

Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 21st February 2019, Rackenford School

Present: Cllr G Lamb (Chairman), Cllr J Cox, Cllr T Hyland, Cllr R Mathews, Cllr F Phillips, Cllr S Warne

In attendance: W Sweet (Clerk), NDC & DCC Cllr J Yabsley

1819-110 Apologies Cllr Child & Cllr Parry

1819-111 Declaration of Interests None

1819-112 Open Forum No members of the public present

1819-113 The Common

a) Scrub clearance

It was reported that Mr Shaddick had withdrawn his offer to undertake scrub clearance work but was keen to get involved with the drainage phase of the project instead. It was agreed that the Clerk would write and thank him for his participation to date which had been very useful to the Council.

Cllr Lamb reported that the full specification for the scrub clearance work had only just been received from Mr E Nicholson of Blackdown Environmental. A quote for £5,100 to do the work had also been received from Blackdown Environmental, which is lower than the ballpark price given previously of £7,000. It was RESOLVED to waive financial regulations 11.1(h), on this occasion only, which requires the council to obtain three quotes. This was recommended for the following reasons: tight timescale with regards to nesting birds on the common, Mr Nicholson is local and has the community at heart, the price supplied has been reduced and offers value for money and it would be unlikely that a cheaper quote could be obtained, Blackdown Environmental has the right licences and experience. This was unanimously agreed by the Council. The Clerk will instruct Blackdown Environmental to undertake the work with a start date of 5th March (a day later than proposed by them) as there will be a funeral taking place in Rackenford church at midday on Monday 4th. It was RESOLVED that in the event of grant money from DCF not being awarded, the Council will fund the work from its reserves. It was RESOLVED to apply to DCC Cllr Yabsley's Locality Budget Fund for £1,000 towards emergency arboreal work in conjunction with the scrub clearance.

With regard to possible nesting birds on the Common, the work will be done under special measures. Blackdown Environmental has suggested that they will start in the area behind Meadow View, which is most likely to have nesting birds within it and then move across the common from there to areas less likely to be housing nesting birds. Any areas with nesting birds will be identified by the on-site ecologist in advance of clearing and marked off to avoid disturbing them. Mr Nicholson had pointed out that as the ash trees are on the dieback path causing the branches to be very brittle and hazardous he recommended that these were cleared.

Maps of where the work is taking place will be produced and displayed by Blackdown Environmental and Cllr Child will produce a notice to advise villagers of work that will be taking place.

A brief discussion took place about the debris in the fire pit which needs to be cleared out. It was felt the best way would be to hire a skip and the details and timing of this will be decided at the next meeting. It was also suggested that a maintenance plan would be needed to keep on top of brambles etc which would grow back in due course. This would be looked at a future Council meeting.

b) Drainage works It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting with the plan being that if a specification and three quotes could be obtained quickly the work could start by the end of the summer.

Meeting closed 20.14

Next Meeting: Tuesday 5 March 2019 at 7.30pm

Signed as a correct record _____ **Date** _____