

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 3rd September 2019 at Rackenford School

Present: Cllr S Child, Cllr J Cox, Cllr T Hyland, Cllr G Lamb (Chairman), Cllr D Parry, Cllr F Phillips

In attendance: W Sweet (Clerk), 2 x members of the public, Cllr J Yabsley (part)

1920-41 Apologies for absence – Cllr S Warne, Cllr R Mathews

1920-42 Declaration of Interests (re. matters appearing on this agenda) – Cllr Phillips declared an interest re. agenda item 10(a) - planning ref. 70231

1920-43 Open Forum – no questions

1920-44 Approve Minutes It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2019 and the Special Meeting held on 19th August 2019.

1920-45 Report from District and County Councillor Cllr Yabsley said that he had been unable to arrange a highways visit to the parish since the last meeting but has brought to Richard Sables' attention overgrown hedges along both sides of the road near Hilltown Cross. Richard Sables will visit the landowner, followed up by a letter if cutting back does not happen. Cllr Child asked about the damaged signpost at the War Memorial junction which is completely rotten and was reported several months ago. Cllr Yabsley will chase this up. It was pointed out by Cllr Phillips that something has happened to the bridge on Old Bell Hill coming from Tiverton direction as there is quite a dip, which could possibly be subsidence. Cllr Yabsley will raise this with Highways. He reported that some but not all potholes have been repaired. It was pointed out that the road surface is very rough by the Old Bell house.

NDC – Cllr Yabsley had attended a Joint Local Plan working party. He reported that NDC is advertising for a new head of planning officer to report to the Head of Place. An enforcement officer had recently left the council and their replacement is now being trained.

DCC – He would be attending an informal fire meeting tomorrow. He said that 30% of fire stations are unable to be manned as the county has problems recruiting daytime on-call officers, particularly in urban areas, due to employers not releasing employees for this type of duty. Sometimes there are only three engines available in the whole of Somerset. The Fire Service consultation periods finishes at the end of September.

Drainage – Cllr Yabsley reiterated that the Council should produce and let him have a list of problem drainage areas within the parish and a plan with all flood spots marked on it.

Wind turbine update – Cllr Yabsley referred to a recent email which had been sent by NDC to the Noise Action Group which said that the site is compliant except at Birchwood and there is also an issue at All Angels. Discussions will take place with the operators to mitigate issues of noise.

1920-46 The Common

a. Update on the regeneration project – Cllr Lamb reported that the ballpark figures for each future stage over the coming 12 months had been submitted to DCF who will pass to the panel when they next meet.

b. Common/Children's Play Area – Report from Working Group. Cllr Hyland reported that she and Cllr Warne had contacted three companies for quotes for the new play area. Copies of the quotes and designs had been circulated to all councillors. Nikki at Little Angels had had an input regarding equipment suitable for toddlers. Cllr Hyland briefly outlined each company's design:

Rhino Play's design is a modern version of what Rackenford already has. It is well made on metal stilts and would re-use the slide that is already there. It includes climbing apparatus. Cllr Hyland felt it was rather urban and more suitable for a park.

Wicksteed's design is also similar to what is already here.

Earth Wrights' design is very naturalistic and uses the landscape, eg connecting ropes to trees. The company has installed playgrounds for the National Trust. The design would involve using a bit more space on the common.

All three quotes included a zip wire and were broadly for the same amount.

Cllr Hyland felt that Earth Wrights' design would fit in well on the common and this was the design she

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favoured. Cllr Child felt that the design will merge with the environment and has more interest for children. It was RESOLVED to go with the Earth Wrights design subject to funding being secured. It was AGREED that the clerk will apply to DCF for funding of £80,000 to cover the cost of the playground and associated groundworks. The design can be tweaked to bring the cost down if need be. An informal public consultation event on the design will be organised to take place in the school once funding has been secured. Cllr Hyland will ask Earth Wrights if they would be happy for their documentation to be used for consultation purposes and whether a representative would be able to attend. Cllr Hyland asked councillors to look closely at the plans to see if there is anything they would like to suggest is changed.

With regard to fencing it was pointed out that Cllr Warne spends a lot of time replacing fence panels so it may be better to go down the metal railings route. Each company quoting was asked to come up with a different solution for fencing.

Maintenance was briefly discussed. Whatever is installed will go green so a proper cleaning programme will need to be put in place and the equipment pressure hosed twice a year.

It was reported that Cllr Warne had recently disposed of rotten equipment and pallins from the play area. The equipment is now beyond repair and on a downward spiral so installing a new playground is now the priority.

c. Approve arboreal inspection policy – Cllr Lamb reported that he had not yet received policy statement – when it is received the clerk will circulate it to all councillors.

d. **Overview of knotweed situation** – Cllr Lamb had met with the new person at Glendale and had looked at various areas previously affected. There was not much sign of it by the carpark but Glendale will undertake a fingertip search and will treat if located. The worse spot is up on the common where children have made a cycle path so that area will be sprayed. A quote has been received for £300 plus VAT and it was RESOLVED to instruct Glendale to do the work in the next couple of weeks. There are docks that need knocking down but this will be left until after knotweed has been dealt with.

e. Any future events on the common – none likely

f. Misappropriate use of the common – The Council had received complaints from residents about children riding on mopeds round the common earlier in the summer. The Council will review whether it needs a common regulation banning motorised vehicles (but not motorised wheelchairs). The Council needs to make sure it is covered from an insurance point of view. The Clerk was asked to contact DALC to find out what other parishes are doing about this type of problem.

1920-47 Highways & Footpaths: Update and any repair or maintenance matters – Cllr Lamb reported that the only outstanding issue was the concreting down the side of the Stag which has not been done yet.

1920-48 War Memorial: Cllr Lamb reported that the Council is still chasing the money that is outstanding. It was AGREED that Cllr Hyland will draft a letter to be sent by the clerk formally requesting the money to be paid.

1920-49 Trinity Well: Nothing to report

1920-50 Planning

a. Applications for consideration:

- **70276** (1) Retrospective application for the permanent siting of 2 static caravans on touring pitches 57 & 58 together with the permanent siting of 1 static caravan used as washroom. (2) Retrospective application for the formation of 14 pitches for seasonal use for tents / touring caravans / motor homes (pitches 36, 37 & 43 to 54). (3) Additional use added to 12 seasonal pitches for tents / touring caravans / motor homes to also allow for the seasonal or permanent siting of static caravans (pitches 17 to 21, 30 to 34, 59 & 60) at Creacombe Parsonage Farm Rackenford Tiverton EX16 8EL.

Concerns were raised about the increase in traffic that may result from the granting of item (3) and how big the site might become in the future. At the moment it is unobtrusive with very little visual impact.

It was AGREED that the Council would put forward no objections to the application but would point out

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to planners that the Council was aware that this is not first time that a retrospective planning application has been submitted regarding this site.

- **70292** Erection of garage at Highfield Farm, Lane from Landfoot Moor to Lower Tidderson Cross, Rackenford EX16 8EU

Cllr Parry had looked at the plans and felt it was a straight forward application. It was AGREED that the Council would submit no objection

- **70231** Change of use of land from agriculture to equine to allow for the creation of a horse riding arena at Field Adjacent to Rackenford Cross, Rackenford.

Concerns were raised about the position of the arena within the field and the visual impact as the field is right at the entrance of the village. It was felt that the arena should only be for personal use and it was suggested that it would be better if the arena was hedged rather than fenced. It was AGREED that the Council would not object to the application but would raise the concerns discussed.

b. Applications awaiting MDC decision:

- **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. Notifications / decisions from NDDC.

- **66543** Extension to dwelling at 8 Meadow View, Rackenford – no objection submitted with concerns raised – approved.
- **66632** Renovation of Farmhouse together with conversion of stables to provide additional living accommodation at Higher Tidderson, Rackenford – no objection submitted – approved.
- **66662** Extension to American style Horse Barn, Demolition of existing & erection of new storage building & erection of round lunge pen at the Old Rectory, Rackenford – no objection submitted – approved
- **66767** Erection of one general purpose agricultural building at Tidderson Lodge, Higher Tidderson, Rackenford – application supported – approved.
- **66849** Conversion of outbuilding to create residential unit at Lewis Farm, Rackenford – no objection submitted – approved.

d. Update on any NDDC planning enforcement action - none

1920-51 Finance

- a. Financial report – the accounts, previously circulated, were reviewed. The VAT refund of £3418.04, as reported at last meeting, had been received on 26.07.19
- b. Review Council's membership of Parish Online at a cost of £36.00 and CPRE at a cost of £36.00. It was RESOLVED to renew both memberships.
- c. Payments to approve:
 - W Sweet clerks wages (24/06 – 24/08/19) £236.90
 - W Sweet expenses £4.53

Accounts received after the preparation of the agenda:

- iData Services – hosting website & yearly domain name fee - £161

It was RESOLVED to pay the above accounts.

The Clerk pointed out that the website charge last year was £141 and £150 had been budgeted for this year. When drafting next year's budget the clerk will ask Andy for the likely cost for 2020.

- d. Cllr Lamb reported that he and Cllr Child had met with the clerk at end of her probation period and recommended the proposed increase. It was RESOLVED to agree a pay rise for the Parish Clerk to new SCP pay scale 12 with effect from 1.04.19 as per NALC's Employment Briefing E02-18.

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1920-52 Defibrillator It was RESOLVED to sign South Western Ambulance Service Memorandum of Understanding for Community Public Access Defibrillator Scheme (previously circulated) and to pay SWAS's pro forma invoice for £1800 plus VAT (£1400 to be transferred to the Council from community fundraised money as agreed on 15/01/19 – ref. 1819-89; balance to be paid by Parish Council from reserves).

1920-53 Fireworks Display 2019 will take place on Tuesday 5th November – the clerk has volunteer forms and other paperwork to be passed to Ian Lucas who will be charge of its organisation and will purchase the fireworks. A notice will be put in the shop asking for volunteers. The Council will pay for the fireworks which will be offset by donations received. The shop will get any profit if there is any. The Council had previously discussed buying a new gazebo as the current one is too lightweight. It was suggested that the Council asks to borrow a couple of large gazebos from Ian Lucas. Signage will be needed stating that the public should not bring anything onto the site including sparklers and not to put anything onto the fire. Cllr Phillips will build a bonfire.

1920-54 Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm: covered under D/Cllr Yabsley's report.

1920-55 Shop Cllr Child reported that the shop had an increasing number of volunteers. The annual accounts have not yet been received but she believed they will show a small profit.

1920-56 School: Cllr Child reported that the school is growing but she had not had the start of term figures yet.

Cllr Child also reported that ITV Southwest is preparing a programme on Rackenford as a living village. The school and shop are both involved. ITV were due to return the following day with a drone.

1920-57 Correspondence

(i) The following had been received: DALC Annual Report 2018/19, Countryside Voice publication from CPRE, a letter with poster of surgery dates from Peter Heaton-Jones' office.

(ii) An email had been received from CPRE regarding a free planning workshop on 15th October from 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. which Cllr Child said she intended to go to. Cllr Parry may also attend.

(iii) A further email had been received re the overhanging tree at 1 Meadow View. Cllr Lamb explained that at the last meeting Ed Nicholson had been approved as the Council's arboreal expert and he would be drawing up a policy document which will include all the trees in the council's ownership. The residents were concerned due to branches possibly affecting electric wires or being blown down in bad weather. The tree needs expert input so the tree is cut properly to keep it in balance. It was AGREED that Ed Nicholson is asked to inspect the tree without delay.

1920-58 Matters of Urgency for noting only - None

1920-59 Next Meeting: Amended to Tuesday 12th November 2019 at 7.30 p.m. to avoid clashing with the fireworks display.

The meeting closed at 21.27.

Signed as a correct record _____ Date _____

Approved