



**ROCKBEARE
PARISH COUNCIL**

Chairman: Cllr. Jerry Wollen

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MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 17TH AUGUST 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wollen J., Wollen S., Forest, and Franklin

Also: Cllr. Lawrence (EDDC) and seven members of the public.

Clerk: Carolyn May

Apologies: Cllrs. Brodie, Ratcliffe and Randall-Johnson (CC)

AGENDA

709.0 Declarations of Interest: None

710.0 Questions from the Public

710.1 Flooding

Mr Paul Jefferson asked if the Flooding Report was to be released. The Clerk responded to the question by stating that there were matters to be addressed before the document could be made public. The matter was set down for discussion during the meeting (Agenda Item 13), when decisions would be made.

The member of the public asked if, once the issues were resolved, it was the intention of the Parish Council to release the report. The Clerk stated that was indeed the intention, However, as a result of certain conduct, the Parish Council had been placed in an invidious situation and that, until the matter is resolved, nothing further could be undertaken.

Mr Julian Turnbull attempted to ascertain the nature of the situation that had occurred. Despite the Clerk declining to comment upon the same, further attempts were undertaken by the individual. Again, the Clerk was obliged to decline to respond to the question.

The Clerk requested, at that juncture, that in light of events which had occurred over the past twenty-four hours, the Chairman use his power to call for a Part II Confidential Discussion (Public

Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act , 1960, to discuss the extant matter. The Chairman announced the addition of a Part II (Confidential) meeting to the Agenda for the evening.

Mr Jefferson alluded to delays in releasing the document. Cllr Forrest pointed out that the Clerk and the Chairman had not, as had been requested, been furnished with the report and that this had delayed proceedings for three to four weeks. The circumstances surrounding the failure were being addressed. The delay was, therefore, not of the Parish Councils' making.

A third Parishioner raised the issue of flooding at Marsh Green. He alluded, in particular, to the flood relief area and Rose Cottage. The gentleman added that unless residents pursue the matter with EDDC, no work is undertaken. In 2021, the Parishioner spoke with a representative of EDDC, who undertook to have the flood relief area at Rose Cottage, maintained annually, this has not happened. The area at Danson House is also unacceptable. Cllr Forrest advised the meeting that the Parish Council has, in fact, had the area at Danson House cleared. The cost of the work was in the region of £1,500. This fact was acknowledged. However, a problem occurs when a tree in the area is cut down. The trunk etc is not removed but thrown into the ditch adjoining the area. The parishioner was not aware of the identity of the person who last undertook such work but suspected that it was a local farmer. Throwing the detritus into the ditch impedes the flow of water under the road.

At Rose Cottage, EDDC installed a drainage scheme for, inter alia, the sewerage farm. EDDC was supposed to maintain the grass area and the run off from Aylesbeare Lane. This has not been done. The area requires a plan of works and constant maintenance.

Cllr Lawrence (EDDC) requested that the Parishioner email him with the information. He (Cllr Lawrence) will follow the matter through. However, there are several parties with responsibility in the area and parishioners must determine which party is responsible for which area of land.

710.2 Planning for Treasbeare

A member of the public stated that he had attended a recent meeting in relation to the proposed access to the above. He stated that it was noticeable that no representative of the Parish Council were present. The Clerk confirmed that no notice of the meeting had been provided to the Parish Council. The parishioner advised that Redrow representative (Mr Cattermole had stated that the Clerk had not responded to correspondence. The Clerk advised the meeting that the statement held no merit and that no correspondence had been received.

Mr Alex Blest intervened at that point stating that the meeting had merely addressed the access issue and not the development of the Treasbeare area. Cllr Forrest highlighted that the area under discussion did not, in any event, fall within Rockbeare Parish. He also stated that he had challenged Mr Cattermole on his assertion, relating to contact. The Clerk highlighted the fact that the telephone numbers for all Parish Councillors, and for the Clerk are listed on the Parish Council website. If, indeed, there had been unanswered attempts to contact the Clerk, why did the representative not use the telephone? This statement was supported by Cllr Franklin.

The Clerk highlighted the fact that a letter had been received in respect of the proposed Treasbeare development, and that this would be discussed under 'Correspondence'.

Note:

Investigations undertaken following the meeting highlighted that the representative for Redrow had contacted the Clerk once, by telephone – prior to the first lockdown, for a general chat and that no arrangements had been agreed upon. Further correspondence had not been received by the Clerk (due to the on-going IT issues).

711.0 Minutes

711.1 The Minutes from the Parish Council meeting, held on the 27th of July 2022 were considered. The following point was raised

711.2 Highway Issues at Westcott

Mr Julian Turnbull alluded to the Minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council, and the commentary relating to the highway issues at Westcott. He stated that although he had sympathy with the residents of Westcott, the proposed route for delivery of materials to the solar farm site is part of a one-way system, to be used out of hours. He stated that he was concerned that an alternative solution was suggested. Namely that the traffic should be routed via Daisy Mount, down Rockbeare Hill, into the middle of Marsh Green. This seemed to pass the problem from one part of the parish to another part of the parish. He also expressed concern at the proposal that the Parish Council 'match fund' monies raised by house holders to fight the matter. Mr Turnbull stated that his concern was that the PC would be funding an action of some type between areas of the parish.

711.3 The Chairman intervened at that juncture, stating that Cllr Forrest had already listed the matter of the solar farm on the agenda, for discussion at the extant meeting. Mr Turnbull's point of concern was noted.

711.4 Cllr Forrest addressed the statement made by Mr Turnbull. He stated that the roads around Westcott were approximately 10 ft wide, if a lorry was to meet a pedestrian/ horse rider, then there would be no room to pass and one of the parties would be required to reverse to a passing place (which are few and far between). Also, it is proposed that the village would be closed off for periods of time. This move would prevent residents going about their lawful business, increase vehicle emissions (longer, more circuitous car journey's) and potentially damage properties. The road from the lay-down area to Daisy Mount and down Rockbeare Hill is a two-way road and a dedicated highway, therefore more able to cope with the heavy traffic that the development will use.

711.5 Whilst the comments were addressed, the Chairman was obliged to halt further discussion, in order to determine whether the Minutes were to be accepted by the Members.

711.6 It was **proposed** by Cllr S. Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Forrest, and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes for the meeting of the 27th of July would be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. UNANIMOUS. Carried.

The Meeting Minutes were duly signed by Cllr J. Wollen

711.0 Reports

712.1 Cllr Lawrence (EDDC)

Cllr Lawrence the meeting that the 2g/3g telephone mast at Parsons Lane/ London Road, is to be upgraded to a 4g/5g mast by a company named Cornerstone. If any objections are received to the upgrade, they will be considered and, if necessary, a new location will be sought for the installation. However, the change will, effectively, be a 'like for like', and an improvement to the infrastructure of the area.

713.0 Planning

713.1 **PA22/1713/ FUL** – the Parish Council has no objection to this matter.

713.2 **PA22/1532/MOUT – Treasbeare Expansion Area**

The Clerk asked the permission of the Chairman to read out a letter received from a parishioner, in relation to the said application.

The author, Ms Naomi Allen, highlighted a number of important considerations, which she requested should be taken into account by the Parish Council, when responding to the Planning Application. These included:

EDDC made a commitment many years ago not to expand Cranbrook south of the Old A30 until all the phases of Cranbrook north of the road, between Station Road and Whimple, had been completed. Rockbeare Parish Council should hold EDDC to account for their consistent pattern of wavering on this decision and commitment to the existing communities in the parishes surrounding Cranbrook.

The pattern of development in Phases 1-2 of Cranbrook show that regardless of the planning permission granted, the developers are quick to build a lot of houses, but slow to provide the necessary amenities to make Cranbrook function as a town - as the BBC recently broadcast to the nation: Cranbrook is a failing development on the grounds of the lack of adequate public transport and amenities. We currently have a very large housing estate with little more than a corner shop and a few schools; this problem will only be exacerbated were EDDC to grant permission for the Treasbeare application. Although the application promises the provision of shops, sports pitches and business opportunities, current performance indicates that once ground is broken on the site the developers' priority will be to build as many houses as possible and provide only the basic outdoor play facilities required by law; they are likely to put the provision of shops and business spaces out to tender. Since the town centre in Cranbrook is still waiting to be built nearly nine years after ground was first broken on Phase 1, we can expect the Treasbeare development to be waiting at least as long for its amenities.

Another ground on which I hope that Rockbeare Parish Council will object to the development is the intention to have traffic from the development exiting onto Parsons Lane. This is already an over-used and under-kept country lane and adding traffic movements of this scale is setting the local communities - both the new one in Treasbeare and the old one in Rockbeare - up for increased traffic and pedestrian accidents, potentially resulting in life-changing injuries or even death. There is also the safety concern generated by the situation of the development on the south side of the Old A30. Without the provision of adequate facilities, provided from the very beginning of development, within the Treasbeare extension, residents will be forced to cross the Old A30 to use the sports and education facilities and the Co-op and chip shop in Phase 1 of Cranbrook. This need creates a significant risk to those pedestrians, crossing that busy road, especially those with children and buggies.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns about the proposed development and I trust that the Parish Council will take these - and the views of other residents - into consideration while formulating what I hope will be a negative response to this application.

Members indicated their agreement with the sentiments expressed by Ms. Allen.

It was **proposed** by Cllr S. Wollen, **seconded** by Cllr Forrest, and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would object to the application and that the objection would incorporate the observations set out by Ms Allen. **UNANIMOUS. Carried.**

714.0 Correspondence

- Letter from Mr. Mark Nequest
- Letter from Ms. Naomi Allen

715.0 Business and Finance

715.1 Members considered the schedule of payments for August 2022.

715.2 It was **proposed** by Cllr Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr Forrest, and **RESOLVED** that the schedule of payments for August 2022 would be approved, and invoices discharged. **UNANIMOUS.**
Carried.

716.0 Rockbeare Rockets Funding

716.1 Mr Alex Blest , attending on behalf of the Rockbeare Rockets Football group addressed the Members. He advised the meeting that, despite the discussions between Mr Wayne Down and the Clerk, he did not feel that the group was ready to enter competitions. He added that the group had not been set up with that aim. The non-competitive nature of the group was what had attracted many of the children in the first instance. The purpose of the group had been to encourage children to play outside in the fresh air.

716.2 Mr Blest advised the Members that there was still a sum of £1.206 remaining from the original Parish Council grant and he anticipated that he would have to return a chunk of that money to the Parish Council. Despite requests from the Clerk, prior to the meeting, no bank statements/ invoices for goods purchased were made available to the Parish Council.

716.3 It was a matter of concern to the Members that there have, as of the date of the meeting, been no DBS checks carried out on those adults involved with the group. Further to this, Mr Blest stated that the coaching training courses (part of the original grant figure) had not been undertaken.

716.4 Currently, there is no management structure to the group (chairman/ treasurer/ secretary safety officer), therefore the group would have to address this prior to becoming affiliated to the local, official, body. At that juncture, the Clerk indicated that she, and another, were willing to assist with the first two of those tasks.

716.5 It was **agreed** that Mr Blest would ascertain the views of the group members/ parents regarding affiliation, and the creation of the necessary committee, prior to the next Parish Council meeting on 27th September, and report back to the Members on that date.

717.0 Website Update

717.1 Cllr Franklin provided the meeting with an update on the new Parish Council website. He is currently compiling the Councillor information page and arranging for the domain to be transferred from the current provider.

718.0 Ford Oaks Solar Farm

718.1 Cllr Forrest alluded to the comments put forward by a local landowner, in support of the proposed development. It had been stated that a number of farmers had agreed to place livestock on the site in order to graze under the panels. Cllr Forrest pointed out that our Consultant had indicated that grazing would exacerbate any flooding problem as longer grass has the proclivity to disperse water, whereas grazed areas provide an easy access route for water to roll across the land to an area where it will collect and pool. In the event that water reaches the planned swales, these will quickly become unable to cope with the volume of water, therefore rendering them ineffective. This, in turn, may result in flooding to the Marsh Green area.

719.0 Millennium Field

719.1 Cllr Forrest reported that Mr Robin Pearson had agreed to head an initiative for bees and hives at the site.

719.2 Cllr Forrest requested to make an amendment to the quotation provided at the last meeting. The sum of £2,500 appertains only to the cost for fencing – not for all work to the site. A further sum of (circa) £1,500 will be required for tree felling.

719.3 Whilst it is the wish of the Parish Council to create a site of biodiversity, which parishioners/ visitors can enjoy, the project is only worth undertaking if the community assists with the work. Assistance with some clearing may be available from local groups (i.e. Young Farmers) but the support of parishioners will be necessary.

719.4 Mr Julian Turnbull advised the meeting that, in the Deed Grant for his property, permission was given to run a water main pipe under the Millennium Field. It was **agreed** that a copy of the Deed would be forwarded to the Clerk.

720.0 Flooding Report

720.1 Cllr Forrest stated that he would like to publish the report as soon as possible. The document must be received as a final report before the matter can be moved forward.

720.2 Cllr. Lawrence asked if he could comment on the issue of sheep grazing at the solar farm site. He stated that the sheep cannot be left on their own. The second point is that, looking at solar farms (those in existence for 3 years plus), there is no grass, or wildflowers around the panels, at all. The suggestion that sheep can graze the area for the duration of the solar farm lease is untenable. The land will become barren. The sites at Cranford Lane and Broadclyst Road were alluded to as being good examples of the point.

720.3 It was agreed that the report should be submitted to EDDC Planners, prior to the planning application being brought to the group for consideration.

720.4 Mr. Julian Turnbull alluded to the delay in disseminating the report but conceded that the matter of the breach of confidentiality has played its part. Cllr Forrest pointed out that the Chairman and the Clerk had not been provided with a copy of the report and that fact had also delayed the process. The breach of confidentiality had still not been resolved. Until the final report is received and remuneration given, the Parish Council was not at liberty to disseminate the document.

721.0 Part II Meeting

721.1 It was proposed by Cllr Susan Wollen, seconded by Cllr Forrest, and **RESOLVED** that, due to the confidential nature of the matters to be discussed, and in accordance with the terms and provision set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the extant meeting should enter into Part II (Confidential) session. **UNANIMOUS. Carried.**

The formal part of the meeting was closed at 7.32 pm, and the public were asked to leave the room.

PART II DELIBERATIONS

722.0 Discussion relating to on-going confidentiality issues

722.1 Members were appraised of the current position. It was agreed that the matter would, again, be addressed with the Consultant, who had not responded to date. Matter **proposed, seconded, and carried. UNANIMOUS.**

723.0 Discussion relating to the Final Report

723.1 The dissemination of the document was deemed necessary, and a course of action was agreed in order to facilitate the creation of the final document. Matter **proposed, seconded, and carried. UNANIMOUS.**

At 7.43pm, the Council exited the confidential session and the meeting closed.

Next Meeting: 27th September 2022 at Marsh Green Village Hall, August 2022, commencing at 7.15 pm

DRAFT