



**ROCKBEARE  
PARISH COUNCIL**

Chairman: Cllr. Phil Franklin

Clerk: Carolyn Y. May

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**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL**

**HELD ON**

**TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present: Cllrs Franklin (Chairman), M. Nequest, R. Nequest**

**Also:** Cllr Richard Lawrence (EDDC) and five members of the public

**Apologies:** Cllrs A. Roberts, S. Randall-Johnson and H. Gent (DCC)

**Clerk/ RFO:** Carolyn Y. May

**AGENDA**

**764.0 Declarations of Interest** - none.

**765.0 Questions from the Public**

**765.1** Three parishioners, residents of Hazel Grove, attended the meeting in order to raise their concerns and objections, in respect of Planning Application 22/2824/OUT.

The residents alluded to the lack of privacy that will ensue, for residents of Hazel Grove, should the proposed properties be built. In particular, gardens would be overlooked.

A further issue related to the retention of water at the site. Currently, run-off water collects at the bottom of the fields at the proposed site. Residents were concerned that this would impact on the properties in the area. One resident highlighted the fact that 'soakaways' had not addressed the situation in the past.

Cllr M. Nequest advised the residents that the Parish Council had only just received the documentation relating to the application, and that there had been no opportunity for Members to consider the same in any depth. Therefore, the Parish Council, as a body. Was not in a position to determine a response to the Planning Department of EDDC.

Cllr. M. Nequest added that the Parish Council was entitled to request that conditions be appended to any planning application. Therefore, the points raised could be alluded to in any response submitted by the body.

Cllr. Lawrence (EDDC) advised the meeting that the proposed development was small (four properties). He added that a problem with development applications arose as a result of EDDC not being able to satisfy the five-year land supply requirement. Therefore, an opportunity for commercial development had been created.

Mr Mark Readman highlighted that the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan, which had been approved by EDDC, approved small areas of development within the Parish. This included development of areas around the boundary of the Parish, and infill, within the villages.

**Action** It was **agreed** that the Clerk would request an extension to the closing date for comments, to enable the matter to be discussed in depth by the Parish Council.

765.2 A parishioner from Marsh Green wished to thank the Clerk for accurately recording his comments, made at the last meeting of the Parish Council, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

765.3 A parishioner raised the poor condition of Quarter Mile Lane. The road is rapidly becoming impassable, due to the potholes and unmaintained condition of the road surface. It was felt that, apart from maintenance, there was a need for a weight restriction to be applied to the route.

**Action** It was **agreed** that the Clerk would report the condition of the road to Devon Highways.

765.4 The Chairman thanked the Parishioner for his contribution to the meeting.

#### **766.0 Approval of Minutes**

766.1 The Minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council, held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were considered.

766.2 It was **proposed** by Cllr. M. Nequest **seconded** by Cllr R. Nequest and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes would be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Unanimous. **Carried.**

The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

#### **767.0 Reports**

##### **767.1 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported that he had attended the meeting of the Rockbeare Parish Hall Committee.

767.2 The Clerk reported that a letter of Resignation had been received from Cllr. R. Forrest. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would write a letter of acknowledgement to Cllr Forrest and thank him for his service to the Parish.

##### **767.3 District Councillors Report**

Statera Energy is proposing to submit plans to develop a new battery energy storage facility on land to the south east of the existing Exeter substation and to the south of Saundercroft Road, near Broadclyst.

Battery storage facilities carry a significant fire risk. While the probability of a fire is low, the hazard can be rated as critical or catastrophic leading to a medium to high-risk rating overall. Lithium batteries are prone to thermal runaway and there are now many documented cases

of battery storage units that have led to serious fires and, in some cases, explosions and/or injury to firefighters.

Battery fires are difficult to extinguish and can re-ignite some considerable time later. Very large volumes of water are needed for many hours to control the fires and they need dealing with promptly, as the fire will cascade from one battery to another. The hazard increases with the number of batteries stored. Fires can reach temperatures of 800C. As well as the direct hazard from fire, there are also hazards from the release of flammable and toxic gases, such as carbon monoxide, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen cyanide, benzene and toluene. These gases are generated within the cell enclosure before venting.

The proposed site at Hawkchurch has recently been refused planning permission by EDDC.

Cllr Lawrence alluded to the proposed meeting, to be held at Rockbeare Village Hall, Rookwood Lane, Exeter, EX5 2LG Thursday 26th January 2023 – between 5:30pm - 8pm. He urged interested parties to attend.

## **768.0 PLANNING MATTERS**

**PLANNING APPLICATION 22/2824/OUT** – The Littlefield Land, South of Hazel Grove, Rockbeare - Outline application (all matters reserved) for the construction of up to four dwellings.

**Deferred.**

**DECISIONS** – Noted

## **769.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

**769.1 Parish Newsletter** – Cllr Franklin provided a draft Parish Flyer, which is intended to be published and provided to all homes within the parish. It was proposed that the title of the document should be 'Parish News for Rockbeare and Marsh Green'.

It was suggested that the document should contain updates of Parish Council projects/ consultations etc, news of upcoming events (as opposed to reporting on past events, and items of interest from parishioners).

Mr Mark Readman is to advise the Parish Council of the role that he may wish to take in relation to the publication.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr M. Nequest, and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Flyer would be progressed. Unanimous. **Carried.**

## **769.2 Parking Area within Rockbeare Village**

It was noted that the 'Residents Only' parking signs had not been removed from the area next to the telephone box. No communication had been received by the Clerk from those who maintain that it is their sole right to park in the space.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk would draft an appropriate notice for the Parish Council website, and the local Facebook page, stating that the 'Residents Only' parking signs must be removed (within a specified period of time). In the event that the request is not complied

with, the Parish Council would arrange for such removal, with no responsibility being accepted for the signs, or damage to the wall.

The Parish Council will then arrange for a sign to be erected, advising that the land is owned by the Parish Council, and may be used as a drop off / pick up point for any member of the public.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. M Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr R. Nequest, and **RESOLVED** that the matter would be progressed. Unanimous. **Carried.**

- 769.3 Report Request** - The Clerk reported that she had received a number of emails from a non-parish resident, who had requested a copy of the Flooding Report, commissioned by the Parish Council, in relation to the Ford Oaks Solar Farm application.

The Clerk had responded by stating that the request would be put before the Members. The author of the correspondence immediately entered into FOI claims. FOI is an action of last resort, when a document is requested and refused. This had not been the case. The Clerk had wished (as is standard practice) to advise the Members of the request – prior to progressing the matter.

The content and tone of the correspondence was noted by Members, who confirmed the statement made by the Clerk. Namely that the document was, in fact, in the public domain and could be accessed through the EDDC Planning website. It was **agreed** that the applicant should be referred, again, to that site.

## **770.0 BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

Members considered the Schedule of Payments for January 2023.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr Franklin, and **RESOLVED** that the schedule of payments would be approved. Unanimous. **Carried.**

## **771.0 WARM SPACES**

- 771.1 Sharon Thorne had forwarded a draft SLA to the Clerk, for signature. Members felt that the document was overly complicated and would require revisiting. Fixed costs would need to be clearer, and the provider would have to provide a definitive list of the items which required to be purchased.

- 771.2 It was **agreed** that the Parish Council would support the provision of the service, prior to the signing of the SLA, which should be revisited later.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr M. Nequest, and **RESOLVED** that the project would be supported, for a short term, prior to agreeing the terms of the SLA, which would be revisited. Unanimous. **Carried.**

## **772.0 GRANT APPLICATION**

- 772.1 Rockbeare Rockets Football Club is to submit an application for funding, to meet a 1/3 part cost of restoring the Rockbeare Pavilion. The balance of the cost to be met by the Manor Estates and Rockbeare Village Hall (1/3 each).

772.2 The Pavilion is in a state of disrepair. However, it is used to store equipment. The NHS Corporate Responsibility Scheme has agreed to provide, free of charge, five qualified tradesmen, for a period of five days, to bring the structure up to standard. The funding is being requested to meet the cost of the necessary materials. Once restored, the Rockets are to be permitted to use the structure at no charge.

772.3 Members agreed that they would require sight of the application at the next Parish Council meeting but agreed in principal to provide the sum of £369.37 for the project.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr R. Nequest, and **RESOLVED** that the subject to sight of the application, the sum of £369.37 would be granted to the Rockbeare Rockets Football Club for the purpose specified *ibid*. Unanimous. **Carried**.

#### 773.0 RE-AFFIRMATION OF PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES

773.1 The following Parish Council Policies were approved:

- **Standing Orders**
- **Financial Orders;**
- **Statement of Internal Control;**
- **Data Protection Policy;**
- **Complaints Process**
- **Grant Awards Policy**

It was **proposed** by Cllr. M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr R. Nequest, and **RESOLVED** that each of the policies would be accepted and published on the Parish Council website. Unanimous. **Carried**.

#### 774.0 MILLENNIUM FIELD UPDATE

774.1 Cllr Nequest provided an outline of the next steps of the Millennium Field Project.

- Two contractors have been asked to submit quotations for the thinning of trees and cutting of paths;
- The provision of a storage facility at the site;
- Installation of fencing at the 'community space area;'
- Installation of a 'kissing gate' and vehicle access;
- Provision of appropriate benches/ play equipment/ BBQ hard standing.

A member of the public raised the matter of flooding at the site. Cllr M. Nequest explained the drainage system to be put in place at the one area where water collects. Land drains are to be installed along the trench at the entrance to the site and three ponds are to be created on the site itself. These works are intended to alleviate the flooding problem.

Cllr M. Nequest added that the Marsh Green Hub is to take on the day-to-day maintenance of the site, once it has been brought up to a basic standard. An appropriate plan of works will be published.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr R. Nequest, and **RESOLVED** that sum of £15,000 would be allocated to the project, in the first instance. Unanimous. **Carried**.

## **775.0 BIRCHEND PLAN**

- 775.1 The Clerk presented a plan for the area at Birchend in Rockbeare.
- 775.2 It had been **agreed** previously that the site should be used to provide a community space for residents. It was proposed that a number of trees should be planted within the perimeter of the site. Three suitable benches could be installed, along with a small amount of play equipment for the under six years age group – including inclusive items.
- 775.3 It was felt to be appropriate that adults with young children should be able to utilise the area for safe play, and relaxation. A number of play equipment manufacturers and installers have been contacted.
- 775.4 During a recent consultation exercise, residents highlighted the lack of a local shop. Therefore consideration is being given to the provision of a suitable means of providing food basics at the site. Therefore, an appropriate area should be cleared to enable the siting of a mobile trailer/ or static construction. The same set up to be identified at Marsh Green. The identification, and costing, of suitable equipment is to be undertaken by Mr Andrew Dunn.
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**The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023