided those present with a leaflet which outlined 110-130 acres, proposed renewable power scheme, to be installed to the west of, and south of, Marsh Green. The map within the document was unclear and Members felt that it did not adequately display the true extent of the proposed development.
- 612.4 Mr Cookson stated that Low Carbon Alliance had worked with Kojima (Investors and Backers of the project) the Devon Wildlife Trust for the past seven months, two local farmers and the Devon County Council Estates Committee have offered their fields for the project but are mindful of the wildlife in the area and local biodiversity. However, a geo physical examination has still to be carried out at the site, to ensure that no ancient structures are in existence.
- 612.5 The project will address flooding issues on the A30, provide greater biodiversity and a green community space.
- 612.6 This will be the first scheme in the United Kingdom that will be managed in conjunction with 'Building with Nature' ([www.buildingwithnature.org.uk](http://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk)).
- 612.7 A member of the public asked Mr Cookson if there was somewhere that a clearer lay out of the scheme could be viewed. He responded by advising the meeting that there will shortly be a website launched for the project. However, that will not happen until the archaeology survey has been completed (commencing on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021). Mr Cookson added that the proposed scheme would be opened for consultation in November 2021.
- 612.8 Cllr Randall-Johnson (DCC) enquired about the 'agricultural grading' of the farms. She added that there was a desire not to lose good quality farmland. Cllr. Randall – Johnson also enquired about the quality of the national grid, and the ability for energy generated to be sent to the same.
- 612.9 Mr Cookson stated that the Agricultural Land Class Survey had been carried out and the land has been graded as 'Class 3'. With regard to the ability to utilise the power that would be generated, Western Power has confirmed that it will be able to take power from the site, directing the same to Exeter.
- 612.10 Cllr Forrest asked which company had classified the land as 'Class 3'? the Cllr. Regarded the land as being 'Class 2'. Mr Cookson stated that he would send the report to the Clerk for dissemination. It was however, ascertained that the company which had undertaken the grading had been contracted to Low Carbon Alliance.
- 612.11 Cllr. Lawrence asked what the land marked out was being used for at present. Mr Cookson responded by stating that Marsh Green Farm had been a dairy farm, and the other land (owned by DCC and Glanville's) had been used for the cultivation of maize. The reason for the question related to the fact that, across the world, crop yield was declining due to global warming and taking arable land (no matter how poor) upon which, something could be grown, for a non-arable purpose was not a good decision. Mr Cookson responded by stating that the developer was mindful to ensure that the installations are high enough to ensure that sheep can still graze the land. There was no suggestion as to where the sheep would come from.

- 612.12 Cllr Randall-Johnson asked if the presence of the proposed solar installations would have an adverse effect on Exeter Airport/ aircraft attempting to take off or land. Mr Cookson stated that it had been confirmed that the installations would not be in the line of sight of the local air industry.
- 612.13 It was agreed that all documentation will be forwarded to the Clerk.
- 612.14 Cllr Wollen (Chairman) thanked Mr Cookson for his attendance at the meeting.

### **613.00 MILLENIUM FIELD**

- 613.1 Three residents of Marsh Green had attended the meeting in order to discuss the Millennium field.
- 613.2 It was noted that the proposal discussed at 612.0 (ibid) actually abuts the Millennium Field.
- 613.3 The Chairman stated that the Parish Council is totally open to suggestions about the future use, or otherwise, of the field. At present, it is totally wild and is essentially a wildlife haven. Perhaps the minimum that can be done would be to tidy up the entrance and the hedge and leave the field as it is. Alternatively, the area could be cleared and used for a purpose.
- 613.4 Mr Ruscoe stated that there were a number of small areas of land which are owned by the Parish Council, and which require some level of maintenance. However, the Millennium Field requires attention, as to attempt to enter the same presents a risk.
- 613.5 It was suggested that the Council could arrange to trim and clear the field, as an interim measure. The Clerk pointed out that the land is extremely wet and marshy. Cllr Susan Wollen added that it was not possible to walk in the area. Mr Ruscoe felt that it would be advantageous to create an area for the villagers and place some benches at the site. However, it was conceded that there were insurance concerns. Cllr Forrest advised the meeting that by clearing the area, the Parish Council would be contravening Government Directives, which advocate the wilding of areas. Mr Ruscoe suggested a light strimming of the site; however, it was conceded that such an action would damage the wild animal habitat.
- 613.6 The Chairman asked what the area would be used for if it was to be cleared. He surmised that it would become a dog walking area. He added that it was difficult to engage with parishioners in Marsh Green due to the lack of an appropriate mechanism to do so. All the Council can do is place an article on our website and in the Parish Magazine, asking for suggestions for uses of the field.
- 613.7 It was **AGREED** that Cllr Franklin would identify three options, which will be discussed at the next meeting and, if agreed, put out to Parishioners for consideration.
- 613.8 Mr Ruscoe raised the issue of new village signs for Marsh Green. He was advised that although these had been ordered from Devon County Council, a notification had been received advising the Clerk that there was, at present, no delivery date.
- 613.9 Mr Ruscoe then suggested that a notice board would be a useful addition to the village.

## REPORTS

### 614.0 Devon County Councillor's Report

Cllr Randall-Johnson commenced her report by advising the meeting that, at present, she was not in receipt of the details of the Devon County Council budget or Settlement. County is keen to know what the settlement is to be over the next few years so that it can plan.

There are a number of projects which are coming forward in the DCC area, in particular the reinstatement of the railway between Tavistock and Plymouth, and the opening up of the railway station at Crediton. This may provide better opportunities, locally, to use the train.

There is huge pressure on the DCC Adult and Social Care budget. The majority of the DCC budget (approx. 2/3) is spent on those ages between 18 and 65 years of age with disabilities who require help. This situation can only be addressed through recruitment of persons who can provide domiciliary care, or who can work in care homes.

Cllr Randall Johnson stated that she had an issue with the whole of this area, because it does not have a special classification, is being identified for all of the development (such as that discussed earlier).

Cllr Randall-Johnson advised the meeting that she had not been aware of the discussions/agreements referred to between Low Carbon Alliance and Devon CC Farms. It may be that the comment was predicated on the term 'in principle. Cllr Randall Johnson will make enquiries in relation to the statement.

### 615.0 EDDC Councillor's Report

Cllr. Richard Lawrence addressed the meeting. He commenced by advising the Members that all EDDC Councillors must now attend a two-day course about global warming. He warned that at present, we are all in a precarious position if we do not elect to engage with projects such as that presented earlier. However, he cautioned that the process must be undertaken in a proper manner.

There is a need to address the issues raised. The UK is among the bottom 10% of biodiverse countries in the world.

Cllr Susan Wollen asked if there was any information relating to the progress of the solar farm proposed by Mr Richard House. Cllr Lawrence was unsure in respect of this particular matter but advised that there was an intention to create a solar farm at Clyst Hyden, among others. These are springing up all over the place and are being developed by different companies. The only saving grace with the Whimple Solar Farm is that the company intends to put the sum of £20,000 per annum back into the village. That is not the stated intention of the company which Low Carbon Alliance represents.

Cllr Lawrence alluded to the sum of money that has been allocated to the Parish, by Sport England. If this is not utilised, it will be reclaimed. Cllr Lawrence stated that he was willing to assist with the delivery of any project that the Parish Council may have in mind.

Members **agreed** that this would be placed on the December Agenda for discussion.

## 616.0 PLANNING

### 616.1 Planning Matter 21/1972/FUL – Land East of the Old Rectory, Rockbeare

This matter had been previously discussed by the Parish Council, which voted to object to the same. The application has been brought back to the Council, so that amendments to the original application might be discussed.

The Clerk advised the meeting that she had received a letter of objection from a parishioner. The letter contained cogent reasons for objecting to the application. Those reasons mirrored the Parish Council's original view.

Members discussed the amendments to the original application but maintained the view that the facility was not required. There are a large number of dog walking areas in the Parish. It was also noted that this was a commercial enterprise and forms one of a number of these facilities run by the applicant.

The monitoring of the facility will be remote; therefore, problems will not be easily addressed.

Members agreed to maintain the original position of the Parish Council and **RESOLVED** to object to the amended plans.

**Proposed** by Cllr Forrest, **seconded** by Cllr Susan Wollen. **Unanimous.** Carried.

## 617.0 CORRESPONDENCE

Member Resignation

## 618.0 BUSINESS & FINANCE

618.1 Members considered the Schedule of Payments and Bank Reconciliation.

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

618.3 The Bank Reconciliation was accepted.

The meeting closed at 7.27 pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021