

OFFWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MONTHLY ORDINARY MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 23rd MARCH 2022 AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs. C. Whithear (Chair), P. Hopkins,
J. Tristram,

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

Members of Public: 8

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

As the members of the public were attending the meeting to speak in respect of the 3 planning applications Items 10a,10b and 10d, the Chair agreed to defer their opportunity to speak for 3 minutes until these agenda items were reached on the agenda.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

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

S.85 (1))

Cllrs. P Sauvage, A. Welch-Thornton, T. Pepper

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)

Cllr. P. Hopkins – Item 10b

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th February 2022

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

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

The Clerk reported that EDDC had recently planted the Oak Sapling in the Village hall recreation ground. Once they had completed all the plantings through East Devon, they would then revisit for a formal presentation of the commemorative plaque.

5. To consider filling casual vacancies. The Clerk reported that applications had been received from 3 candidates:-Mr Carl Whitehead, Mr Mark Norfolk and Mr James Evans. The Clerk advised Councillors of the procedure to be followed and then the Chair invited each candidate to speak.

Mr Carl Whitehead said that he had moved to Ofwell 18 months ago. He spoke about the previous voluntary roles he had previously been involved with elsewhere and said that as a team player he wished to become a Councillor in order to contribute to the Community.

Mr Mark Norfolk said that he had lived in Offwell since March 2021 and had found it to be a very welcoming community. He wanted to become more directly involved in various aspects of the community and wished to become a Councillor so that he could do more work for and within the community.

Mr James Evans said that he had lived in Offwell since April 2021. He had previously lived elsewhere in another East Devon village for the past six years and enjoyed living in a rural parish village environment. He wished to become a Councillor in order to help the community and would look to serve the parish impartially to the best of his ability.

Cllr. Tristram proposed that all 3 candidates be co-opted, seconded by Cllr. Hopkins, all in favour. The new Councillors to join at the next meeting.

6. Reports:

a) Police

No report received

b) District and County Councillors

EDDC Cllr. Parr reported that EDDC had agreed the Budget on the 23rd February. The council Tax charge for a Band D property will be £156.78 -an increase of £5.00 / 3.29%.

Car parking charges will increase from £1.00 per hour to £2.00 per hour in prime car parks (those in Exmouth, Sidmouth, Seaton & Beer) with other inland car park charges increasing from £1.00 per hour to £1.50 per hour. An extraordinary meeting of Council has been called to reconsider the charges in the Roxburgh Car Park in Sidmouth.

There had been a Strategic Planning Committee meeting on the 8th March to consider two options to add further smaller villages to Tier 4 of the Settlement Hierarchy as regards the distribution and allocation of development in East Devon towns and parishes. Offwell was included in one of these options. Fortunately, strong objections including one from Offwell Parish Council resulted in both options being rejected.

The Clerk thanked Cllr. Parr for contacting him on the 8th to inform him that this matter was due to be considered later that day. This had enabled him and the Chair to draft and submit a strong objection into the meeting whilst it was in progress.

DCC Cllr. Hartnell reported that the DCC budget had been approved on the 17th February. The DCC element of Council Tax will rise by 2.99% adding 87p per week or £45 a year to a Band C council tax bill.

The DCC Strategic Plan up to 2025 has been published and can be viewed on the DCC website.

DCC has agreed that 20mph schemes can be progressed in 2022/23 for Communities who request them. He was happy to discuss individual Parish requests and support putting them forward for assessment before the 31st March.

The Clerk said that the Parish Council had previously considered the matter two years previously and had requested that the existing 30mph area be considered for reduction to 20mph.

Cllr. Hartnell also updated Councillors on the Seaton Multi-use Trail, the Coastal & Market Towns Urban Renewal pilot project and the matter of Devon Pension Fund & Investments in Russia.

Written reports had been submitted by both Councillors and circulated to the Parish Councillors.

c) Clerk

None

d) Offwell Neighbourhood Support Group

The Chair advised that only one person is currently being supported.

e) Highways Matters

The Clerk reported that the Highways officer had not responded on the matters he had discussed with him last month. Cllr. Hartnell said that he would speak to the Highways Officer and seek answers.

The Clerk said that parishioners had expressed concern about the lack of any action to start and progress the repair works on the A35 landslip below the Devils Elbow. The landslip had occurred many months ago and the traffic lights were causing long delays at peak times. These delays would inevitably greatly increase as the spring/summer seasonal traffic increases. Also many vehicles were trying to avoid that section of the A35 by using the narrow local lanes but in doing so (often at high speed) were causing a safety hazard to pedestrians and other users. Cllr. Hartnell said that he would speak to National Highways to express our concerns and press for the repair works to commence as soon as possible.

f) Footpaths Report

Cllr Tristram reported that the West Colwell to Northleigh Hill Road footpath was being improved under a self help scheme.

g) Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 Sub Committee

The Chair reported that the sub committee had met twice. The event plans are progressing well and a large number of items for the event had been purchased utilising the £600 from the Parish Council. Receipts for all the purchased items had been provided and 2 cheques for £300 each had been issued from the CIL account to reimburse the two committee members who had purchased them. 55 persons had already booked to attend the event.

h) Any Other Reports

None

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

None

8. Correspondence

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

9. Finance

a) Current Financial Position

The Clerk reported that there is £2,562.09. in the current account, not allowing for any payments to be approved at the meeting.

The CIL account balance is £12.09 (following the issue of the two cheques for £300 each under Item 6g above)

- 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 March 2022**
 - 2) **Payment of £41.89 to Axminster Printing for stationery**

Payments proposed by Cllr. Tristram, seconded by Cllr. Hopkins All in favour.

10.Planning Applications:

- a) **22/0253/FUL- Ty Croeso Offwell Honiton EX14 9RY
Demolition of single storey detached dwelling and erection of a two storey 3-bed detached dwelling.**

The Clerk advised that whilst the Parish Council had resolved to support the application at the last meeting, an amended plan had been subsequently submitted. Mr Evans, the applicant explained to Councillors the reasons for the amendments, namely the use render instead of cladding and some window changes. Following further discussion, Cllr.

Tristram proposed that the Parish Council continue to support the application, seconded by Cllr. Whithear, 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 reported that the EDDC Planning Committee Meeting took place on the 16th March and that they approved the planning application.

The Clerk spoke on behalf of the Parish Council, also Tony Norris and Steve Guilbert who were objecting and also Cllr Helen Parr as our ward Councillor.

However, despite all our objections both verbally at the meeting and the many detailed written objections submitted, the Planning Committee voted in favour of approving the application. They completely ignored our concerns about Highway Safety and the adverse effect on local businesses along Tower Road. Some of the Committee members said that we the parishioners and residents would just have to accept the highways problems that the traffic would cause. One even said that it would be hellish for 3 hours in the morning but that was acceptable as it was only for two days in the week that the centre would operate.

We had requested in writing that it was essential that the Committee undertake a site visit to acquaint themselves with the 3 routes that traffic to the site would take and the narrowness of Tower road and the minor lane. However our request was completely ignored as was the many objection points we had raised in our objections and the emails he and others had sent to each of the Planning Committee members.

It is an extremely disappointing decision and one which will affect all parishioners who use Tower Road, the minor lane and the A35 and also the residents and businesses along Tower Road and the minor lane. He feels that we were really let down by the poor assessment by Devon Highways and them watering down their original objection that there would be an unacceptable impact on Highway Safety as the roads were narrow and not suitable. They watered down their objection even though they accepted our road width analysis and agreed that Tower Road was too narrow for over 50% of it's length for a car and large vehicle to pass one another. They did not consider the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers and horse riders who use Tower road and the minor lane and who under the new Highway Code legislation are supposed to be given priority and allowed a two metre safe passing space by vehicles.

Regrettably the planning committee have made their decision and as one member of the Committee actually said we will now be faced with hellish mornings when the Centre operates on the two days of the week.

Mr Steve Guilbert and Mr Tony Norris also spoke about their disappointment and anger at the way in which the planning committee had considered the application and had completely ignored the request for a site visit and the many detailed and valid objections the Parish Council and others had submitted. They said that the Committee seemed to be more concerned about the legal costs of defending an appeal if they were to refuse the application.

They agreed that both the Devon Highways and National Highways assessment of the application and the collection centre traffic implications on the local road network and the A35 junctions were flawed and incorrect. As such their submissions to the Planning department as Consultees were also seriously flawed. They said that the residents on Tower Road were considering submitting complaints to EDDC, Devon Highways and National Highways.

**c) 22/0459/FUL – Land at Colwell Farm, Offwell
Permanent agricultural workers' dwelling.**

Cllr. Tristram proposed that the Parish Council support the application, seconded by Cllr. Hopkins, all in favour.

**d) 22/0481/FUL – Marwood House, Offwell EX14 9RW
Construction of a single storey detached granny annex with associated decking.**

Mr and Mrs Mcdermott, the applicants explained to Councillors that the application was for an eco friendly timber framed and clad granny annexe. Cllr. Hopkins proposed supporting the application, seconded by Cllr. Tristram, all in favour.

10. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

None

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

20th April at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed *C. Whithear*

Date *18/05/2022*