

DRAFT

OFFWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MONTHLY ORDINARY MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH 2024 AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: J. Tristram, T. Norris, D. Blackmore, A. Welch-Thornton,
M. Norfolk, T. Pepper

In Attendance: A Jenkins (Clerk), EDDC Cllr. H. Parr

Members of Public: 1

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Council meeting and outlined / reminded everyone of the Covid-19 measures which had been adopted for Council meetings.

OPEN SESSION

A member of the public raised the matter of Heavy Goods Vehicles going to the Sewage /water Treatment works.. It is understood that they are supposed to be using North Combe Road but they are also on occasions using the lane which goes down from the Church which is totally unsuitable for such vehicles.

She said that last week a Coastal Waste Skip lorry with an attached skip trailer went down the lane from the Church and got stuck by the thatched cottage damaging the thatch. It then reversed all the way back up the lane to the Church damaging walls as it went. The householders have contacted Coastal Waste who it is understood are going to repair the damage.

Councillors discussed the matter and felt that that Parish Council should ask Highways to take this matter up with the contractors and operators of the sewage/water treatment works to ensure that any HGVs travelling to their site do NOT use the lane from the Church and must use North Combe Road. The Clerk to contact the Highways Officer to take this matter up with them as a matter of urgency.

Also it has been noticed that the road sign by the Church "Unsuitable for Heavy Goods Vehicles" has been turned round and is facing towards the hedge behind. The Clerk to ask the Highways Officer to get this turned around as soon as possible.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons given (LGA 1972 S.85 (1))**
Cllr. P. Hopkins

2. To receive any declarations of interest relating to items outlined in this agenda (this does not preclude the duty to declare further interests as applicable)

None

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st February 2024

The minutes were declared a true record of the proceedings, proposed by Cllr. Norris, seconded by Cllr. Blackmore, all in favour.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

5. Reports:

a) Police

None

b) District and County Councillors

The Clerk advised that no report had been received from DCC Cllr. Hartnell. EDDC Cllr. Parr gave the following verbal report:-

Chief Executive- Currently the District Council has 3 Interim Chief Executives:- the Monitoring Officer/ Deputy Chief Executive; the Director of Finance; the Director of Housing, Health and Environment. However, the capacity of the Executive Leadership Team is limited and EDDC needs to appoint a Chief Executive. The Council has started 'the recruitment process and expects a new Chief Executive to be in place in the summer

Local Plan work in progress-

There will be further **Reg 18 Public Consultation in April and May.**

Topics include

- land for housing development, submitted late;
- Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area boundaries, and
- Green Wedges.

Green Wedges are areas of land where development is generally not permitted, to protect against development creep which would result in settlements joining up, and also to protect the settings of communities.

All Green Wedge boundaries in the LP eg. Between Colyton/ Colyford/ Seaton, are being reviewed. Officers propose c. 70% Green Wedge designated land across East Devon be removed from this protection.

GWs are strongly supported by residents. They are a key policy in Neighbourhood Plans eg. the Colyton Parish NP. The policy has been tested at Appeal, eg.

Colyford/ Seaton Green Wedge tested at the Harepath Rd. Appeal 2014 where it was the key policy underlying the Appeal Inspector's decision to uphold EDDC's refusal of planning permission.

c) Clerk

None

d) Highways Matters

1) 20mph

None

2) A35

None

3) Bus Service

None

4) Other Highways matters

a) Cleave Lane – surface water

Cllr. Tristram advised that he had been contacted by residents about the surface water running down Cleave Lane which was damaging the unsurfaced bridle way and causing a hazard to vehicles, pedestrians and their properties. The Clerk to ask Devon Highways and the PROW Team to investigate the matter and how the problem of the surface water can be resolved.

b) A35 – water drainage / surface water

The surface water running across and down the A35 from a point near the scrap yard entrance and also by the junction to the East Devon Business Park was causing a hazard on the road. The Clerk to contact National Highways and Devon Highways to ask them to have a site meeting to jointly investigate and rectify these issues.

c) Road Patching works – Road closure 2nd -4th April 2024

Road from Offwell Cross to New Road Cross

Road from Colyton Cross to Brakenwood

The Clerk advised that he had put a prominent notice of the road closures on the front page of the website and had also sent out emails to everyone on the database including the School, Village Hall, Social Club and the Church notifying everyone of the road closures.

d) Temporary Road Closure -11th June 2024

Road from Axminster Road to Offwell Cross, Offwell

The Clerk advised that he had received advance notification of this road closure and will issue out the notice nearer the date.

e) Footpaths Report

Cllr. Tristram advised that the Footpaths Officer and himself had reported two footpaths issues to the PROW team/

f) Any Other Reports

None

6. Correspondence

a) Invitation from ORG/VHC for the Parish Council to provide a representative to serve on the ORG/VHC committee.

Councillors discussed the matter and decided to defer the matter for the time being.

b) Torbay and Devon Devolution Consultation (Devon County Council)

The Clerk had circulated to Councillors details of the proposed devolution consultation and DALC's own consultation response. He said that DALC had requested that all Parish and Town Councils consider the matter and submit responses.

Councillors discussed the matter. Cllr. Norris proposed that the Parish Council submit the following response, seconded by Cllr. Norfolk, all in favour:-

Response

Whilst Offwell Parish Council is supportive of the principle providing more powers to local authorities that are closest to communities, with the objective of strengthening their influence and improving the cost effectiveness and speed of public service delivery. Offwell Parish Council is against adding what appears to be another level of authority (DTCCA), required to deliver the proposal, thereby introducing another level of

bureaucracy, additional cost, and delays. We fail to understand how or why the implementation of another level of authority is required? With devolution one would normally expect powers to be devolved to existing areas and local authorities, who have a better understanding of the requirements of their parishioners and local areas.

We also have major concerns relating to the long-term funding of the CCA. While we accept that funding has been acquired from the centre until 2027, if this ceases and the two leading authorities are then responsible for funding the CCA, this money would have to be found by reducing expenditure in other areas or by additional local precept taxation

Within the current proposal there is no confirmation of any additional funding that the CCA would generate from the centre, only what is already generated in the region.

In conclusion, Offwell Parish Council is not able to support the proposal of a CCA that does not appear to be fully funded or provide greater powers to the existing local authorities that already in place.

We do NOT support the implementation of another even higher level of authority and bureaucracy.

The Clerk to submit the response.

c) Dog Bin waste collection charges

The Clerk advised that EDDC were substantially increasing the charges for the emptying of dog waste bins, implementing the new charges over a two year period. The charges for 24/25 is going to be £3.06 per collection (representing approximately a 45% increase) with the charges for 25/26 to be £4.00 per collection (representing approximately a further 31% increase). In addition, the dog bins will all be numbered and logged on a spreadsheet and only those listed will be emptied. The Parish Council will be able to choose the frequency of the collections (once, twice or three times a week) to take place for each dog bin.

Councillors discussed the matter and agreed that the bin by the Church should be emptied 3 times a week and the bin at the bottom of the 30mph sign between the Woodland and Fouracres Closes be emptied once a week on a Monday. The Clerk advised that on this basis the annual cost would be £763.78 which would be a substantial increase on the 23/24 cost of £396.00.

The Clerk to complete the spreadsheet and submit to EDDC.

d) Food provider database update 2024

The Clerk advised that EDDC were compiling a database on what food support is available in the different parishes across East Devon. The Clerk to reply advising that there is no foodbank or community food provider in the parish.

e) D-Day 80th Anniversary

Cllr. Tristram advised that the Offwell Bell Ringers would be participating in the Ringing Out for Peace at 6.30pm on the 6th June

7. Finance

a) Current Financial Position

The Clerk reported that there is £2,530.93 in the general account and £3,137.82 in the CIL account.

b) Expenditure to be ratified

None

c) Expenditure to be approved for which bills have been received

- 1) Payment to A.Jenkins of £238.48 for the Clerk's net salary after tax/NIC deduction for the month of October (29/02/2024 to 28/03/2024)
- 2) Payment to HMRC of £59.60 for PAYE

- 3) Payment of £84.00 to the Clerk for Home Office Allowance for October, November, December, January, February & March 2024
Payments proposed by Cllr. Norfolk,, seconded by Cllr. Pepper. All in favour.

d) Change of Bank signatories

To be deferred

8. Planning Applications

a) 24/0310/FUL - Hillcrest Tower Cross Honiton EX14 9TN

1 mono pitch shed adjacent to existing shed of dry storage of agricultural machinery
Cllr. Norris proposed that the Parish Council support this application, seconded by Cllr. Blackmore, all in favour.

b) 21/1798/FUL - Land On The East Side Of Tower Road Offwell Honiton

Change of use of an existing agricultural building and associated works for use as a Livestock Collection Centre.

The Clerk advised that the Applicants had now submitted an application 24/0132/DOC to discharge the planning conditions which applied to the approved planning permission. The Clerk and Cllr. Norris had studied the application in detail and had prepared a detailed report which they circulated to Councillors. Cllr. Norris spoke about the report which clearly shows in detail that the applicant is clearly in contravention of the conditions of Grant of Planning Permission for 21/1798/FUL and has shown a blatant disregard of the Grant of Planning Permission and has blatantly ignored and been in breach of the planning conditions for almost two years. It has taken them 2 years to provide the required information while proceeding with the development where the conditions unequivocally state that no development must commence until the required documents were supplied and approved.

In addition, the Livestock Collection Centre has been in use on Monday mornings from the beginning of this year. The breaches of the planning conditions have been reported to EDDC by the Parish Council over the last 2 years but EDDC have taken no effective enforcement action and allowed the applicants to blatantly ignore the conditions. He said that EDDC must consider what message this sends to the residents of East Devon. Does it perhaps mean that EDDC will not enforce any conditions of a Grant of Planning Permission allowing applicants to just ignore the conditions and proceed as they see fit. Cllr. Norris proposed that the detailed report be submitted to EDDC, seconded by Cllr. Pepper, all in favour with comments that the Parish Council trusts that EDDC will now take their responsibilities seriously considering each and every contravention of the planning conditions ensuring that all the works and issues comply with the original plans and requirements/conditions.

b) 23/0735/FUL – Land North Of Honiton Golf Course Northleigh Hill Road Honiton

The construction of a Youth Football Facility, including clubhouse, parking, storage and football pitches to suit all age groups.

The Clerk advised nothing to report.

10. Electricity Sub Station – Removal of unsightly Tree stumps and planting of hedge

The Clerk advised that the tree stumps had been stump ground down to ground level. He had sought quotations for planting a beech hedge along that area in front of the wall.

The quotation obtained was to Clear the strip of land outside the power station of all remaining saplings to leave clear ready for the next stage. Rake back all stump grinding and lay weed membrane down (35m by 2m) pegged in place with ground staple to prevent it blowing away. Cut slits in the membrane to plant the beech saplings through (18” spacings between plants) in staggered rows 12” apart (175 beech saplings in total). All efforts to be made to stick to these planting spacings but due to the stumps being ground to ground level it may be unavoidable at

times to not be planting through a stump in which case the plant will be moved either back or two the sides to allow planting. When planting the ground will be enriched with a dumpy bag of topsoil to make up for the poor soil quality due to the previous coniferous hedging. Once everything is in and planted the stump grindings will be raked over the top of the weed membrane as a mulch/ground cover. Additional wood chip can be supplied at extra cost to fully cover the membrane once works are complete. For all labour and materials to carry out the work will be £809.48 (with 40cm-60cm high beech saplings) or £893.76 (with 60cm-90cm high beech saplings)

The Feoffees had previously said that they may fund the planting and the Clerk said that he had sent them a copy of the quotation for their consideration and was presently waiting for their confirmation that they were prepared to make a donation to cover the costs of the hedge planting. The Clerk said that the Council would be responsible for maintaining the hedge to the agreed height of 6 foot. Councillors felt that this responsibility was acceptable.

Councillors were of the opinion that a beech hedge would make that area look much better and would be acceptable if the Feoffees were very kindly prepared to fund the costs. The Clerk and Chairman were delegated to make a decision to proceed with the works once the Feoffees had confirmed their funding.

11. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Replacement Laptop

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Clerk advised that the date of the next meeting will have to be changed from the 17th to the 10th April as he had been notified of new planning applications which required a response.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm