



DRAFT MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

11TH MARCH 2025

PRESENT: Cllr. Franklin (Chairman), Cllr. Nequest, Cllr. Wall, Cllr. Brooks and Cllr. Priddis.

Also: Two Members of the Public

Parish Clerk

AGENDA

64/24-25 Apologies – Cllr. Olive (EDDC)

65/24-25 Public Forum

Drains – Mr Knight reported that the drains in Marsh Green have now been cleared out by DCC (Highways) Department. He added that this was the first time that the work had been carried out for several seasons. Mr Knight added that he would like this work to be undertaken regularly, in order to avoid a build-up of detritus, which causes the drains to become ineffective.

It was highlighted that the Clerk had reported the issue (again) to Highways, and that she would where necessary continue to do so. The Chairman emphasised that the Parish Council had no powers to force DCC to undertake work to the highway, and that the maintenance of the same did not fall within the remit of any Parish Council.

Public Session - Mr Jim Randall asked the meeting if, in the event of more parishioners electing to attend Parish Council meetings, the public session could be extended, to accommodate discussions. The Chairman highlighted that the time allocation for public discussion fell within his remit, and if necessary the discussion period could be extended.

The recent criticism of the Parish Council on the Rockbeare Facebook page was discussed. It was noted that whilst some particularly egregious comments had been publicly aired, no correspondence on the issue of the road closure in Rockbeare had, in fact, been directed to the Parish Council website/ Clerk. Much of the commentary was considered to be inaccurate and unfair, with the Parish Council having been castigated for issues which did not fall within its' statutory remit. It was further noted that those who articulated the most vitriolic comments were, in fact, never present at Parish Council meetings.

66/24-25 Reports

Chairmans Report

East Devon Local Plan 2020 – 2042 – The Regulation 19 Public Draft of the Plan is now online. This is a lengthy document of 267 pages. The document will be added to the Parish Council website, to enable parishioner to have access to the same.

The public consultation on the proposals will run up until 31st March 2025

Cllr. Franklin attended a recent online meeting relating to the proposals and will continue to do so. There is to be significant development, including Farringdon on the A30. It is important for as many properties as possible from this development included into Rockbeare Parish.

Rockbeare Road Closure – It was emphasised by the Chairman that the road closure at Rockbeare had been properly applied for by the developer and authorised by Devon County Council (DCC). DCC is the appropriate, and principal, authority which has sole responsibility for roads and footpaths within the county.

On the matter of road maintenance and closures, Parish Councils have no more authority than residents. Despite the responsibility for the said road closure falling firmly within the remit of DCC, several parishioners have sought to hold the Parish Council responsible for the closure/ lack of access, and have taken to social media to castigate the latter body.

The Chairman of the Parish Council did, in fact, liaise with the contractors, asking if it was possible for access by foot to be maintained. Unfortunately, for health and safety reasons, this was not possible as a trench had been dug in the middle of the road.

A parishioner advised the Parish Council that an additional problem had arisen due to contractors not removing the safety barriers upon completion of the work.

Re-instatement of Meetings at Rockbeare Village Hall – Meetings of the Parish Council have recently been held solely at Marsh Green Village Hall, as there has been no availability at Rockbeare. However, the body is now able to reinstate the bi-monthly meeting at Rockbeare, and all meetings will now be held on the third Wednesday of the month (as was previously the arrangement).

67/24-25 To approve the Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2025

Members considered the Draft Minutes for the meeting held on 28th January 2025.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr Brooks and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes for the Parish Council Meeting, held on 28th January 2025, provided a true reflection of the discussions, and that the Minutes would be approved. Unanimous. **Carried.**

68/24-25 Business and Finance

Members considered the schedule of payments provided.

Retrospective Payments for February 2025

Date	Payee	Invoice Ref	Gross	VAT	Net
20/02/2025	Brightsea	112605	226.00	0.00	226.00
20/02/2025	MGVH	Feb-25	15.00	0.00	15.00
20/02/2025	Ionos	2.03042E+11	21.60	3.60	18.00
20/02/2025	HMRC	N/A	744.22	0.00	744.22
20/02/2025	JJ Tree Services	N/A	10060.00	0.00	10060.00
20/02/2025	Salary	N/A	1937.00	0.00	1937.00
20/02/2025	Stationery Recharge	215	142.60	0.00	142.60
20/02/2025	Expenses	N/A	176.50	0.00	176.50
20/02/2025	Simon A. Martin	234804	24.00	4.00	20.00
20/02/2025	AJGIBL GBP CLIENT NST	57297645	799.65	0.00	799.65
Total			14146.57	7.60	14138.97

It was **proposed** by Cllr Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and **RESOLVED** that the list of payments for February 2025 would be approved, and the liabilities discharged. Unanimous. **Carried.**

Schedule of Payments for March 2025

Date	Payee	Invoice Ref	Gross	VAT	Net
11/03/2025	MGVH	Mar-25	15.00	0.00	15.00
11/03/2025	RVH (Hub)	08	609.84	0.00	609.84
11/03/2025	INSPIRING CONNECTIONS (HUB)	104	1848.82	379.96	1468.86
11/03/2025	INSPIRING CONNECTIONS (HUB)	105	392.16	65.36	326.80
11/03/2025	IONOS	203041523983	21.60	3.60	18.00
11/03/2025	HMRC (Mar)	N/A	744.22	0.00	744.22
11/03/2025	SALARY	N/A	1937.00	0.00	1937.00
11/03/2025	EXPENSES	N/A	182.75	0.00	182.75
11/03/2025	SIMON A. MARTIN	234804	24.00	4.00	20.00
Total			5775.39	452.92	5322.47

It was **proposed** by Cllr Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Wall and **RESOLVED** that the list of payments for March 2025 would be approved, and the liabilities discharged. Unanimous. **Carried.**

69/24-25 Planning Application - None

70/24-25 Planning Decisions – Noted

71/24-25 Correspondence

Retired Councillor Colin John Please - The Clerk reported the sad passing of Retired Councillor Colin J. Please.

Colin had served his parish as a Parish Councillor, and Chairman of the Parish Council, for a considerable number of years, his contribution to the community had been immeasurable. A kind and considerate gentleman, Colin will be sadly missed.

It was agreed that, in Colin's memory, a memorial bench would be procured and placed in the Millennium Field, with a suitable commemoration plaque attached to the same. A short service of dedication will also be arranged, once the bench is in situ.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would make the necessary arrangements. Unanimous. **Carried.**

It was **agreed** that a second plaque would be procured, dedicated to the memory of Jonathan Roscoe, a parishioner of Marsh Green who had made a significant contribution to the development of the Millennium Field, and to the hosting of the annual Remembrance Service refreshments at Marsh Green.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would make the necessary arrangements. Unanimous. **Carried.**

EDDC Local Government Devolution - the document, relating to the proposed reorganisation of the county's democratic management, has been published. It was **agreed** that as this is a lengthy document, Cllr. Franklin would peruse the same and identify the main points of the same. These would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

David Reed, Member of Parliament – the Clerk read out a letter from the local MP, in which a request had been made to speak with the Chairman. It was **agreed** that Cllr Franklin would contact David Reed.

Road Repairs (Rockbeare) - The Clerk reported that a Parishioner had contacted the Parish Council to raise his concerns relating to the resurfacing of the road at Lowbrook. The Parishioner felt that the patching had not been carried out appropriately. There is no tar sealant around the patch, and the patch itself stands proud of the main road surface. The Clerk confirmed that the patching had been inspected and that the points raised were justified. This matter will be reported to DCC Highways.

72/24-25 Member Remit

Following recent Facebook correspondence, it was felt that Parishioners should, perhaps, be appraised of the specific remits of individual Councillors.

The Parish Council has several new Members, who felt intimidated by some of the comments made. It is stressed that Parish Councillors do not receive payment for the work that they undertake, and that they are working for the benefit of the community. Furthermore, it is felt to be unfair to castigate the Parish Council for matters over which it has no control/ legal standing.

A Parish Council may only deal with matters in which it has a legal right to involve itself. Those rights do not include highway maintenance, lighting/ blocked drains (Devon County Council), planning matters (Parish Councils are merely consultees. Decisions are made by the principal planning authority for the area (EDDC)), or flooding matters (EDDC/ Environment Agency).

Whilst the Parish Council is willing to add its' voice to concerns raised, it holds no power to alter any decision legally made by a principal authority.

It was **agreed** that the individual remits of Councillors should be published:

Councillor	Remit
Cllr. Phil Franklin	Chairman – contact for any relevant matters Special Interest - Birchend
Councillor Mark Nequest	Vice Chairman – contact for any relevant matters Special Interest – Marsh Green / Millennium Field
Councillor Tracey Brooks	Councillor Special Interest – 20 is Plenty
Councillor Liz Priddis	Councillor Special Interest: Rockbeare Hub/ village enhancement
Councillor Sonia Wall	Councillor Special Interest: Rockbeare Hub/ village enhancement

73/24-25 Potential Acquisition of Land

The Clerk reported that she had attended a meeting on the morning of the 11th of March, with the potential donor of land to the Parish, and a Planning Consultant. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the viability of providing a parish amenity for the residents of the Parish.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk would pursue the matter further and liaise with the consultant for Park Life Hub at Heavitree, Exeter.

74/24-25 Recording of Parish Council Meetings

The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council should undertake a live recording trial, of the next Parish Council Meeting. This would afford parishioners an opportunity to follow a meeting from home.

It was **agreed** that Cllr. Franklin would make the necessary arrangements for the recording.

75/24-25 Appointment of Internal Auditor for the Municipal Year 2024-25

It was **proposed** by Cllr Nequest, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and **RESOLVED** that Jacqui Peskett (JP Auditors) would be appointed to undertake the annual internal audit of the Parish Council, for the 2024/25 Municipal Year. Unanimous. **Carried**.

76/24-25 Project Updates

Millennium Field - Cllr Nequest reported that the footpath at the field is walkable. Cladding of the shipping container will be undertaken when the weather conditions improve.

Land at Quarter Mile Lane - The Clerk advised the meeting that she had passed the triangle of land, owned by the Parish Council, on Quarter Mile Lane. It was noted that trees had been felled on the border between the triangle and Sunnyside. The detritus arising from the felling of the trees had been left on the land owned by the Council.

The Clerk asked if the trees had been felled on the instruction of a Councillor. If this was not the case, then no permission had been sought to leave the arisings on Council land, and action would have to be taken to ensure that those who authorised the felling arranged for the removal of the arisings from Parish Council land.

Councillor Nequest agreed to speak with JJ Tree Services in order to determine if that firm had felled the trees and, if so, who gave permission for the same.

20 is Plenty – Cllr Brooks reported that she had discussed the ‘next step’ in the campaign with the Cranbrook Co-Ordinator.

It has been suggested that the Rockbeare Team could borrow the Cranbrook speed monitoring equipment to record the speed of motorists travelling in excess of 20mph through the village. The camera would have to be situated at a designated spot, and speed recording undertaken three separate times during a month.

This exercise would be best conducted during the Spring/ Summer and would require the assistance of volunteers.

Rockbeare Hub – Cllr Wall advised the meeting that there were currently a number of villagers who were willing to form a committee to oversee the running of Rockbeare Hub. It was felt that the current cost of the Hub was not sustainable and that a local group of volunteers would provide best value for the Parish Council.

It was **agreed** that such a committee could be a sub-Committee of the Parish Council, led by two Parish Councillors. It was **agreed** that this proposal would be trialled and that the mechanics of setting up the subcommittee would be undertaken by the Clerk, once more information is available.

Plants for Rockbeare Village – Cllr Wall requested the permission of the Parish Council to procure flower boxes for the village. A brief discussion ensued, in relation to the placement of the same.

It was **agreed** that a number of boxes should be purchased, and permission sought from the Village Hall to place some of these items on the inside to the fence. Others would be placed on the fence at Birchend.

Next Meeting – the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at Rockbeare Parish Hall, on the 16th of April, commencing at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 19.30 hrs.

MEMBER ACTION LIST

Date	Action	Responsible Member	Completed
11/03/2025	Contact Local MP	Chairman	
11/03/2025	Contact Ben Hunt - funding and hub advice	Clerk	
11/03/2025	Marsh Green - felled trees and detritus left on PC land. Cllr Nequest to liaise with JJ Trees to ascertain if that company felled the trees - if so, at whose request.	Cllr. Nequest	
11/03/2025	If trees felled at Marsh Green on the instruction of another, the Clerk to correspond with that third party to request the removal of detritus from Parish Land.	Clerk	
11/03/2025	Rubble deposited at Prickly Pear Wood - no authorisation requested. This is PC land.	Cllr. Nequest	
11/03/2025	Birchend transfer to PC	Chairman	
11/03/2025	Appoint the Internal Auditor for FY 2024/25	Clerk	18/03/2025
11/03/2025	Local Government Devolution - re-organisation consultation documents. To read and precis for next meeting.	Chairman	
11/03/2025	Members Remit - post on website	Chairman	
11/03/2025	Bi-monthly PC surgery	Clerk/ Chairman	
11/03/2025	Recording of PC Mtg - pilot	Chairman	

11/03/2025	Millenium Field - Shed Cladding - to arrange when drier weather.	Cllr. Nequest/ Clerk	
11/03/2025	Millenium Field Memorial Benches	Clerk	
11/03/2025	Land acquisition liaison	Clerk	
11/03/2025	20 is Plenty - liaise with Cranbrook	Cllr Brooks	
11/03/2025	Hub - Committee formation and management of events	Cllrs. Wall and Priddis	
11/03/2025	Plants etc for Village	Cllrs Wall and Priddis	

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