

OFFWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MONTHLY ORDINARY MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 27th JULY 2022 AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs. J. Tristram, A. Welch-Thornton, M. Norfolk, P. Hopkins,
C. Whitehead, J. Evans

In Attendance: A Jenkins (Clerk), DCC Cllr. Hartnell

Members of Public: 0

Cllr. Tristram, the Vice Chair chaired the meeting

He 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. Sauvage, T. Pepper, 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 15th June 2022

Cllr. Tristram said that it had been requested at the meeting that meeting minutes be normally issued within 14 days but that this was not noted on the draft minutes. Cllr. Norfolk proposed that the minutes duly amended to note this be declared a true record of the proceedings, seconded by Cllr. Welch Thornton, all in favour.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

Cllr. Whithear had carried out the repairs to the Best Kept village signs.

5. Reports:

a) Police

No report received but PCSO England had advised that hopefully the Police will have a new volunteer working with them at Honiton whi is going to put together a Rural Newsletter and look at their connectivity with local parishes.

b) District and County Councillors

DCC Cllr. Hartnell reported that the County Council was very concerned that there was likely to be a £30 - £40 million over spend and was looking at saving money across all of it's services and departments.

He said that he had asked Highways whether the suggestion was feasible that Parish Councils could progress more quickly the process of introducing a 20 mph speed limit in their villages by offering to fund the cost of the new signs. They had advised that this was not possible or feasible as the average scheme cost was over £25,000 and each scheme had to meet certain additional criteria and it wasn't just a cost issue.

He said that the County Council had recently introduced a permit system for all vans visiting all their recycling sites across Devon. This applied to all vans including those owned and used for private personal use.

c) Clerk

None

d) Offwell Neighbourhood Support Group

None

e) Highways Matters

DCC Cllr. Hartnell advised that he was awaiting an answer from the Highways Officer on the matters of the siting of an additional grit bin and the potholes on the unnamed lane running from the Bishop's Tower at it's junction with the A35. The Clerk said that the potholes were getting worse and could cause an accident if a vehicle exiting the A35 at speed hit a pothole and lost control. This exacerbated the risks posed to pedestrians and others at this point. Cllr. Hartnell said he would look at the potholes himself and speak to the Highways Officer.

The Clerk said that this lane was highly dangerous and that parishioners had asked if it could be made a No Through Road with no access from or onto the A35 other than a small opening for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders. Cllr. Hartnell said that was aware of the dangers posed at this junction and had discussed with Highways how it could be altered and road safety improved. He would discuss with Highways the feasibility of and the pros and cons of making it a No through road.

Councillors also asked him to investigate whether a stop/giveway sign could be placed at the junction of the lane from the Sutton Barton recycling centre with it's junction with the lane running from past Offwell Village Hall.

Cllr. Hartnell said that he was due to undertake Section 8 Highways training and would send the Clerk details of the course in case any Offwell councillors were interested in attending.

The Clerk advised that he had contacted the newly elected MP requesting a meeting at both Offwell and Kilmington in order that we can make him aware of the A35 issues in Offwell and request his active support in seeking the safety improvements with National Highways

f) Footpaths Report

No report received

g) Any Other Reports

None

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

None

7. Correspondence

Correspondence had been circulated to Councillors. The one item of correspondence of particular note was the changes effective from the 31st July 2022 to the Stagecoach bus service from Axminster to Honiton and vice versa. Devon County Council had advised that Stagecoach is making a number of changes to services from 31st July as the first step towards a commercially sustainable network when Government funding ceases. It also reflects reduced passenger numbers, increasing driver and fuel costs and a continuing shortage of drivers. Service 4/4A/4B Exeter – Cranbrook – Ottery St Mary – Honiton - Axminster Stagecoach have given notice to DCC to end the present service 4 contract.

Stagecoach will operate a commercial service 4 between Exeter and Cranbrook only, with a twenty-minute Monday – Saturday daytime frequency, thirty minutes during Sunday daytimes and hourly evenings.

DCC has now awarded Stagecoach a tendered contract to operate a revised service covering Exeter – Cranbrook – Ottery St Mary – Honiton – Axminster. This will be registered as the 44 service. There will be a two hourly service from Axminster and a combination of one to two services in the hour from Honiton. It had been hoped to replicate the frequency of the current service, but none of the bus operators had the resource to fulfil this tender option.

8. Finance

a) Current Financial Position

The Clerk reported that there is £3,430.66 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 £333.44 for the Clerk's salary for the month of July 2022

2) Payment of £75.96 to P & M Jolly for the Summer Planting of the Offwell Haycart. Payments proposed by Cllr. Hopkins, seconded by Cllr. Welch Thornton. All in favour.

c) To review the Internal Auditors report in respect of the 2021/22 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The Clerk reported that the accounts for the year 2021/22 had now been finalised and the internal audit completed. The Clerk presented the annual internal audit report to Councillors.

Councillors noted the report. Cllr. Tristram proposed acceptance of the Internal Auditors Report, seconded by Cllr. Evans, all in favour.

The Clerk advised that the external auditors are the same as last year. Smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2022, are able to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller authorities) Regulations 2015. There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability return to the external auditor, provided that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2022 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted notifying the external auditor.

d) To consider, and if thought fit, approve sign the Annual Governance Statement Section

ONE of the 2021-22 AGAR (Version2, with exemption)

Councillors reviewed the system of internal control prior to completing the Annual Governance Statement. Cllr. Norfolk proposed approval of the Annual Governance Statement, seconded by Cllr. Whitehead, all in favour. The Chair and Clerk signed the Statement.

e) To consider, and if thought fit, approve and sign the Annual Accounting Statements Section TWO of the 2021-22 AGAR. (Version2, with exemption)

The Clerk then presented to Councillors the signed and dated Accounting Statements for the year 2021-22 and explained the accounts. Councillors considered the accounting statements. Cllr. Evans proposed approval of the Accounting Statements, seconded by Cllr. Welch Thornton, all in favour. The Chair signed the Statement.

f) To consider the proposal that Kilmington Parish Council seeks exemption from the External Auditing of its 2021-22 accounts as per the regulations for AGAR Version 2.

Cllr. Tristram proposed the Council certifying itself as exempt from the limited assurance review, seconded by Cllr. Hopkins, all in favour. The Chair and Clerk signed the Certificate of Exemption. The Clerk to submit the Certificate to the external auditors.

g) To consider and set the dates for the Period of Exercising of Public Rights

The Clerk suggested adopting the dates of the 3rd August 2022 to 12th September 2022. He advised Councillors that due to the Council having requested and the external auditors having agreed to an extension to the submission date of the AGAR to the 29th July 2022, these dates were different to those normally set as the statutory dates for the period of Exercising of Public Rights.

Councillors agreed to these dates.

9. Planning Applications

None

10. Councillor Training

The Clerk advised that he was now looking at arranging a DALC New Councillor training course in Offwell one evening in October,

11. Website

The Clerk reported that all the pages on the website relating to the Parish Council, Public Services, Police, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council had been updated.

the audience / page views etc for the village site.

He had also requested and received information from the administrators as to the number of people who visit the website. They had advised that in the past year there had been 2,794 unique visits to the website and that 6,819 pages had been viewed. In the last 3 months there had been 758 unique visits to the website with 1,785 pages viewed. For every visit visitors have looked at 2.28 pages on average. The most popular pages viewed are the Village Hall, Parish Council, Councillors Contact Details and Meetings, Agendas and Minutes.

The Clerk said that this information shows that the website is well used and is an important informative publication resource for parishioners and others to be able to access.

12. Offwell Haycart Planting

Cllr. Tristram proposed that the Parish Council give Peter & Melanie Jolly a £25 garden centre voucher to thank them for their voluntary hard work over the years in planting and creating the wonderful summer and winter haycart planting displays. Seconded by Cllr. Whitehead, all in favour. The Clerk to purchase the gift voucher and send it to them with a letter thanking them for their voluntary work and contribution to the Parish.

Mrs Vicky Whithead had offered to take over the planting of the Haycart. The clerk said that he

had spoken to Honiton Garden centre about the possibility of them sponsoring the haycart planting and the the chair and himself would meet with them to further discuss the matter and report back to Council at the next meeting.

13. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

None

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17th August 2022

The Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed *J. B. Tristram*

Date *17/08/2022*