

OFFWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT 7.30PM

ON MONDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2019 IN THE SOCIAL CLUB

Present: Cllrs. A. Small (Chair), M. Brake, S. Patch, J. Tristram, P. Hopkins, M. Mulrain,
P. Tuke

In Attendance: A Jenkins (Clerk)

Members of Public: 3

OPEN SESSION

It was reported that Sheila Stratton who had served as a Parish Councillor for some years in the past had sadly passed away. Councillors were sorry to hear this sad news and asked the Clerk to send a Sympathy Card.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

1. Apologies

Cllr. V. Smith, Cllr. C. Whithear, Cllr., DCC Cllr. M. Shaw, EDDC Cllr. P. Arnott,
EDDC Cllr. H. Parr

2. Declaration of Interests

None

3. a) Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st October 2019

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

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Clerk advised that he had received the new supply of Sandbags and would pass them onto the Chair.

The Clerk reported that with regard to the A35 Parishes Liaison Forum, that Andy Roberts of Highways England has agreed to a meeting with representatives from Offwell, Widworthy, Shute, Dalwood and Kilmington Parish Councils. He has agreed on the basis of there being two representatives from each Parish Council, that they are specifically representing the Parish Councils and that there would two meetings a year with the two DCC Councillors also being able to attend. Four dates in January and February have been suggested with a suggested time of late morning.

Councillors agreed that Cllr. Patch and Cllr. Tuke be the two Councillors to represent Offwell PC. The Clerk said that he also planned to attend the meeting.

The Clerk to advise the date, time and venue for the meeting. The Clerk said that he was collating accident statistics for the last five years and would prepare a report for the January meeting, so that the Councillors are prepared with as much information as possible ahead of the meeting with Highways England.

The Clerk reported that Balfour Beatty, the Highways England contractor had now cleaned the dirty road sign at Greystones Cross.

The Clerk reported that Stephen Kelly, the Devon Highways Officer had assessed the two hedges on Ramsden Lane but had advised that they were not safety defects and as such they would not be looking at cutting back yet. He has also advised that in his opinion there are no issues with the tree on Tower Road.

Cllr. Tristram asked if the Clerk could ask Stephen Kelly to look at Mill Lane near Bagwells Cottage where a hedge had been professionally laid but a gap 6-7ft had been left in the hedge, with a drop of 20-30ft behind. He was concerned that there could be a safety issue.

5. Reports

a) Police:

The Clerk reported that he had not received any police report.

b) District and County Councillors:

DCC Cllr. Shaw had sent his written report which had been forwarded to all Councillors. He had reported that the Fire Authority had postponed its decision on the proposed Fire Station closures until the 18th December. He is intending to submit a motion expressing concern on the proposed closures to the Council. He suspects, however, that the Fire Service may delay publishing its conclusions from the consultation in view of the General Election, in which case the Authority meeting may be further postponed.

EDDC Cllr. Arnott had sent a written report which had been forwarded to all Councillors. He had reported on a number of matters including that EDDC had appointed a task and finish forum to make an enhanced and in-depth study of car park charges in the district owned facilities. They welcome any ideas and suggestions from Coly Valley residents as to how business, tourism, shopping or visits to pharmacies etc might be improved by, for sake of example, half an hour's free parking.

c) Other Reports

The Clerk gave a brief report on the DALC AGM Conference/Exhibition he had attended and advised that he had attended two workshops covering Governance and Legal Updates from the NALC senior solicitor. One of the subjects covered was the Website Accessibility Regulations which existing websites must comply with by September 2020 but new websites have to comply with immediately.

The Clerk advised Councillors that the various workshop presentations were available to view on the DALC website.

6. Correspondence

The Clerk advised that he had forwarded on to Councillors all email correspondence received.

The items of note were:-

- a) Email from EDDC re CIL and annual accounting procedure **Noted**
- b) DCC Flood Risk Management Newsletter **Noted**
- c) DCC Devon Carbon Plan **Noted**
- d) DCC Highways Newsletter **Noted**
- e) Email from the Secretary of ORG & VHC advising that some of the Monday's dates for Council Meetings will clash with skittle matches for the 2020 season and that it will be necessary on those dates for the Council to hold its meeting in the Hall instead. The charge will remain the same.
The Clerk to liaise with ORG & VHC

7. Finance

a) Current Financial Position

The Clerk advised that there was £8988.15 in the current account (after allowing for uncleared cheques but not allowing for the below payments).

There was now £3,362.09 in the CIL Account

It should be noted that the Council has resolved to make a commitment to spend of £2,250 from this CIL monies on playground equipment for the Project.

The Clerk advised Councillors that the present position against the budget as at 18th November was a spend to date of £2,870 and a projected end of year spend of £7,202 against the budget of £8,287.

b) Intervening Expenditure to approve

None

c) Expenditure to be approved

Cllr Patch proposed, Cllr. Tristram seconded, all in favour that:

1. £27.02 be paid to D. Mulrain to reimburse for website domain registration.
2. £104.40 be paid to P & M Jolly to reimburse for Summer 2019 planting costs for the Haycart
3. £318.72 be paid to the Clerk for salary for period from 14th October to 11th November 2019.

d) Forthcoming expenditure to approve

Councillors resolved in the event of the Council not holding a meeting in December to empower the Chair and Vice Chair to authorise payment to the Clerk for his salary, and any other necessary payments. Proposed by Cllr. Patch, seconded by Cllr. Tristram, all in favour.

8. Planning Applications

19/1714/FUL – Northcombe Farm, Offwell, EX14 9SP

The Clerk reported he had sought clarification from EDDC on the proposed combined plans for what had appeared to be a residential building. They advised that the applicants had submitted this plan in error and that Planning had requested plans showing the proposed livestock/storage building and erection of silo and siting of associated container to house bio mass boiler. They were presently awaiting these and would contact the Parish Council when received.

9. Ash Dieback

The Clerk advised that no further information had yet been released on the free tree schemes with devonashdieback.org and the Woodland Trust.

10. Lengthsman

The Clerk advised that he was still awaiting answers from other Parish Councils as to the contractors they employ to do lengthsman type work.

The Clerk reported that Stephen Kelly, the Highways Officer had replied to his query about the JCB which had been working clearing out easements on a number of lanes in the Parish. He had stated that they do not employ lengthsman any more. Their contractor does sometimes go out and clear easements and grips on lanes. However, Stephen Kelly does not have a copy of their programme of work. They generally do not clear ditches as this is landowner responsibility.

11. Offwell Haycart

The Clerk reported that he wrote to Mrs Smith, Mrs Garwood, Mrs Bartlett and Mrs Hallows seeking their thoughts on the matter as the original fund raisers of the Haycart and their opinion as to whether they would be agreeable for the Parish Council to make a decision on the future of the Haycart.

Mrs Smith had replied stating that if the haycart was no longer fit for purpose, she would be sorry not to see it when she regularly passes through the village. Mrs Bartlett was sorry to hear that it was in such a state of disrepair and felt that the Parish Council should take full responsibility for its repair. Mrs Hallows will also be sorry to see the demise of the Haycart as it is an attractive addition on entering the village and that it had made a valuable contribution to the village over a number of years helping to win “the Best Kept Village” and numerous favourable comments from Judges, Villagers and visitors.

The Chair reported that a Master Wheelwright and Coachbuilder had inspected the Haycart and had advised that the state of disrepair meant it was unsuitable and uneconomical to repair and that it should be replaced with a new Haycart. The cost of a new Haycart in hardwood was likely to be over £2,000.

Councillors agreed that the Haycart had been a very attractive welcoming feature on the approach to the village and that it should if possible be replaced by a new Haycart. They felt however that the Council should not take on the full financial responsibility to do so but should encourage a Parish Action Group to be formed to raise the funds for a new Haycart. The Parish Council would be prepared to consider supporting such a group.

Councillors to contact parishioners who may be interested in forming an action group. Cllr. Brake to put a notice on the Website asking for volunteers to form an action group.

The Clerk advised that Mrs Hallows in her letter had advised that for a number of years her husband and herself had maintained the Village Pump and the surrounding area, at their own expense, as their contribution to the village. The work entailed not only planting but weeding the cobbled area, removal of debris etc. She will be planting the pump as usual this Autumn, ready for the Spring but wishes to give notice that someone else needs to take over in the Spring.

Councillors asked the Clerk to write to Mr & Mrs Hallows thanking them for all the work and their contribution to the village in making the pump such an attractive and well kept feature.

Cllr. Tristram said that he would speak to the School Headmistress and ask for the School to take on the role of maintaining and planting the pump area.

12. Parish Council Website

Cllr. Brake reported that he had started putting together a new website and had forwarded a test website to the rest of the Sub Committee. He was presently waiting their feedback.

In response to a query from the Clerk, Cllr. Brake confirmed that the new website will comply with the Website Accessibility Regulations.

13. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

None

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Councillors resolved that the 16th December meeting be cancelled, unless the Chair and Clerk deemed it necessary for it to go ahead if anything arose requiring Council’s consideration and decision. The Clerk to advise Councillors by the 12th December if the meeting was necessary. Proposed by Cllr. Patch, seconded by Cllr. Tristram, all in favour.

If no December meeting is held, the next meeting would be Monday, 20th January 2020 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The Meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed..... Date 20th January 2020

