

OFFWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MONTHLY ORDINARY MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 20th APRIL 2022 AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs. J. Tristram (Vice-Chair), P. Sauvage, T. Pepper, A. Welch-Thornton,
C. Whitehead, M. Norfolk
J. Tristram,

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

Members of Public: 0

The Vice-Chair chaired the meeting as Cllr. Whithear was unable to attend.

The Vice-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

No matters raised

COUNCIL BUSINESS

1.To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons given (LGA 1972

S.85 (1))

Cllrs. C. Whithear, P. Hopkins, J. Evans, DCC Cllr. M. Hartnell, EDDC Cllr. H. Parr

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 23rd March 2022

Deferred to next meeting

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

5. Reports:

a) Police

No report received

b) District and County Councillors

EDDC Cllr. Parr had submitted a written report. She had reported that a council tax rebate of £150 will be given to every East Devon household living in an A, B, C or D band property. EDDC is administering this scheme of government grants.

A new Action on Poverty Fund has been opened by East Devon District Council (EDDC) to help reduce poverty in East Devon. The fund can accept applications for grants of between £500 and £5,000 for projects and activities to help reduce poverty in East Devon. For more information on this and other grants see EDDC website.

The council is ending the use of Glyphosate based herbicides for weed control in favour of Vinegar based RHS endorsed sprays and manual control methods. £67k will be added to the Capital program to purchase 2 Hotfoam machines. The council will also be withdrawing from spraying in some areas including highways around town centres, which the council currently does although it is not within the remit. River Axe Special Area of Conservation- Natural England has advised East Devon District Council that because of the sensitivity of the River Axe, which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation, new planning permissions for new homes, and other developments providing overnight accommodation, should not be granted in the catchment of the river unless they can be shown to be “nutrient neutral“.

The fundamental problem is that there are excessive levels of phosphates entering the river. Most phosphates come from agricultural activity, including run-off from farmed land. A sizeable amount of the remainder however, is a result of human activity associated with the houses we live in and business premises and buildings we use- ie. the waste water that is generated.

On farm projects to improve the quality of water discharge have been supported and funded by Natural England and the Environment Agency for many years. A mitigation scheme for new dwellings will however need to provide mitigation in perpetuity and so is proving much harder to achieve.

EDDC is now one of over 70 local authorities affected by this issue. Both Colyford and Colyton are outside of the River Axe Special Area of Conservation.

Axminster however is within the catchment area. This possible embargo on residential building could have a serious effect on housing numbers in the Local Plan and put at risk the 5 year land supply.

The Personnel Committee received a Confidential report on a Learning Review costing £18k, which was carried out by the Local Government Association to try to improve relationships at the council. Member/Staff relationships have been a matter of concern, raised in Staff Wellbeing Surveys. The LGA made a number of recommendations, some of which were accepted by the Personnel Committee 22 March, including strengthening the Code of Conduct; improving procedures for Grievances and Employment matters, and increasing training and support for new Leaders/ Portfolio Holders and Administrations.

DCC Cllr. Hartnell had submitted a written report:-

Flood Risk Management Action Plan - DCC Cabinet approved a budget allocation of £10k (for 2022/23) for an initial assessment of flood risk from surface water and ordinary watercourses in Seaton and to consider options for potential improvements and funding opportunities. This action is necessary following the flooding of over 20 properties last October. As the lead local flooding authority DCC produced a Flooding Investigation Report.

A35 Safety Improvements - I regularly catch up with our MP to discuss issues in the division. I've asked Neil Parish to contact National Highways to arrange a meeting with parishes along the A35. The A35 working group last met in February 2020. I explained the frustration of local parish councils regarding progress on this matter and the lack of a regional manager for National Highways not helping the situation. Neil has contacts at National Highways so I am hopeful a meeting can be arranged to bring this important issue to the for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are one of ten areas in England selected by the Government to negotiate far-reaching devolution deals to help level up areas blighted by low productivity and deep-seated deprivation. A deal offers the opportunity for additional powers and funding to tackle local priorities such as more affordable housing, better public transport and providing skills our economy needs.

A 'County Deal' does not require a mayor, operates in concert with the existing local government structure and requires a Combined Authority only to oversee the additional devolved powers. In terms of where we are in this process, the partner authorities are working together to negotiate with government. In essence the 'fuel' to drive the transformation is the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) that replaces EU funding with a non-mayoral Combined Authority getting overall control of UKSPF planning and delivery. Initial proposals have been submitted to government as a starting point for negotiations. The ambition is to have a deal in place in late 2022/early 2023 with implementation from April 2023.

c) Clerk

None

d) Offwell Neighbourhood Support Group

None

e) Highways Matters

The Clerk advised that following our last meeting, DCC Cllr. Hartnell had written to Neil Parish, M.P. and National Highways and had expressed the Parish Council's concerns about the delay in the roadworks repairs being carried out on the A35 and also the lack of information and inaction on the A35 Average Speed Camera proposed project. He was yet to receive a reply.

f) Footpaths Report

Cllr Tristram reported that improvement work on the West Colwell to Northleigh Hill Road footpath was progressing.

g) Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 Sub Committee

Cllr. Whitehead reported that the plans were progressing well, 74 persons had booked to attend the event and 40 volunteers had offered to help on the day.

h) Any Other Reports

None

6. To consider any matters pertaining to Coronavirus and Offwell Parish

None

7. Correspondence

The Clerk advised that all correspondence had been circulated to Councillors.

8. Finance

a) Current Financial Position

The Clerk reported that there is £4,821.48. in the current account, not allowing for any payments to be approved at the meeting.

The CIL account balance remains unchanged at £12.09

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

- 1) Payment of £326.72 for the Clerk's salary for the month of April 2022
 - 2) Payment of £103.99 to DALC for NALC & DALC affiliation fees renewal.
- Payments proposed by Cllr. Pepper, seconded by Cllr. Sauvage All in favour.

c) 2021/22 AGAR

The Clerk reported that the AGAR online information/forms/instructions had been received from the external auditors and that he was in the process of completing the 2021/22 paperwork for submission to the internal auditor.

10.Planning Applications

Cllr. Tristram asked the Clerk the position on the planning application for the community sign at Cleave Cross. The Clerk advised that he had sought pre application advice and that both the Planning Department and Devon Highways had indicated that they were likely to refuse an application as there were Health & Safety issues in placing the sign at Cleave Cross as it was on a narrow lane near the road junction and no pavement. Cllr. Sauvage proposed that the Council not proceed with the application, seconded by Cllr. Welch-Thornton, all in favour.

11. Defibrillator Training for VETS volunteers

The Clerk advised that it was some time since the Volunteer Emergency Telephone System (VETS) volunteers had last received training and that it had been recommended that they should now receive some refresher training. The cost of a refresher training course from Community Heartbeat Trust is £180 plus VAT plus the venue cost, if any of hiring the Village Hall. Cllr. Pepper proposed that the Council pay the costs of the course and that it be arranged for May if possible, seconded by Cllr. Whitehead, all in favour. The Clerk to liaise with Mrs Sauvage and organise the Course.

12. Parish Meeting

The Clerk advised that the Annual Parish Meeting was scheduled to take place on the 18th May at 7.30pm after the Parish Council meeting at 6.30pm. He further advised that Cllr. Whithear was trying to arrange a guest speaker for the meeting.

13. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

None

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

18th May at 6.30pm

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed

C. Whithear

Date *18/05/2022*