

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 6th November 2018, Rackenford School

Present: Cllrs Child, Phillips, Matthews, Cox, Parry and Hyland, K Ward (Clerk), 14 members of public.

1819-68 Apologies: Cllr Lamb

1819-69 Declaration of Interests: Cllr Phillips declared an interest in agenda item 6a and left the meeting during the discussion on the field adjacent to Meadow View.

1819-70 Public Forum

There was a comment that it was disappointing that a village hall was not included in the options for the Common regeneration. It was argued this was an identified priority for the village and that the financial hurdles could be overcome by getting a grant to cover mortgage payments. It should be a community hub fit for the 21st century run by a local group. It was argued this would be self-funding and have wider use than the hall at The Stag, which is part of a commercial venture and like the Church may not be suitable for all groups. It was requested that a further survey be undertaken urgently to ascertain interest in a village owned community hub as part of the Common regeneration. If there is no interest then the matter should be shelved.

The Council was thanked for the “fantastic” fireworks evening.

A query was raised as to why the Open Forum was at the beginning of the meeting not the end when public can comment on matters discussed at the meeting. It was explained that this is normal convention and also allows the public to comment and leave rather than sit through the “dry” items on the agenda. There was general support from the public that a session at the end of the meeting would be welcome.

A query was raised as to whether the members of the public present were recorded and if people were identified in the minutes if they raised comments. The Clerk said that only the number of public present was recorded and comments were anonymised due to consents being required for GDPR. There was a suggestion that there was a sign in sheet where the public could consent to have their names included in the minutes if preferred.

There was a query raised on which groups could apply for funds from the Batsworthy Fund. It was suggested they look at the website.

1819-71 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2018

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

1819-72 Report from the District and County Councillor: Deferred.

1819-73 The Common

- a. Referring to three matters identified through the consultation exercise, Cllr Child explained:
 - i. Field adjacent to Meadow View: This has been designated as public open space (POS) in the newly adopted Local Plan and refers back to the Parish Plan which identified a general desire to keep the centre of the village as a green space. The POS designation primarily protects an area from development, and the landowner was happy for this to be the case. However a planning application for a community use on the site, such as a village hall or a recreation facility, could still be successful. This would of course need to be agreed with the landowner. Meanwhile the POS designation does not change its current use as a private field. Residents

who have been using the field for dog walking under the misapprehension that POS is the same as public access are requested to stop.

Action: A note on the POS status to be put up on the noticeboard and website.

- ii. Ownership of Meadow View: it was acknowledged that the road is currently still in the ownership of the housing association and private residents contribute to its repair. If a pedestrian access from it to the common or field eventually becomes a firm proposal the residents of Meadow View should get together to form a view. One comment was made that the residents would oppose any proposals for an access point, although it was pointed out there is currently a hole in the hedge that has long been in use. Another commenter did not object to the access, but said general use should not be encouraged while residents have a financial responsibility for the road. Feelings might change if the road were adopted. A further concern was raised as to whether permanent access would become permissive rights. Cllr Child reiterated that the Council was aware of concerns.
- iii. Village hall: Acknowledging the earlier request for a further survey to all households to investigate interest in a village hall, Cllr Child said that when this was looked at previously and not until after drawings had been prepared, residents were surveyed about what it would be used for. The unexpected result was that there was so little interest that the project was dropped. The concern was and is that a village hall for a community this size would not be able to cover its running costs. The funding of the actual building has never been considered an insuperable problem, even before the Batsworthy fund became available. Anybody anxious to revive the project needs to form an action group to do some detailed research in similar parishes with halls to inform themselves on the current overheads, usage, charges and income of other examples. If this produced evidence that some projects are financially viable, especially in places where there are alternative community spaces, the Council would consider sponsoring a survey for Rackenford. The questionnaire on behalf of the Batsworthy Fund which was being referred to as evidence that there is strong demand for a hall was issued in early 2016 when The Stag hall had been closed for two years and the then owner was applying for permission to pull it down. The present owner has confirmed that the hall will be available for community use by next summer after a major refurbishment which will give it independent access from the pub. A concern was raised that by not having the village hall on the Common consultation survey the opportunity for a village hall is being lost. Cllr Child responded that this was not the case as the most practical location would be on the field adjacent to Meadow View, where the Common regeneration proposals do not include any hard landscaping. The proposed football pitch would still enable that site to include a village hall in the future, though she would alert its proposers to the problem of providing adequate parking space, which would not help with the green space target. There was a suggestion that a village hall could be more viable if combined with the Shop. Examples of nearby good village halls were also given. It was reiterated that village halls are generally run by separate trusts and not the parish council; the Village Hall trust still exists and the action group could discuss its ideas with its chair.

Action: The Council to provide a list of research requirements for the community group.

- b. Cllr Child tabled a summary of the results of the Common survey. There were 39 forms returned with the views of 50 people, mainly in the 18-65 age range which was reflective of the population. It was noted that responses were generally very positive. Two forms were returned that rejected all proposals in favour of a village hall and only two others mentioned a hall as another possible option. It was noted that clearing scrub, dealing with drainage and an all-weather path were not included in the options as they were treated as given. The top priorities from the consultation were:

1. Younger children's play area
2. Older children's play area
3. Events structure
4. Junior football
5. Bus shelter

Other less popular proposals such as log seating could also be included in early stages where they were low cost.

The least popular options were:

1. Dipping pond
2. Adult exercise equipment

Other matters raised were car parking and the importance of making provision for ongoing maintenance.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the results of the consultation and to instruct Swan Paul to amend the final Common design to take into account the priorities identified from the survey.

Cllr Hyland said there was much interest in volunteering to help with the regeneration work which would save costs. It was **AGREED** to gather interest from volunteers, for example with scrub clearance under supervision from the Council. Cllr Child said the detailed survey findings will be made available via the Clerk.

Action: Councillors to instruct Swan Paul on the priorities for the final designs. Clerk to re-circulate topographical survey of the site. Clerk to send reminder on volunteering with regard to insurance cover and Council leads to be identified for different works.

- d. Cllr Warne stated that some of the picket fences around the play area need replacing. A comment was made that the swing seats are cracked and need replacing. It was agreed that replacement would be provided. Cllr Warne volunteered to deal with all this.

1819-74 Fireworks display 2018

Cllr Child reported that the combined cost to the Council and Shop of providing fireworks and catering came to £1002, and that total donations were £908. The loss is to be borne by the Council. It was noted that the marquee needs replacing and should be considered before next year's event.

1819-75 Highways and Footpaths

- a. Highways: Cllr Phillips reported he met with DCC Cllr Yabsley and the Local Highways Officer and that some long outstanding repairs had been made. He also reported 5 tonnes of salt had been delivered. Cllr Phillips said there were still a few pot holes not yet repaired, but it was assumed that they weren't big enough yet! Cllr Cox queried a blocked drain on the lane between Old Bell and Little Rackenford, but it was stated this is now an unclassified road and not DCC responsibility. Cllr Phillips will ask DCC who ownership was transferred to.
- b. Footpaths: Cllr Warne reported he was still trying to get works done to the footpath near the Stag. The P3 forms for 2019/20 funding had been received.

1819-76 War Memorial

- a. The Memorial has been reinstated and it was understood all cleaning and repairs have been completed. The Clerk said a completion report is needed from the stonemason in order to receive the WMT grant. Cllr Phillips queried what was happening with the cherry trees on the site, but it was clarified that the Council has decided to leave them in situ following concerns from the public. It was **AGREED** to reassess the most diseased tree.

- b. WW1 commemorations: Cllr Child reported the school will be marking the event with a procession and service at the Memorial on Friday 9th, reading out some of their own research on the boys from the school who had gone to war, and planting poppies. All are welcome to attend this event as well as the usual service at the Memorial on the 11th, both at 10.50am.

1819-77 Trinity Well

Cllr Child reported repair works have been completed and invoices received. Replacement of the thatch may be some years in the future.

1819-78 Noticeboard

Cllr Child reported the broken noticeboard by the Well has been taken away but is beyond repair. There was an offer from Mike O'Connor to make a new one at cost, estimated at £250. It was noted this is considerably cheaper than a purchasing a new noticeboard and therefore the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the offer.

1819-79 Planning

- a. The following application were considered and it was **RESOLVED** to submit the following responses:

- 18/001711/FULL: formation of an open clamp (4630m²) for the storage of silage and alteration to existing access, Gibbet Moor Farm (Stoodleigh Parish).
The Council has concerns that no evidence is provided to support the claim that there will be no increase in traffic, with no information on what this amounts to at present or the directions in which silage will be moving to and from the site. There is also concern that the proposal is too large to be accommodated on this site and evidently much larger that is necessary to hold the silage taken off the farm itself.
- 65648 Erection of building to provide stables and store at Blindwell Farm, Rackenford
No objections
- 65714 Prior approval for change of use from one agricultural building to one dwelling house class Q AB, Blindwell Farm, Rackenford
No objections

- b. It was **NOTED** the following applications are awaiting NDDC decision:

- 65484: Prior notification application for proposed development by telecommunications code system operators in respect of erection of one 15m monopole with radio equipment attached, erection of one metal storage cabinet and erection of compound boundary fencing at land at Higher Thorne, Rackenford (no comments submitted)

- c. The following decisions from NDDC were **NOTED**:

- 64824: Extension to dwelling at West Batsworthy Cottage Rackenford – approved (in June)
- 64839: Prior approval for change of use agricultural building to one dwelling house at West Batsworthy Farm – approved (in June)
- 65529 Approval of details in respect of discharge of conditions 3 (landscape proposals) and 5 (bat and nesting bird boxes) attached to planning permission 64824 (extension to dwelling) at West Batsworthy Cottage.

1819-80 Finance 2018/19

- a. Financial report: The Clerk gave an update on the current year finances as set out in the budget monitoring statement.

- b. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:

- K Ward / HMRC clerks wages £216.32 (incl £91.85 re Common)
- K Ward expenses £16.92 (incl £10.54 re. Common)

- G Lamb reimburse for Common survey printing £34.00
- M Lane replacement of pump cup for Trinity Well £25.00
- S Hagley replacement of Trinity Well seating and paving £369.00
- Sonic Fireworks £884.00 (£710.00 incl discount + VAT)
- Swan Paul re Common landscape architectural designs – awaiting invoice but payment approved in principle.

1819-81 Draft budget 2019/20

The Clerk reported that no council tax information has yet been received from NDDC. The Council were requested to consider making provision in reserves for elections 2019 £1000, tree works to the Common as identified in the DWT report £500, additional funds for the Snow Warden £500. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the changes in reserves. It was also recommended to ascertain if there were community funds available for a defibrillator when the current lease expires in 2020, otherwise additional funding may be needed. Regarding the annual budget, it was recommended to increase the annual budget for the Common and it was **AGREED** that some funds from the contingency budget should also be transferred to the Common.

Action: Clerk to update the draft budget for January meeting.

1819-82 Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm:

The Batsworthy Noise Working Group have requested that the Council complain to NDDC about the failure to comply with requirement to measure noise from three sites as instructed by the Planning Inspector and not two, and the lack of progress over the past two years. The Council **AGREED** to write to NDDC.

Action: Clerk to send letter drafted by Cllr Child

1819-83 Shop/School

Cllr Child reported the shop has made a profit of £3000 for the last accounting year. The School is flourishing, and is pleased to have retained its “good” Ofsted status.

1819-84 Correspondence

The Clerk reported there have been emails concerned over reinstatement of the war memorial and the date of the fireworks event. There is a request from the South Molton Scouts for a letter of support to the Community Together Fund for refurbishment of their scouts hut. The Council **RESOLVED** to send a letter of support. Correspondence from NDDC about a review of polling districts has been forwarded to councillors.

Action: Clerk to contact South Molton Scouts

1819-85 Matters of Urgency for noting only

Cllr Warne reported the rotten wood on two benches on the Common which need repair. He offered to carry out the repairs.

Meeting closed 9.15pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 15th January 2019 at 7.30pm

Signed as a correct record:

Date:
