



**ROCKBEARE
PARISH COUNCIL**

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DRAFT MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

12TH FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Cllr. Franklin (Chairman), Cllrs. R. Nequest and M. Nequest

Also: Cllr T. Olive (EDDC), and two members of the public

Parish Clerk: Carolyn May

AGENDA

87/23 Apologies – Cllr. A. Dunn, Cllr. R. Dunn, Cllr Sarah Randall - Johnson (Devon Council)

88/23 Declarations of Interest - None

89/23 PUBLIC SESSION

Mrs Tracey Brookes addressed the Members, in relation to the issue of vehicles speeding through the village of Rockbeare.

Mrs Brookes stated that her driveway leads onto the main road through the village. She has been very concerned, frightened, and appalled at the speed of motorists who drive through the village, it seems that a lot of drivers tend to ignore the speed limit sign completely.

This situation affects her family as they tend to use the driveway for access to the house.

Mrs Brookes believes that the speed limit in the village should be reduced to 20 mph , making it safer for pedestrians who use the road for walking where there are no footpaths.

A large number of drivers do not appear to acknowledge the sign for the playground by the village hall; the fact that there is a bus stop on both sides of the road; or the school signs when lights flashing.

Mrs Brookes asked if it would be worth starting a petition or campaign to try to change this the speed limit in the village?

Mrs Brookes is also very concerned about the area where the children enter/ exit the school.

Mrs Brookes also mentioned the lack of pavements, along the main road, in the village along the main road, stating that she found it very difficult to walk along the road in the village without having to walk in the road due to lack of pavements.

The Clerk advised the meeting that Mrs Brookes had communicated with the PC and that advice had been provided previously. It had been explained that the issue of speeding traffic had been addressed by the PC on several previous occasions.

Traffic speed/ roads and pavements are matters that should be raised with Devon County Council (Highways), as these do not fall within the remit of the Parish Council. It had been explained to the parishioner that several suggestions had been put forward by the PC, none of which had been accepted by either Devon CC/ Devon & Cornwall Police. One argument put forward for non-action, by DCC, was the fact that there had been no reported accidents/ fatalities in the village. Therefore, there had been no evidence to support an application for a reduction in traffic speed. This is the benchmark used to support any application.

An offer had been made by the PC, to place illuminating speed signs at the entrances to the village had been dismissed by the police, on the basis that there is no evidence to support the view that such signs make any discernible difference to speed.

Again, Mrs Brookes was advised to raise her complaint with DCC, via Cllrs Randall-Johnson and Gent.

90/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD on 16th January 2024

Members considered the draft Minutes for the last meeting of the Parish Council, held on 16th of January 2024.

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

91/23 REPORTS

Chairmans Report

Sign at Parking area – The Chairman reported that he had written to Cllr Gent (DCC) in relation to the sign that is currently sited at the parking area in Rockbeare. It has been suggested that this could be moved to a position next to the post box.

Warm Rooms/ Hub – the Chairman reported that he had attended the Hub. The venue is being well used and is a valued amenity.

County Councillor Report

Cllr Sara Randall-Johnson (DCC) - This report had been disseminated to Members, prior to the meeting. Report 'noted' and appended at 'A'.

EDDC Councillor Report

Cllr. Olive reported:

- **Cranbrook Governance Review** – a review is to be undertaken, which will impact on Rockbeare Parish. It is intended that a public meeting will be held, to which the Parish Councillors will be invited. Any agreed changes will not take effect until 2027.
- **Green Wedges** – EDDC is undertaking a review of 'Green Wedges' and is considering cutting these by 75%. This will affect the wedge between Rockbeare and Cranbrook, at the point of the Cranbrook expansion. There will be a further report in relation to this matter, in March 2024.

92/23 PARISH COUNCIL VACANCIES

There are currently two vacancies for Parish Councillors. It was **agreed** that these would be advertised in the usual manner.

93/23 WARM SPACES

Sharon Thorne addressed the meeting in relation to this matter. She reported that she was happy that the amenity was being used by a substantial number of people, with a wide mix of age groups.

The issue of 'signing in' was raised. Members felt that the practice was important and must be enforced for two main reasons:

- **Safety** – in the event of an untoward incident, all patrons will have to be accounted for. Therefore, an accurate list of those present is required.
- **Monitoring Usage** - It had been previously noted that many of those attending the Hub had, in fact, not been parishioners of Rockbeare. Many users were from Cranbrook, Honiton, and Ottery. This situation was one that had to be managed, due to the costs involved.

It was accepted that many attendees did not sign in at the door to the Hub, therefore an accurate record of usage was not available. Sharon advised the Members that, due to her being required to work in the kitchen, she was unable to enforce the 'signing in' rule.

Members suggested that a second person could be appointed to undertake the enforcement of signing in. Sharon advised that not all persons who attended actually stayed for the duration of the event, therefore, it was likely that no one person could be appointed to undertake the task. Members felt that Inspiring Connections was being paid to run the event, and that it was the responsibility of the organisation to find a solution to this situation.

Costs - it was highlighted by the RFO that the Hub had, thus far, cost in the region of £17,000, and that this sum would likely rise to £20,000 by the end of the 2023/24 Financial Yar. The RFO highlighted the fact that the amenity had cost substantially more than had been agreed. This is public money and it is incumbent upon the Parish Council to obtain 'best value'.

Members voiced their concern at the number of non-parishioners who were obtaining free food at the Hub. It was felt that the Parish Council should not be subsidising those who did not contribute to the precept. Or offer a donation towards the cost of the facility.

Sharon advised the meeting that a contributions jar had been placed in a prominent place at the venue – this had raised a total of £6.00. Members felt that it was inappropriate that attendees from out with the parish were not contributing to the project in a meaningful way.

Sharon also advised the Members that consideration had been given to fundraising activities, and that there would be a joint fund raiser (fashion show) with Rockbeare Primary School.

In an effort to reduce the cost of the facility, Members were of the firm opinion that all attendees should be obliged to sign in at the door to the hall, and that all **non-parishioners** should be required to pay the sum of £2.50 per person. Parishioners would continue to have **free** access to the Hub. This proposal would be implemented from the 22nd of February 2024, and the result reviewed at the next Parish Council meeting. At present, no charge would be made for children attending the Hub.

It was **agreed** that this change would be advertised on Facebook.

It was **proposed** by Cllr M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. R. Nequest and **RESOLVED** the sum of £2.50 per person, for non-Rockbeare Parishioners, would be charged for attending the Hub, and partaking of hospitality. Unanimous. **Carried.**

It was **proposed** by Cllr M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. R. Nequest and **RESOLVED** an approach would be made to Morrison's Supermarket, requesting that they donate fruit to the Hub (for children). Unanimous. **Carried.**

94/23 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Application – PP12719553

Address - Land South of Hazel Grove, Rockbeare

Proposal – Approval of Reserved Matters

Members considered the matter. Mrs Brookes stated that the access at the site would only exacerbate the current traffic problems in the area.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr. R. Nequest and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would not object to the application but that a comment relating to traffic speed would be appended to the response. Unanimous. **Carried.**

PLANNING DECISIONS – Noted

95/23 CORRESPONDENCE

Members considered a number of email items received.

It was **proposed** by Cllr M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and RESOLVED the correspondence would be accepted as a resignation by Cllr Brodie. Unanimous. **Carried.**

96/23 BUSINESS AND FINANCE

96/23.1 Members considered the Schedule of Payments and Bank Reconciliation

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Rebecca Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin, and RESOLVED that the schedule of payments would be accepted, and the liabilities discharged. Unanimous. **Carried.**

96/23.2 The Bank Reconciliation was accepted.

97/23 MOBILE SHOP PROPOSAL

Cllr Franklin had discussed the proposal further, with Cllr. A. Dunn. It was **agreed** that the provision of this service would be too difficult. Having read the prepared business plan, and considered the SWOT analysis, it was felt that the dependence on the goodwill of volunteers would leave the parish open to substantial losses.

98/23 MILLENIUM FIELD UPDATE

No further work has been undertaken. However, a suitable storage unit has been identified. The Clerk is to ascertain whether planning permission is required for 4 corner foundations. In order to ensure that the structure remains in keeping with the area, it is proposed that it should be timber clad.

Rat poison has been found on the field. This has now been removed. It was **agreed** that further incidents would be reported to the police.

99/12 BIRCH END

The covenant to be discussed, again, with the person who donated the land. Cllr Nequest confirmed that he had spoken with the donor, who had indicated that he had no objection to the proposals put forward by the Parish Council.

It was **agreed** that a local solicitor would be identified to deal with the land transfer, and that suitable seating would be sought to be placed on the site in the first instance.

100/23 Defibrillator at Marsh Green

Cllr M. Nequest reported that SW Power had advised him that the power would be cut to the unit unless a suitable electricity (unmetered supply) supplier could be found. Enquiries had not been fruitful. However, EDDC has a supplier, and Cllr. Oliver stated that he would enquire about the defibrillator being connected to that supply. It was **agreed** that Cllr M. Nequest would email Cllr Oliver with the details of the unit.

The public meeting closed at 19.20 hrs.

101/23 It was **proposed** by Cllr R. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and RESOLVED the Parish Council would, in accordance with the provisions of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, enter into confidential discussions.

102/23 It was **proposed** by Cllr M. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and RESOLVED that the Clerk's remuneration would be raised by one full scale point. Unanimous. **Carried.**

The Meeting Closed at 19.40 hrs.

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