ROCKBEARE
PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr. Phil Franklin

Clerk: Carolyn Y. May
32 Victoria Commercial Centre,
Station Approach
Victoria, Roche,
Cornwall PL26 8LG

Telephone: 01726 210139

Email: clerk@rockbeare.eastdevon.gov.uk
Web: www.rockbeareparishcouncil.co.uk

DRAFT MINUTES OF ROCKBEARE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

19TH NOVEMBER 2025

PRESENT: Cllr. Franklin (Chairman), Cllr Nequest (Vice-Chairman), Cllr.Brooks, Cllr. Wall., Cllr. Priddis, Cllr. Boddington.

Also: Three members of the public

Parish Clerk: Carolyn May

AGENDA

71/25-26 **Apologies –** Cllr. Vanstone (DCC), Cllr. Gent (DCC)

72/25.26 **Declarations of Interest** – No declarations of interest were made.

73/25-26 **Reports**

- **EDDC (Cllr. Olive) –** none received.
- **DCC (Cllr. Vanstone) -** none received
- **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported that he and the Parish Clerk met, via Zoom, with the Co-ordinator for Grantscape (Matt Young), and the Chair of Aylesbeare Parish Council. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the division of the grant funding sum made available by Infinis (Contractors for Ford Oaks Solar Farm).

The fund (totalling circa £93,000) is to be divided between the three areas which are being adversely affected by the construction process of the solar farm (Marsh Green, Westcott and Aylesbeare).

The Clerk advised the meeting that the village most affected was Marsh Green, then Westcott. It was **agreed** that the sum would be divided with two-thirds being allocated to Marsh Green and Westcott, a further one-third being allocated to Aylesbeare.

The fund will not be managed by the Parish Council, which will sit on any panel as a representative for the parish. Several parishioners residing in Marsh Green have been approached and asked to form a group, which will determine the wishes of villagers in relation to potential projects which can be financed from the fund.

Remembrance

The Chairman thanked Cllrs. Brooks and Wall for representing the Parish Council at the Rockbeare Remembrance Service.

74/25-26 Public Open Forum

Rockbeare Hill – Speed Restrictions

A parishioner asked if the request to reduce the speed limit on Rockbeare Hill had progressed. Cllr. Brooks advised that the whole '20 is Plenty' project has ground to a halt, due to the lack of speed monitoring volunteers in the parish.

The attending parishioner indicated that he was willing to volunteer for the task. It was **agreed** that Cllr Brooks would liaise with the gentleman to progress the project.

Cycle Racks

A parishioner requested that the Parish Council considered placing cycle racks in the village (particularly in the vicinity of the Village Hall). The lady explained that she resides outside the village. Her children attend various group activities held in the village hall. Rather than use her motor vehicle to take the children to these activities, she would prefer that they used their cycles. However, there are no facilities for the storage/ safety of unattended cycles in the village.

Members briefly discussed the possibility of providing cycle racks at Birch End and opposite the school. Mr Ben Hunt advised the meeting that DCC had provided several lockable bollards for cycles, close to the Heavitree Community Project Building. Ben undertook to provide contact details to the Clerk.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Franklin, **seconded** by Cllr Brooks and RESOLVED that the Clerk would contact Devon CC to ascertain the possibility of obtaining cycle bollards. The Clerk to look at other cycle rack options and report to Members. Unanimous. **Carried.**

Community Facilities Feasibility Study

Mr Ben Hunt addressed the meeting in relation to the 'Draft' Feasibility Report, relating to the proposal for a dedicated community hub.

Ben stated that there was a great deal going on in the Parish. However, there was a need to ensure that all partners/providers were aware of the plans of the other groups. At present, it appears that each group is operating in a silo.

The Consultation Exercise commissioned by the Parish Council raised several common themes, including:

- The need for community cohesion to reduce loneliness.
- Health and Wellbeing issues.
- Sustainability

Ideas raised by respondents included:

- Shop/ café/ meeting spaces
- Play areas
- Pump Track
- Multi-use Games Area
- Community space

Matters to be Considered

- Legal Framework – clauses to be clarified re: reversion of land,
- Appointment of Architect – and determination of the extent to which the current architect will progress the Parish Council's plans.
- What drainage has been placed at the site for the proposed car park.
- Check the plans to determine what is included in the current proposal.
- Design and development proposals.

It was **agreed** that Members should consider the Draft Report and determine the priorities for the design of the project.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk and the Vice Chairman should meet with Cyril Emmett and the Leading Architect to discuss the points raised.

75/25-26 To Approve the Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2025

Members considered the draft Minutes for the meeting held on 17th September 2025.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Brooks, **seconded** by Cllr. Priddis and RESOLVED that the Minutes for Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 17th September2025, provided a true reflection of the discussions undertaken, and that the Minutes would be approved. Unanimous. **Carried.**

76/25-26 Finance and Economy

Payments to be approved:

As a result of there having been no Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held in October 2025, Members were required to consider both the October and November 2025 payment schedules – the former to be approved retrospectively.

Payment Schedule – October 2025

Date	Payee	Invoice Ref	Gross	VAT	Net
19/11/2025	Ionos	203048	21.60	3.60	18.00
19/11/2025	AG Tree & Garden Services	1261/1277	180.00	0.00	180.00
19/11/2025	RVH (Hub)	2025/26-88	87.96	0.00	87.96
19/11/2025	Carolyn May	N/A	1854.60	0.00	1854.60
19/11/2025	Carolyn May	N/A	184.50	0.00	184.50
19/11/2025	Simon A. Martin	15339	24.00	4.00	20.00
19/11/2025	HMRC	N/A	898.05	0.00	898.05
			3250.71	**7.60**	**3243.11**

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Brooks, **seconded** by Cllr. Franklin and RESOLVED that the Schedule of Payments for October 2025 would be approved. Unanimous. **Carried.**

Payment Schedule – November 2025

Date	Payee	Invoice Ref	Gross	VAT	Net
19/11/2025	Ionos	203048	21.60	3.60	18.00
19/11/2025	AG Tree & Garden Services	11	60.00	0.00	60.00
19/11/2025	RVH (Hub)	2025/26-59	105.96	0.00	105.96
19/11/2025	Carolyn May	N/A	1854.60	0.00	1854.60
19/11/2025	Carolyn May	N/A	283.68	0.00	283.68
19/11/2025	Simon A. Martin	15339	24.00	4.00	20.00
19/11/2025	HMRC	N/A	898.05	0.00	898.05
19/11/2025	Brightsea	115685	246.00	0.00	246.00
19/11/2025	Inspiring Connections	Grant	250.00	0.00	250.00
			3743.89	**7.60**	**3736.29**

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin **seconded** by Cllr. Nequest and RESOLVED that the Schedule of Payments for November 2025 would be approved. Unanimous. **Carried.**

Hub Income

Cllr. Wall reported that the sum of £200.00 is to be paid into the Parish Council bank account, to be held for the Committee.

CIL Payment

The Clerk Reported that the sum of £24, 272 had been received from CIL monies.

77/25-26 Budget and Precept Setting

Members considered the Budget and Precept Setting documents provided by the Clerk (Attached at 'A').

It was noted that Parish Council income to date, for the extant financial year, totalled £71,598. Expenditure to date totalled £44,565 (net). The total sum held in the Parish Council bank account, as of 31st October 2025 is £94,156 (rounded up).

As reported at 57/2025-26, the sum of £24, 272 was received as a CIL payment. It should be noted that this sum does not form part of the Parish Council's disposable income and must be accounted for as an 'earmarked' sum.

Funding made available for Westcott and Marsh Green, from the Infinis Fund, will not be included in the Precept calculation, as those funds are being held by an independent third party. However, allocated budget spending for those areas will be reduced substantially in the Parish Council budget calculation.

Budget Setting

The projected annual expenditure for the 2025/2026 financial year is estimated at £63,865 (rounded down). This projected sum represents an overspend of £7,966 for the financial year. This overspend is, in great part, due to the failure of a contractor to submit his invoice during the 2024/2025 financial year, and the unexpected requirement to commission the Community Amenities consultation.

Several factors were set out for consideration, which would impact upon the 2026/2027 budget and precept. These would likely impact on Parish Council costs. These included (though not exclusively):

- Increased Insurance costs
- Increased Subscription costs
- Increased grass cutting costs
- Increased hall rent costs
- Statutory pay rise (the Clerk advised that, for the third year, she would not claim the statutory pay rise).
- Legal costs that may be incurred resulting from the diminution of the Parish boundary
- Increased audit fees.

Grants - The Clerk highlighted the lack of grant funding for the extant financial year and asked if the status quo was to be maintained during 2026/2027. Members felt that the Parish Council was undertaking several projects for the benefit of the parish and that the inclusion of grant funding would impact adversely on both the budget and precept for the next financial year.

Having considered all the relevant factors, the Parish Council set the following budget for the 2026/2027 Financial Year:

Budget Head	Budget Sum	Projected Annual Total for 2025/26	2026/27 Budget
	(£)	(£)	(£)
Salary	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
Employers NI	2,834.00	1,156.88	1,750.00
Expenses	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Subscriptions	365.00	357.24	425.00
Expenses (Members)	500.00	250.00	250.00
Accountant	300.00	132.00	250.00
Stationery	500.00	300.00	350.00
IT	350.00	306.00	400.00
Hall Rent PC	200.00	470.00	500.00
Audits	650.00	605.00	650.00
Insurance	700.00	700.00	1,200.00
Grass Cutting	1,500.00	1,500.00	3,000.00
Grants	-	-	-
Birch End Project	1,200.00	1,200.00	3,000.00
Millennium Field Project	1,200.00	18,000.00	250.00
Hub	12,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00
Newsletter	900.00	900.00	920.00
Defibrillators	200.00	88.00	100.00
Legal Fees	N/A		10,000.00
Feasibility Study	N/A		8,000.00
	55,899.00	62,465.12	**64,545.00**
Feasibility Project	.	1,400.00	
		63865.12	

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin **seconded** by Cllr.Brooks and RESOLVED that the 2026/2027 Budget for Rockbeare Parish Council would be set at **£64,545.00.** Unanimous. **Carried.**

Earmarked Reserves were Set at:

CIL	£34,000
Legal Fees	£10,000
Birchend	£3,000
Feasibility Study	£10,000

Precept Setting

Members considered the precept sum required by the Parish Council to cover the costs of operation for the 2026/2027 financial year. The sum is calculated on the tax base for the parish (the number of properties that are liable to pay council tax). In Rockbeare Parish, this number totals 317.

Having considered the options available, it was agreed that the precept would be raised by 7%, to £44,940 for the year, keeping the increased precept per household to below £10 per month.

It was **proposed** by Cllr. Franklin **seconded** by Cllr. Nequest and RESOLVED that the 2026/2027 Precept for Rockbeare Parish Council would be set at **£44,940.** Unanimous. **Carried.**

78/25-26 **Planning Applications –** No responses to be made

79/25-26 **Planning Decisions –** Noted

80/25-26 **Infinis Contractors** - This matter was addressed in the Chairman's Report.

81/25-26 **London Road Development –** Nothing to report

82/25-26 **Millennium Village Green Status**

Cllr. Nequest requested that the Millennium Field should be given 'Village Green' status. He added that it was the only available 'green area' for Marsh Green residents and that the development of the area should enhance the facility to encourage villagers to use the area for social events.

To date, there has been a village barbeque at the site and a Carol concert has been arranged for the 21st of December.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk would investigate the process for designating the area as a village green. It was further **agreed** that a suitable plaque would be commissioned to highlight the new title.

83/25-26 **Local Government Re-organisation – No update from September 2025 (below)**

The potential adjustments to the boundary with Cranbrook have raised significant concerns among Members. Historically, alterations to the boundary have led to portions of Rockbeare Parish being integrated into Cranbrook

A primary concern is that any further boundary modifications might strip new developments from Rockbeare's jurisdiction, potentially resulting in a detrimental loss of revenue that would be crucial for local services and community projects.

Considering these issues, it has been deemed imperative that the Parish Council actively challenge any efforts towards such boundary changes.

Additionally, Cllr. Franklin has put forth the suggestion to revisit the Rockbeare Neighbourhood Plan.

84/25-26 **Correspondence**

NALC – new email regulations

85/25-26 **Member Training** – Details of on-line training to be disseminated.

86/25-26 **Project Updates**

Hub – this was covered under Finance and Economy.

Village Facility – Addressed

The project is at a very early stage, but it is hoped that any facility built would include a café and small shop, along with suitable meeting space and adjacent, dedicated, parking and parkland. As previously reported, the potential site for the building has been donated by a local landowner and would be kept in perpetuity for the parish. The earmarked site would be immediately to the rear of the new properties on the Littlefield site.

Millennium Field - No further update

Birchend – ongoing.

87/25-26 **December 2025 Meeting**

It was **agreed** that there would be no Parish Council meeting in December 2025.

88/25-26 **Meeting Closed: 20.25 hrs**

89/25-26 **Action List**

Date	Action	Responsible Member	Update
2025	**Contact Local MP**	**Chairman**	**Initial appointment cancelled – contact made by Chairman has not been responded to.**
2025	**Ben Hunt – Amenity Consultation**	**Clerk/ Chairman**	**Draft Report received, next steps to be agreed.**
2025	**Prickly Pear Wood**	**Clerk**	**On-going**
2024	**Birchend Transfer**	**Clerk**	**On-going**
2025	**Twenty is Plenty**	**Cllr Brooks**	**On-going. DCC advised of our interest.**
2025	**Infinis Committee**	**Clerk/ Cllr. Nequest**	**Volunteers for committee being sought.**
2025	**Devolution**	**Chairman/ Clerk**	**On-going, Exeter made bid for Rockbeare.**
2025	**London Road Development**	**Clerk**	**Follow up.**

Next Meeting: 21st January 2026

Appendix A

Finance/ Precept Documents

Table 1 - Income 2025/26 (April to October)

Income Source	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	Total
Precept	0.00	21000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21000.00	0.00	42000.00
CIL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	24272.00	24272.00
Grant	0.00	0.00	4670.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4670.00
VAT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Warm Rooms	0.00	6.00	5.00	0.00	440.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	651.00
Bingo	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Misc	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00
		21006.00	**4675.00**	**0.00**	**440.00**	**0.00**	**21205.00**	**24272.00**	**71598.00**

Projected Income for 2026/27

Current Level Precept - £42,000
CIL - £ unknown (Estimate £12,000)
VAT Refund - £1,400

Should the Grants sum be removed from the budget, the difference between projected income and predicted expenditure will be £10,445. Whilst some of the shortfall could be absorbed from monies held by the Parish Council, it is the purpose of the Precept to meet running the costs of the organisation.

Table 2 - Expenditure to Budget (April to October 2025} and Projected Spending to End of Financial Year

Budget Head	Budget Sum	Expenditure to Date	Projected Annual Total for 2025/26
	(£)		
Salary	30,000.00	17712.35	30000.00
Employers NI	2,834.00	578.44	1156.88
Expenses	2,500.00	1359.85	2500.00
Subscriptions	365.00	357.24	357.24
Expenses (Members)	500.00	0.00	250.00
Accountant	300.00	132.00	132.00
Stationery	500.00	0.00	300.00
IT	350.00	152.88	306.00
Hall Rent PC	200.00	232.52	470.00
Audits	650.00	605.00	605.00
Insurance	700.00	0.00	700.00
Grass Cutting	1,500.00	736.00	1500.00
Grants	-	0.00	0.00

Birch End Project	1,200.00	88.00	1200.00
Millennium Field Project	1,200.00	**16831.29**	18000.00
Hub	12,000.00	3799.60	4000.00
Newsletter	900.00	492.00	900.00
Defibrillators	200.00	87.99	88.00
	55,899.00	43165.16	62465.12
Feasibility Project	.	1400.00	1400.00
		44565.16	**63865.12**
VAT		1180.49	

Table 2. Highlights the amount spent to date against the budget set for the Financial Year 2025/26.

The budget set for 2025/26 was £55,899. As of 31st October, the Parish Council has expended 77.2% of the annual budget (£43,165). The majority of the overspend of £15,631 relates to late invoicing by a contractor for work carried out at the Millennium Field at Marsh Green. The overspend on this budget head should have been met from budget funds in the 2024/25 Financial Year.

Removing the Millennium Field 'overspend' of £ 15,631, reduces the actual (annual)spend against budget for the Financial Year (to date) to £ 28,934.16 (51.8% of the total budget).

Hall rent has also exceeded the estimated sum. This overspend is attributed to the Parish Council's commitment to supporting the Rockbeare Hub project.

However, the Rockbeare Hub is now (excepting hall rent) covering its own costs. Therefore, the total cost of the project will not exceed that already spent, plus the hall rent for the remainder of the financial year.

Feasibility Study – No budget figure was set in 2025/26 for this project. The Parish Council elected to provide the sum of £1,400 to Mr Ben Hunt, for the purpose of commencing a Feasibility Study in respect of a proposed new Village Community Hub. This project remains in the very early stages but land for the facility has been earmarked for donation, from a resident farmer of the parish. The Feasibility Study was not accounted for in the 2024/25 Parish Council budget and was, therefore, met from CIL funding.

Budget Setting Considerations

- The Statutory pay rise for Staff is likely to be set at 3% - although for the past two years the Clerk has declined to accept the pay rise.
- Our insurance costs are set to rise because of improvements to the Millennium Field – awaiting information. Suggested £1200 to be apportioned for this.
- Hall rent may rise in January – Estimated 5% - therefore an additional sum of circa £50.00 should be provided for this (£550.00 pa.).
- The gardener is likely to raise his fees in January – estimated 5%. Also, additional areas for cutting will increase this cost – a suggested budget for grass cutting / other gardening tasks should be set at circa £2,500).
- Inflation is currently running at 3.8%
- Legal costs for Birch End are likely to be costed in the region of £5,000
- Further work on the Feasibility Study is anticipated – in the region of £8,000
- DALC subscription will likely rise by around 10%.
- The Parish Council may be required to seek legal advice in respect of the move by Cranbrook to subsume part of the Parish (Gribble Lane) into its own area.

- The sum of £63,000 has been allocated to Marsh Green and Westcott by Infinis. This sum represents compensation for the disruption caused by the construction of the Ford Oaks Solar Farm and may only be spent on those areas.
- The Parish Council has received the sum of £24,000 by way of CIL monies – this may only be spent on projects which benefit the whole parish.
- The Parish Council has not provided grants during 2025/26 – do Members wish to reconsider this? Section 137 permits a maximum of £11.10 per Rockbeare elector. However, such spend must benefit the majority of the community.

Table 3 - 2026/2027 Budget (Agreed)

Budget Head	Budget Sum	Projected Annual Total for 2025/26	2026/27 Budget
	(£)	(£)	(£)
Salary	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
Employers NI	2,834.00	1,156.88	1,750.00
Expenses	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Subscriptions	365.00	357.24	425.00
Expenses (Members)	500.00	250.00	250.00
Accountant	300.00	132.00	250.00
Stationery	500.00	300.00	350.00
IT	350.00	306.00	400.00
Hall Rent PC	200.00	470.00	500.00
Audits	650.00	605.00	650.00
Insurance	700.00	700.00	1,200.00
Grass Cutting	1,500.00	1,500.00	3,000.00
Grants	-	-	-
Birch End Project	1,200.00	1,200.00	3,000.00
Millennium Field Project	1,200.00	18,000.00	250.00
Hub	12,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00
Newsletter	900.00	900.00	920.00
Defibrillators	200.00	88.00	100.00
Legal Fees	N/A		10,000.00
Feasibility Study	N/A		8,000.00
	55,899.00	62,465.12	**64,545.00**
Feasibility Project	.	1,400.00	
		63865.12	

Precept Setting

What is a Precept?

The Precept is a tax that Parish Council's charge their local electors to meet their budget requirements. Parish Councils do not receive any direct funding from central government and rely on their Precept plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they provide.

The Parish Council Precept is part of the Council Tax and is collected from local electors via their East Staffordshire Borough Council Tax payments.

How is it Calculated?

The Precept requirement is the difference between the Parish Council's estimated income and its anticipated spending requirements for the financial year (its budget).

The financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

The Parish Council needs to agree a budget before it can set its Precept, and both must be agreed by the full Parish Council.

When calculating the Precept, the Parish Council takes into consideration:

• current year's spending levels - for ongoing services for which it is responsible e.g. grounds maintenance asset repairs, insurance and cost of the Parish Council running costs
• costs of any additional spending plans or projects, agreed in Budget meeting
• provision for contingencies and reserves
• levels of anticipated income –e.g. grants

Currently there is no cap on the amount that Parish Councils can raise via their precept (District/Borough Councils and County Councils are capped). This is under consideration but for now Central Government expects Parish Councils to demonstrate restraint. They should be able to explain and justify larger precept increases.

Once a Precept has been approved by the Parish Council, the Clerk informs EDDC of the agreed sum, and it is then added to residents Council Tax bills. EDDC pay the Precept to the Parish Council in two instalments to the Parish Council (April/September).

Tax base and Band D equivalent.

Part of the Precept Calculation is the 'Band D equivalent'. Band D is the middle band of Council Tax and is supposed to represent the amount of Council Tax paid on an average property in the area. The Band D equivalent provides a measure which allows precepts among councils of different sizes to be compared. The estimated number of Band D equivalent properties in the tax base is notified to the Parish Council by SCDC prior to the Precept setting exercise. The required Precept is divided by the number of houses in the tax base to get the Band D equivalent.

Precept Increase Impact (Band D properties)

Current Precept	Tax Base (number of Qualifying Properties)	Increase (%)	Inc. Value	2026/7 Precept	(10) Monthly Increase per household (£)
42,000.00	317	1	420	42,420	1.32
42,000.00	317	2	840	42,840	2.65
42,000.00	317	3	1260	43,260	3.97
42,000.00	317	4	1680	43,680	5.30
42,000.00	317	5	2100	44,100	6.62
42,000.00	317	6	2520	44,520	7.95
42,000.00	317	7	2940	44,940	9.27
42,000.00	317	8	3360	45,360	10.60
42,000.00	317	9	3780	45,780	11.92
42,000.00	317	10	4200	46,200	13.25
42,000.00	317	11	4620	46,620	14.57
42,000.00	317	12	5040	47,040	15.90