

**RACKENFORD AND CREACOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

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**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 9th May 2019, Rackenford School**

**Present:** Cllrs Child, Cox, Lamb, Parry, Warne

**In attendance:** W Sweet (Clerk), 1 member of the public.

**1920-01 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council**

Cllr Child and Cllr Warne proposed and seconded Cllr Lamb as Chairman, all agreed.

Cllr Lamb and Cllr Parry proposed and seconded Cllr Child as Vice-Chairman, all agreed

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Lamb and Cllr Child will be Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2019/20, and the declaration of acceptance of office forms were signed.

**1920-02 Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Hyland, Mathews and Phillips, C/D/Cllr Yabsley

**1920-03 Declaration of Interests** (re. matters appearing on this agenda) - None

**1920-04 Open Forum** Mr Saupe said that dog fouling is now a real problem in the village with several people letting their dogs run loose and not picking up their mess. Dog fouling is a particular problem near the shop and car park and on the common. He had offered a poo bag to someone whose dog he had seen fouling but it had been refused. The Dog Warden will take up this matter if there are witnesses who report it. In the absence of named individuals to whom the Council can write it was **RESOLVED** to produce a leaflet to be delivered to all households within the village informing residents what they should do if they see a dog fouling and the owner not picking up and reminding dog owners of their legal responsibilities relating to their dogs.

Mr Saupe has offered to pick up posts from the tower and remove the concrete so they can be used in the future on the common. He has recovered the Christmas sleigh and reindeer.

**1920-05 Approve Minutes** It was **RESOLVED** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2019.

**1920-06 External bodies:** It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Child would be representative for the school (Helen Hyland to be asked to attend in Cllr Child's absence), Batsworthy Cross and shop (Cllr Lamb to deputise where necessary).

**1920-07 Councillor responsibilities:** It was **RESOLVED** to agree the following roles:

Snow & Tree warden – Cllr Phillips

Footpaths & play area – Cllr Warne

Highways – Cllr Phillips

Planning – Cllr Parry

**1920-08 Annual Review of Governance and Accounts**

a) After reviewing the Statement of Internal Controls, it was **RESOLVED** to approve it.

b) It was **RESOLVED** to complete and send off the Certificate of Exemption regarding the External Audit for 18/19.

c) It was **RESOLVED** to agree and sign Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – Annual Governance Statement 2018/19.

d) It was **RESOLVED** to agree and sign Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – Accounting Statements 2018/19.

(e) It was **RESOLVED** to implement the recommendations from the Internal Audit report – a summary of which had been previously circulated. Overall the Council had received a positive report from the Internal Auditor with just a few minor recommendations which the Clerk briefly outlined.

**1920-09 Report from District and County Councillor** – not present

**1920-10 The Common**

- a. **Regeneration project** – Update and agree next steps: Cllr Child had previously circulated a report summarising future stages, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. Cllr Lamb said that the main water problem is when it comes off the back road onto the common missing the gullies. The

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Council can either go down the route of trying to rectify the problem but with no help from Highways or live with it. The area is wet and boggy in winter and dries out in the summer. Drainage of the football pitch can be dealt with using a low tech contractor but will have to make sure the pitch is not left uneven. A specification will need to be drawn up and quotes sought. Swan Paul's scheme is being cutting down quite considerably. It was AGREED that Cllr Lamb will contact South Molton Rugby club as they have had their pitch drained relatively recently to see who had done their work. He will also contact local contractors (eg Robin Webber near Tiverton) for a ballpark figure for drainage work and the building up of the play area, as well as the Land Drainage Contractors Association who may be able to give the Council advice. It was agreed to take road drainage out of the common project as felt too big an issue to include.

With reference to the play area Cllr Warne said it would be a good idea to fence the whole area, which will be raised, with galvanised good quality fencing that would keep out dogs, last for a long time and not need a lot of maintenance. Where the play area is currently situated is a good place for it and the current L shaped could be increased and made into a rectangular area. It would be better to go for as much space as possible, as items need to have certain distances between them. In the older children's adventure play area planning to have a zip wire which insurance companies can be wary of. The Clerk will ask the Council's insurers their view on this. The Working Group has not yet met but will do so as soon as possible to obtain ball park figures for what is wanted. Some play equipment suppliers will get involved in the whole project at a cost. Cllr Warne will look through play equipment brochures and invite a couple of reps to make a site visit.

It was suggested that one hard path is laid and to not have any soft paths and to see what happens.

Batsworthy fund has asked the Council to supply them with ballpark figures for the rest of the project prior to submitting its next application. The next deadline for applications is early June. It was **RESOLVED** to get each item listed in Cllr Child's report roughly costed with the view to undertaking them over the next 12 months. It was **AGREED** to apply to Batsworthy for the next stage of the work by the end of this month.

- b. **Children's Play Area** – To consider any urgent repairs and maintenance. The recent ROSPA report means it is not viable to repair the existing items and replacement as planned under the Common Regeneration is the best way forward. The equipment is decaying but still OK to use. Cllr Warne will keep an eye on everything but if anything gets broken the playground may have to be closed and the equipment removed. Prior to the regeneration work involving the play areas, villagers will have to be made aware that they will be without a playground for a number of months. Cllr Warne said he was aware of a cheaper alternative company to ROSPA who could undertake the annual inspection. More information to be sought prior to next year's inspection.
- c. To note felling of tree opposite the church on 11.03.19 for safety reasons. Cllr Lamb reported that the bottom of the stem that had narrowly missed hitting the mini bus was completely decayed. It had fallen during high winds and more winds were forecast. He had decided it was too much of a risk to leave. As tree surgeons were nearby working on the common clearance at the time Cllr Lamb had asked them to look at and deal with the tree. They had taken off the higher branches on the first day and the rest on the following day. The cost will come out of the budget for the common clearance.
- d. Review idea of Common as a potential landing site for Devon Air Ambulance. Cllr Lamb said that DAA are still keen to use the common as a landing site. Cllr Child suggested and it was AGREED that this is postponed until after the Council has completed the first round of work on the common project. In an emergency the helicopter can land there.
- e. Discuss email from parishioner in Meadow View re. overhanging tree Cllr Lamb said that the council has a duty of care to make sure the tree did not pose a danger. It was RESOLVED to have it inspected by an independent and qualified person. Cllr Lamb will contact Mr Nicholson at Blackdown Environmental. It was suggested that all trees have to be checked every 12 months under the Council's insurance policy. The Clerk will check the council's insurance policy and will also inform the residents of 1 Meadow View that council will initially have the tree inspected and discuss results of the inspection.

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### 1920-11 Highways & Footpaths:

- (a) Highways – Cllr Lamb reported that at Cllr Phillips' recent meeting with Richard Sables no progress had been made in relation to problems with drainage.
- (b) Footpaths – Nothing to report. Cllr Lamb said that thank-you's from two rambling groups who had recently used the footpaths had been received.

**1920-12 War Memorial** Cllr Lamb reported that some recompense was still being chased. It was noted that the grant received from WMT had been reduced by 25% due to non-compliance with the grant conditions.

**1920-13 Trinity Well:** Cllr Lamb reported that Mike has put in a new bucket.

### 1920-14 Planning

- a. Applications for consultation: None
- b. Applications awaiting NDDC decision
  - **66418** Prior Approval for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to One Dwellinghouse (use Class Q(a)(b) at Central Barn, North Grendon Farm, Rackenford. It was pointed out by Cllr Lamb that this property is in the Parish of Witheridge not Rackenford. The Clerk will contact the Planning Department to let them know.
  - **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 notifications / decisions from NDDC were **NOTED**:
  - **66078** Formation of new access off the public highway together with blocking off of existing at Toll House Farm, Rackenford – permission granted
  - **66162** Variation of Condition 3 (occupancy restriction) attached to planning permission 54230 (erection of dwelling for forestry worker) to change wording of the condition at the Cabin at Hensons Wood, Rackenford – permission granted
  - **66276** Removal of Condition 3 attached to planning permission 26119 to allow for residential letting at Higher Tidderson Farm, Tidderson Lane, Rackenford – withdrawn.
- c. **Update on any NDDC planning enforcement action**
  - (i) An email had been received from a resident regarding the possible breach of planning at Cob Castle. This had been reported at the end of last year and an enforcement raised on it. There is a training centre being run there in breach its agricultural use. Cllr Lamb has spoken to the enforcement officer and it is still on-going. It is likely to be a retrospective planning issue.
  - (ii) An enforcement had been raised some time ago re. Hedgelands regarding a flue on an external boiler. Cllr Lamb said he will follow up to see what is happening.

### 1920-15 Finance

- a. Financial report: The accounts for 18/19 and budget monitoring statement previously circulated were reviewed. There were a couple of queries which the clerk will look into and report back to the Council: clarifying: the amount donated for the fireworks, the breakdown of the costs relating to the War Memorial, the £200 received from DCC. With reference to the current financial year, the Clerk reported that as at 30.04.19 the balance in the bank was £25,628.81. 50% of the precept and grants has been received - £3279.89.
- b. The following receipts were NOTED:

• 8.03.19 – DCC (possible part payment for use of hard court)	£200.00
• 21.03.19 – WMT grant towards war memorial cleaning	£1,070.00
• 25.03.19 – DCF grant for work on the Common	£5,822.00
• 15.04.19 – DCC Locality Funding grant	£1,000.00
- c. It was **RESOLVED** to make the following payments:

• W Sweet clerks wages (25/02 – 27/04/19)	£226.60
• W Sweet expenses	£25.58
• Cllr G Lamb reimbursement of leaving gift for K Ward	£110.00
• Devon Association of Local Council subscription	£86.21 (£74.91 + VAT)
• Knowstone Parish Council, 50% of cost of election seminar	£15.00

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- FA Phillips snow clearance and salting £813.00 (£677.50 + VAT)
- Rackenford Parochial Church Council grass cutting grant £200.00 (see min 1718-125)
- BHIB Insurance renewal £580.27
- Blackdown Environmental £8430.00 (£7025.00 + VAT)
- Alison Marshall internal audit £100.00

d. It was **RESOLVED** to ratify payment to: ROSPA Playsafety Ltd £99.00 (£82.50 + VAT)

**1920-16 Problem of dog fouling etc in the Village** – covered until item 1920-04.

**1920-17 Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm:** Cllr Child reported that there was no change from last time. There had been a NCC meeting which objectors had attended. ND Council is now paying for the extra noise measurement.

**1920-18 Shop/School:** Cllr Child reported that the shop's turnover for the past year was exactly the same as for the previous year. Work has been done internally in the shop which looks very smart and it is hoped it will bring in extra customers.

**1920-19 Correspondence** The following had been received:

- Annual report from CPRE had been received
- Email from Mr Newton offering his assistance with traffic management if needed as suitably qualified;
- Thank you card from Karen Ward.

**1920-20 Matters of Urgency for noting only** Cllr Child reminded the Council that after the last firework display it had said it would have to buy another marquee. It will need to be a more industrial pop-up one, approximately 6m x 3m, likely cost £500.

**1920-21 Next Meeting:** Tuesday 3rd July 2018 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 21.15

Signed as a correct record \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Approved*

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### Rackenford Common post clearance; issues discussed at May 9 meeting

1. We have received many compliments on how good the common looks post clearance. Some Meadow View residents want more done behind their gardens but there is no negative criticism at all so far.

2. On March 22 GL, SC, RM,FP and JC walked the site to check the results. This led to the following observations

\***Drainage.** The ground was much drier than it had been even after recent weather, and we agreed that this suggested that some drainage might not be needed at all. It seems best to concentrate on draining the grassy area of the football pitch, enlarging that primarily by widening it towards the east by about 15 metres and using mole drainage techniques. Further clearance of crack willow should be done using a stump grinding machine, which makes it permanent without disturbing the ground surface.

\* **Paths.** Now views are opened up , paths seem much more intrusive. We felt that all weather access across the common could be achieved by one path starting below the Meadow View garages, clinging to the bank behind the MV gardens and either continuing down the hedge of Fred's field to the road or curving round behind the hard court to reach the top of the existing track. This would be created by further clearance behind MV , including the trees on the bank which residents want removed, and one or two others. It would have the advantage of low visibility, not cutting across the common proper. The surface and width need to be agreed.

\***Water off the common** (southwards) and off the road on to the common (from the NE) should ideally be diverted into drains. FP had met Richard Sables and Jeremy Yabsley to discuss this. It was agreed that an additional pipe is required to meet the flow southwards, running under the road, and that the drains are inadequate along the N road. The DCC has no money to sort this but would not object to our doing it ourselves. This would be very expensive, and there is a case for setting it apart from the common project itself while further research is done.

\* **The children's play areas** should as the Swan Paul plan suggests be sited on raised areas, which means importing soil for this.

\***The wild area identified by Devon Wildlife** is now much easier to assess. It includes one very marshy patch in which we noted red fungus, to be protected. The small plantation of limes needs thinning out. The area should be allowed to expand itself. The thicket of snowberry which is a garden escape from MV is approaching towards it and needs permanent elimination.

\***The wooded area on the NE corner** was not finished as Blackdown had noted Japanese knotweed which must be treated first. The bluebells and snowdrops had survived, but there is a lot of lamium galeobdalon which is very invasive, and arguably a garden escape. The children have improvised a BMX track and it was suggested that this be left as a "dark corner".

\* **The ponds along the NE side** are mainly filled with water from the road. Drainage would obviously partly solve this (but we would not want to lose them all). Action if any needs to be included under a separate road scheme, as above.

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### Next steps

The bonfire remains to be removed once the ground is dry enough ( FP).

A litter day to remove glass and spikes; the iron pillars from the old windmill are a feature to be preserved and need to be removed for safety. (This has now been done)

An application is needed for a felling licence for further clearance work.

Urgent attention to plans for the children's play area, since the latest ROSPA report makes it plain that there are too many problems to make anything but replacement a practical proposition.

A plan for prioritising next stages, taking account of views in the public consultation.

**Main sections of work targeted for the year ahead, rough estimates of cost needed before quotes are sought**

	When	Cost estimate
Mole drainage for the grass area, plus expansion by 15 m to the east and drainage ditch along the eastern hedge	Summer 2019	£
Children's play areas; outlines drawn and existing equipment and fence removed	Autumn 2019	
Children's play areas; levels to be raised by stone and soil imports and surface decided and installed for the younger children's area	Autumn 2019	
Children's play areas; equipment bought and installed and fence rebuilt for the younger one	Winter 2019/20	
Trees cleared and hard track ( compacted stone) laid from behind MV along course previously decided	Winter 2019/20	
Event structure design commissioned	Summer 2019	
Event structure built	Spring 2020	
Picnic tables and chairs bought and installed	Spring 2020	
Maintenance plan drawn up and necessary equipment including a ride on brush cutter bought. Wood chips can in future be used to fill in wettest areas	Spring 2020	
Total cost envisaged		

These cover all the most expensive elements of the Swan Paul plan, and also all the top three priorities of the public consultation.