

# DRAFT

## OFFWELL PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY

### 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2017 IN THE SOCIAL CLUB

**Present:** Cllrs A Small (Chair), T Staunton, C Whithear, J. Tristram,  
S Patch, D. Millington

**In Attendance:** A Jenkins (Clerk), DCC Cllr. M. Shaw

**Members of Public:** 5

### OPEN SESSION

Dr. Ambler, Chair of Governors at Offwell Cof E Primary School spoke on the matter of Zig zag lines outside the school. He said that the School shared the same safety interests as the Council, that some vehicles must stop outside the school to drop off/pick up and that there were layers of issues to be considered.

Cllr. Tristram advised that the matter had arisen following a suggestion from a parishioner and that the Council had sought to find out the views of the Parish as a whole before discussing the matter by putting an item on the website requesting any views on the matter.

The Clerk reported that he had only received 2 responses and read out both responses, one objecting to any zig zags and the other commenting on any such lines being unenforceable in practice.

Cllr Patch said that in the past the School had self policed the matter of stopping/parking outside the school. Following further discussion, it was agreed by all that a form of self policing by the school would be the best solution going forward.

Dr Ambler said that the school appreciated the safety concerns which had been expressed and that the school will try and emphasize these to all parents and others visiting the school.

### COUNCIL BUSINESS

#### **1. Apologies**

Cllrs. M. Brake, M. Mulrain & P. Tuke. PCSO D. England

#### **2. Declaration of Interests**

None

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

The minutes were declared a true record of the proceedings, proposed by Cllr. Staunton and seconded by Cllr. Millington, all in favour.

### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Cllr. Patch reported that Stephen Kelly, the DCC Neighbourhood Traffic Officer had not turned up for the prearranged meeting to inspect the two lanes from Cleave Cross to Greystones. She had sent him a few emails but had not received any response from him. It was decided that the Clerk send him a letter requesting a new meeting.

The Chair said that he had attended the meeting at the Knowle on the 5<sup>th</sup> December when the Leader of DCC, Councillor John Hart had given a talk on the Budget issues facing the County Council following a substantial reduction in their budget.

The Clerk advised that he had obtained more information on the Regulations 59A and 59B but was continuing to investigate what is regarded as appropriate spends and would produce a written report for Council once his investigations were completed. He did recommend that a new separate bank account be set up to hold the CIL money as suggested by EDDC for the proper administration and reporting of CIL. Cllr. Patch proposed that a new separate bank account be opened for the CIL money and that the £742.81 CIL money received be transferred to this new account. Cllr. Whithear seconded, all in favour.

### **5. Reports**

#### **(a) Police:**

The Clerk reported that PCSO Anning had resigned from the Police to go to work for Environmental Health at EDDC. PCSO Darren England who has worked at Honiton for 15 years will until a new PCSO is appointed be covering both Honiton & Rural Honiton. He had sent a written report that there had been 4 reported crimes for the period 19/11/2017 to 17/12/2017. The first crime was sending text communications of an offensive nature, the second of harassment without violence, the third of criminal damage to a house sign on gatepost, and the fourth of a burglary theft of a lawnmower from a shed.

#### **(b) District and County Councillors:**

DCC Cllr. Shaw had submitted a written December report and also an early January report, both of which had been circularised to Councillors. He advised that he will have a Pothole Action Fund of £47,000 in 2018/19 for the 9 parishes in the division and that he was expecting early in the new year, to see the County's review of its widely criticised "safety defect" policy (only filling holes which are 300mm wide and 40mm deep at the edge).

An important meeting was due to be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at the Beehive to discuss the future health provision for Honiton and its environs. He was encouraging Parish Councils to attend and Cllr. Patch volunteered to attend as the council representative.

#### **(c) Other Reports - None**

## **6. Correspondence**

The Clerk reported that the following correspondence had been received: -

- a) Email from EDDC attaching a copy of the current electoral register of the parish, which showed that there were 364 electors in the parish.
- b) Letter from ORG & VHC advising that effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 the room hire charge for the Parish Council meetings will increase from £15 to £16.
- c) Christmas Card from Neil Parish, M.P.
- d) Email from EDDC planning asking if there were any issues accessing plans online.
- e) Email newsletters from Offwell C of E Primary School.
- f) Email member survey from DALC asking what was the Council's top 5 priorities/issues.
- g) Email from DCC Highways providing links to the presentations given at their November events. Forwarded on to all Councillors.
- h) Email about the Blackdown Hills Parish Network.
- i) Email from Brian Norris, Director of Living Memories (not for profit social enterprise) re Reminiscence resources for Dementia patients in East Devon. Had been forwarded on to all Councillors but it was felt that there was no organisations in the Parish who would be able to use these resources.
- j) Email from EDDC re Stay Warm This Winter links. Forwarded for inclusion on the Village Website.
- k) Email from DCC re Refill Devon Initiative.
- l) Email from EDDC Cllr. M. Allen re online petition "Protecting Rural UK Healthcare".
- m) Email invitation from CPRE to the New Housing & The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan seminar on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at the Gipsy Hill Hotel in Pinhoe

## **7. Finance**

Cllr. Staunton proposed, Cllr. Whithear seconded, all in favour) that:

- a) £124.37 be paid to the Clerk for the period 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017
- b) £17.60 be paid to HMRC for PAYE for same period
- c) £75.00 be paid to ORG & VHC for Room Hire for Council Meetings August 2017 to December 2017 inclusive.

## **8. Bank Statements & External Auditors Report**

The Clerk advised that there was £11,184.60 in the current account (after allowing for 6 uncleared cheques) and passed around for the Councillors perusal the 1<sup>st</sup> December Bank statement.

## **9. Budget & Precept 2018/19**

The Clerk presented a document (copy attached as Pages 6 of these minutes). This showed the budget for 2017/18, the spend to date, the projected end of year figures together with a potential draft 2018/19 budget for Cllrs. consideration and approval.

The budget for 2017/18 had been £ 4,799 less a local Council tax support discretionary grant of £112 and it had been decided to take £1,900 from reserves resulting in a precept figure of £2,787.

The spend to date was £5,140 with the projected end of year figure being £7,442. The reason for the budget being exceeded, being mainly due to an increased grants spend of £2,710 as compared to the budgeted amount of £800 and an underestimation of the Clerk's salary. There is also another potential additional spend before the year end if the Council were to employ a lengthsman contractor. However, the Council can apply to Parishes Together for a grant of £387.20 towards the cost of employing a contractor for drainage/ditch works. The application deadline for this grant is 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. (Refer to Item 11)

The potential budget of £6,901 for 2018/19 takes into account the Clerk's increased salary as decided at the November 2018 meeting. The other budgeted amounts are similar to last year's budgeted amounts but did not include any amount for a lengthsman contractor. The Council tax support discretionary grant is reduced from £112 to £85 for the coming year. (It is envisaged that in the following 2019/20 year this grant will reduce to zero).

The Clerk advised that in considering the budget and setting the precept the Council needed to consider the amount they wished to take from reserves of £8,646 (projected year-end balance) to set a reasonable and considered precept.

Last year the Council decided to take £1,900 to reduce the precept. This resulted in a precept figure of £2,787 which had been a modest increase of £63 on council tax demands for the Parish.

With the Council having previously supported the amount of the precept by taking monies from reserves (balance held at bank), if they wished to continue this course of action to keep a similar level of precept there would over a number of years be a substantial reduction in the reserves, particularly if there were any large grants to be made by the Council.. This would be more so if year-end spends exceeded projected budgets.

If the Council wished to reduce the amounts taken from reserves to support the precept, then the precepts would have to be increased. Last year £1900 was taken from reserves to give a precept of £2787. If this year Council wished to set a precept of £3,000 they would have to take £3,816 from the reserves of £8,646. This would in effect reduce the reserves by year end 2019 to £4,830 based on projected figures.

The Clerk stressed the importance that the Council maintain adequate reserves (normally a year's budget amount), and that the Council should consider drawing less from reserves over time so that the precepts would become on a par with budgets but this would result in larger increased precepts. The Clerk as RFO recommended that the Council take a figure of £ 3,300 from reserves, which would give a precept of £3,516 and a projected year end 2019 balance of £5,348. This would result in an increase of £729 in the precept but would maintain the reserves at a more adequate level.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for his work in preparing the report and budget forecast. Cllr. Patch said that some years ago the precept had been substantially higher although the Council had big reserves and that it had been a conscious decision at that time to reduce the precept by drawing down from the reserves. This had continued for a number of years but could not continue indefinitely as it was important that the Council have adequate reserves.

Cllr. Tristram proposed accepting the budget and the Clerk's recommendation of a precept of £3,516 for 2018/19. Cllr. Millington seconded, all in favour. The Clerk to submit the completed precept form to EDDC.

## **10. Planning Application – 17/2875/FUL –Stonewick, Offwell EX14 9SB**

Cllrs. perused the application and Cllr. Staunton proposed supporting the application, seconded by Cllr. Millington, all in favour.

## **11. Employment of Lengthsman contractor, including a pro active plan of work and management & monitoring considerations**

Cllr. Patch advised that Luppitt, UpOttery and Cotleigh had joined together under Parishes Together to employ a contractor but that the contractor was unable to take on any new additional work. Similarly, Coltyon, Northleigh, Southleigh & Farway had also joined up under Parishes Together and had employed a contractor @a cost of £37.00 plus VAT per hour. The contractor uses a micro digger.

The Clerk reported that he had investigated the Parishes Together funding and that it was possible for individual parishes to apply on their own for ditches and drainage works. Any such works would need approval by DCC Flood Risk Team, DCC Neighbourhood Highways Team and the Environment Agency. Offwell would be able to apply for a grant of £387.20 from the Parishes Together Fund but that the closing date for applications is the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

The Clerk said that a number of individual parishes had received such funding and that he had written to all these parishes asking if they were able to recommend the contractor they had used. It was agreed that the Councillors should make a list of the problem ditches, drains in the Parish in order to draw up a priority list of works to be considered, so that a decision can be made at the next meeting for a Parishes Together application.

The Clerk advised that according to the Devon Highways schedules, their parish lengthsman were due to undertake 2 days work in Offwell Parish starting on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018. He said that he would make enquiries with Highways as to which ditches they were proposing to work on.

## **12. Haycart Repairs**

Nothing to report.

## **13. Zig zag lines outside school**

Matter discussed in open session.

## **14. Agenda items for Next Meeting**

None

## **15. Date and time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 7.30pm in the social Club. The meeting closed at 9.13pm.

Offwell Parish Council															
BUDGET 2017-2018															
Clerk	Clerk	Printg	Insur	Subs	Accountg	Training	Room	Grants	Parish	Village	Recruiting	Defib	Foot	Total	
Sal PAYE	Exps						Hire		Meeting	Amenities			Paths		
1400	318	50	310	165	30	250	250	800	60	610	156	200	200	4799	
												Less CTDG		112	
												Net		4687	
SPEND TO DATE															
1275	140	158	261	58	0	85	75	2710	35	223	0	120	0	5140	
PROJECTED END OF YEAR															
2550	210	150	261	165	30	170	195	2800	35	400	156	120	200	7442	
POTENTIAL BUDGET 2018/19															
3480	250	150	300	165	30	250	250	800	60	610	156	200	200	6901	
												Less CTDG		85	
												Net		6816	
										Less via from RESERVES					
BUDGET FOR PRECEPT															





