

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 5th March 2019 at Rackenford School

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

In attendance: W Sweet (Clerk), NDC & DCC Cllr J Yabsley (part), 1 member of the public

1819-114 Apologies: Cllr D Parry

1819-115 Open Forum No comments

1819-116 Declaration of Interests None

1819-117 Minutes It was **RESOLVED** to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 15th January 2019, 12th February 2019 and 21st February 2019.

1819-118 Report from District and County Councillor Cllr Yabsley reported that the budgets had now been set. There is a £330,000 deficit at the District Council which has been catered for. £760,000 will be spent on new recycling equipment – compressors, balers etc plus additional collection lorries for use over the next 10 years. Things are progressing regarding the proposed new leisure centre in Barnstaple which will be going before the full council for approval later this month. The cost of maintaining the old leisure centre is greater than building a new one. The District Council will be borrowing money over a 40 year period. If agreed the new centre will include some interesting new things including a perpetual ski slope with a screen that can mimic any slope in the world. The Barnstaple pool currently has the greatest use in the South West which is the reason it is getting government funding. The costs of demolition of the leisure centre are covered in the cost of re-developing Severn Brethren. Cllr Yabsley had been in Taunton with the Head of Place at a workshop on design quality attended by Councils from all over the South West. It had been an opportunity to lodge issues and had been very helpful.

Re. County Council there will be a 2.99% increase plus 1% for adult care. There is a reduction in the budget of £13m. There has been an overspend of £8m on Children's services which is being managed back to £4m. Cllr Yabsley said that the real issue will be the rearranging of base line funding in 2021 and the fear is that the Council is not likely to come out of it better off. £80m is coming from the Government for Devon for potholes and extra roadworks. He encouraged residents to keep reporting potholes and any other issues with the roads. He will be meeting with Richard Sables in the parish, probably during week of 25th March and will contact the clerk when he knows the date.

Cllr Lamb asked about the Road Warden scheme. Someone would need to undertake Chapter 8 training in order to supervise work on the highways. Drainage is one aspect councils can do under the scheme. There is a Highways Committee fund councils can apply to but it is getting more difficult to access as more parishes now in the scheme and bidding for funds. He said that Richard Sables could help with maps and marking problem areas. The Road Warden scheme can be used to inform council of work that needs doing or to undertake some of the work itself. Signs for when work is being done would have to be hired. Volunteers are covered by the County Council's third party insurance. Cllr Phillips to draw up a list of things for when the Highways visit to parish takes place.

It was pointed out that the top lane is atrocious and is currently flooded and needs a drainage scheme as a priority. A problem with hedge overhanging lane at Home Farm was mentioned and Cllr Yabsley said he would deal with it.

Cllr Hyland asked about street lights as there are a couple in the village that stay on all night. Cllr Yabsley explained that the road through Rackenford would be classified as a main street and therefore the lights are designated by policy to stay on all night and it would be difficult to get that changed

1819-119 The Common

- a. Update on the regeneration project. It was **NOTED** that Blackdown Environmental had been appointed to undertake scrub clearance and had just started the work.
- b. Agree timetable and procedure for obtaining specification and quotes for drainage work. It was **AGREED** that councillors will meet informally on Friday 15th March at 9.30 a.m. on the Common after clearance work has been completed to: assess the area post clearance, walk where it is thought the best routes for the footpaths will be, photograph and mark on plan where the worse wet areas are in order to compare with how the ground is in the summer, mark where road drains are and look at the playground. Ideally the drainage work will take place at the end of the summer. Three quotes will need to be obtained. Current grant money from DCF needs to be spent before applying to them for next tranche. Once the wet areas have been recorded the Council can start negotiations with Highways.
- c. Hard Court/Children's Play Area – to consider any urgent repairs and maintenance: None at present. ROSPA check is due to take place soon and will flag up any issues. It was reported by Cllr Child that re. the hard court, the bolts which attach the yellow notice stick out into the court and need to be cut off. The door on the other side cannot be properly closed as it is bent. It needs to be taken off and beaten. (A job for Brian Phillips?) Cllr Warne offered to attend to these issues.
- d. Disposal of ash and debris from fire pit – this needs to be loaded into a trailer and then re-loaded into a skip as it would be difficult to get a lorry with a skip onto the common. Cllr Phillips will organise when the weather has improved. Other junk/rubbish on the common could also be collected up ready to go in the skip.
- e. It was **NOTED** that the Council had been awarded a grant of £5,822 for the scrub clearance phase from DCF .
- f. It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had applied to Cllr Yabsley's Locality fund for a grant towards arboreal work.

1819-120 Highways & Footpaths

- a. **Footpaths** – Cllr Warne reported that 5-6m of the footpath at the back of the Stag will be concreted into the field. On the path near Lower Bulworthy, a self-closing gate will be installed instead of a stile, between the two fields. Both these items will be done at some stage this year. Cllr Mathews asked whether there could be more pointers to show where the footpath goes through Mills field opposite Higher Farm as someone had commented to him that it was not obvious. It was suggested that when the Trinity Well noticeboard is reinstated a footpath map could be put on it. It was suggested that the landowner could be asked which way they would prefer people to walk – across the field or follow the line of the hedge. An A4 laminated sheet showing the line of the path could be attached to the gate using zip ties if agreed with the landowner. Cllr Warne will follow up.
- b. **Highways** – General update and any issues to report – covered under Cllr Yabsley's report
- c. **Discuss possibility of joining DCC Road Warden scheme** particularly with view to undertaking work on gullies in the Parish. There are various problems in the parish with gullies and drainage. If the Council joins the Road Warden scheme it can decide what to do and apply for grant money. The gully system at back of the common is choked up and water is not going where it should, similar situation in other places around the parish due to lack of maintenance. Scheme to be explored further after meeting with Richard Sables.
- d. **Snow Warden** – Cllr Phillips reported that there is 2.5 ton of salt left so if there is late snow the Council has enough. In answer to a question regarding which roads the Parish Council is responsible for, Cllr Phillips said that from the Link road (Stonelands Cross) to the school is the priority, plus he usually clears from the War memorial to Clean Feed and from Two Gates Cross to the village.

1819-121 War Memorial

To note receipt of War Memorials Trust Completion Report acknowledgment. The Clerk reported that an email from WMT dated 5.03.19 had also been received querying the use of chemicals on the cleaning of the War Memorial. Richard Grant Memorials had been contacted and the chemical used was Deosan Red Label Hypochlorite AG31. It was felt that this had been sorted out at the

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time of application and Richard Grant had been selected as the only contractor qualified and approved to do the work.

1819-122 Trinity Well: Cllr Hyland raised the question of possibly applying for a grant to re-thatch it from the Calor Gas Rural fund. Cllr Child said it should be possible to get a grant from the original funders (SWEET), who had mentioned this on a subsequent visit. Cllr Child has a file of the funding applications and quotes for the well. It was **AGREED** to obtain a ballpark figure from a thatcher and estimate of remaining life of the thatch.

1819-123 Planning

a. Applications for consultation:

- **66276:** Removal of Condition 3 attached to planning permission 26119 to allow for residential letting at Higher Tidderson Farm, Tidderson Lane, Rackenford – deadline 14th March. Cllr Lamb said that the original permission goes back to 1998; the application is to remove the condition that the barn can only be a holiday letting. He said that the applicants had made a good case for it to be lettable as a domestic dwelling. It was **AGREED** that there was no reason for the Council to object and the Clerk to respond accordingly.

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

- 66078: Formation of new access off the public highway together with blocking off of existing at Toll House Farm, Rackenford; no objections but comments submitted re. landscaping of old and new access points
- 18/01711/FULL: formation of an open clamp (4630m2) for the storage of silage and alteration to existing access, Gibbet Moor Farm (Stoodleigh Parish, MDC). Comments submitted on traffic concerns and size of proposal.

c. The following decisions from NDCC were **NOTED**:

- 65939: Extension to rear of dwelling, extension to side of dwelling to form annexe & change of use of land to form extension to garden at Rosedale, Rackenford – permitted
- 65648: Erection of building to provide stables and Blindwell Barn, Rackenford - permitted
- 65623: Extension to hay/straw barn and extension to livestock barn at West Backstone, Rackenford – permitted
- 65978: Erection of one general purpose agricultural building at Tidderson Lodge, Higher Tidderson, Rackenford - withdrawn

d. Update on any NDDC planning enforcement action – nothing to report.

1819-124 Finance 2017/18

a. Financial report – the budget monitoring statement had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk pointed out that staff pay will go over budget this year due to the overlap with previous clerk and extra work involved re. the two recent special meetings.

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

- K Ward clerk's pay £114.17
- K Ward expenses £29.01
- W Sweet clerk's pay £180.25
- W Sweet expenses £19.31

c. Accounts received after preparation of the agenda: It was **RESOLVED** to pay invoice dated 1.03.19 from George Phillips for £800 for grass cutting on the Common in 2017 (£360) and in 2018 (£440). There is money in the budget and in reserves to cover this expenditure.

d. It was **RESOLVED** to agree the Clerk's attendance at DALC seminar 'Preparing for Elections' on 7th March at cost of £15 plus VAT (50% of full price as cost being shared with Knowstone Parish Council).

1819-125 Parish Elections, Thursday 2nd May – The clerk briefly ran through the timetable:

18th March – Notice of Election issued

19th March – nominations open - link to downloadable nomination papers will be available from Clerk or NDC website or hard copies can be requested from the Clerk and posted to whoever wants them. Nominations have to be delivered in person to North Devon Council office,

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nominations sent through the post will not be accepted

3rd April – nominations close at 4.00 p.m.

Parish Councils will not be charged for Poll cards .The Clerk will produce a laminated Notice of Election to be displayed in Creacombe.

1819-126 Assets: The asset list as previously circulated was reviewed and after adding three benches and 1 planter, it was **RESOLVED** to be correct.

1819-127 Risk register: after reviewing the document, previously circulated, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the risk register.

1819-128 Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm Cllr Child reported that the re-testing needed to be done at three locations but was only being done at two. The Council is now carrying out the third inspection itself. An email had been received from Jane Faust regarding an Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting on Thursday 7th March at 10 o'clock which would be looking at the council's performance re. Batsworthy.

1819-129 Shop/School Nothing to report

1819-130 Review hard court rental charge to school The amount charged had been reduced dramatically last year. The school is not using hard court as much as they were. It was **RESOLVED** to charge £400 this year and an invoice will be sent to them. The school is growing so usage may increase in the future.

1819-131 Correspondence An invitation to CPRE's Housing Seminar on 21st March had been received. A copy of 'Clerk & Councils Direct' had been received and was available at the meeting.

1819-132 Matters of Urgency raised by the Chairman for noting only

Cllr Warne said that if the drainage is going to be undertaken at the latter end of summer the play equipment would have to be removed. The new equipment could be installed during the winter/spring in depending on grants but hopefully it will be possible to install it at any time of year if the area has been well drained. The Play Area Working Group will meet and get in contact with play supplies companies to obtain ballpark figures/quotes.

Cllr Hyland said there was an issue with an aggressive dog in the village, non-muzzled and scaring other dogs, and residents were worried it may hurt a child. This is something for the Dog Warden to deal with and Cllr Warne will obtain guidance from him.

Cllr Lamb reported that in the hardcourt area, the corner was being undermined and losing base material. Cllr Warne had looked at it and said advice was needed on how it can be remedied; it may need gabions or a stone wall round the corner as part of the common landscaping project.

1819-133 Future meeting dates: To agree the meeting dates for 2019/20:
7,00 p.m. Tuesday 7th May 2019: Annual Parish Meeting, and Annual Meeting of the Council,
Tuesday 2nd July 2019, Tuesday 3rd September 2019, Tuesday 5th November 2019, Tuesday
14th January 2020, Tuesday 3rd March 2020

**Next meeting: Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Meeting of the Council,
Tuesday 7th May 2019, at 7.00pm, Rackenford School ***

**post meeting note – these meetings will now take place on Thursday 9th May*

Signed as a correct record _____ Date _____