

# RACKENFORD AND CREACOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Parish Council will be held at Rackenford School, on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017, starting at 7.30pm.

All councillors are summoned.

Members of the public are welcome and have the opportunity to speak on item 2 only.

Parish Clerk: Karen Ward, 8 Peard Road, Tiverton, EX16 4LQ. Phone 01884 798711

## AGENDA

- 1 **Apologies**
- 2 **Open Forum** – members of the public, and councillors with an interest, have the opportunity to address the meeting if invited to do so by the Chairman (limiting their contribution to 3 minutes)
- 3 **Minutes**  
To sign, if approved, the minutes of the 2 May 2017 meeting.
- 4 **Declaration of Interests**
- 5 **Vacancy on Rackenford & Creacombe Parish Council:** To consider and vote on applicants for co-option on to the Parish Council (closing date for applications 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017)
- 6 **Finance 2017/18**
  - 6.1 Financial report – see budget monitoring statement
  - 6.3 Payments to approve:
    - K Ward / HMRC, clerks wages £220.64
    - K Ward, expenses £35.19
    - Glendales for doc treatment £75.00+ VAT
  - 6.5 Accounts received after the agenda was posted
- 7 **Recommendations from Internal Audit** – see supplementary information 1
- 8 **Council policies-** to consider, review and approve the new policies as set out in supplementary information 2
  - 8.1 Anti-fraud and corruption policy
  - 8.2 Grant policy
  - 8.3 Training policy
- 9 **Review of contract procedures**–to consider, review and approve amended sections Standing Orders and Financial Regulations–see supplementary information 3
- 10 **Planning**
  - 10.1 Applications awaiting NDDC decision -none
  - 10.2 Application / Enforcement Decisions since last meeting
    - 10236 Unauthorised works to Listed Building – replacement windows at Stag Inn – Not expedient to enforce

- 62829 Demolition of existing dwelling and adjacent barn and erection of new dwelling with ancillary accommodation at East Nutcott – granted
- 62995 Plot 1, Prospect Farm reserved matters - granted

10.3 Applications received after the agenda posted.

**11 Report from District and County Councillor**

**12 The Common:**

12.1 To consider the scoping document attached in supplementary information 4

12.2 Update on grass cutting volunteers (Cllrs Warne & Phillips)

**13 Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm – verbal update**

**14 Highways & Footpaths**

14.1 Footpaths – update on replacement gate, and other matters noted (Cllr Warne)

14.2 Common/Children’s Play Area – verbal update

**15 War Memorial – to note progress, and any outstanding information needed to complete the grant application to the War Memorials Trust**

**16 Trinity Well – update on the repair works needed to the well and to consider and approve any quotes received.**

**17 IT equipment – to consider estimates and approve purchase of a laptop, scanner and relevant software**

**18 Correspondence**

Notification of road closures

**19 Shop/Post Office/School – verbal updates**

**20 Matters of Urgency raised by the Chairman for noting only**

**21 Next Meeting**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017, at 7.30pm, Rackenford School

Karen Ward (Clerk) Dated: 26 June 2017

**RACKENFORD AND CREACOME PARISH COUNCIL – 4 July 2017**  
**Agenda item 7: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2016/17 AUDIT,**  
**Supplementary Info 1**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION DATE</b>
1	Standing Orders are in NALC template format and have not been personalised to the council or noted as adopted.	<b>Accepted</b> – standing orders approved at May 2017 meeting, being reviewed for contracts	On agenda at July meeting
2	Transparency Code only shows minutes/agendas and year end accounts only and all required documents be published online. .	Partially accepted – this comment relates to historic agenda information such as financial reports which have never been published and in many instances are no longer available. Going forward, all agenda items are published.	ICO publication scheme review by September 2017.
3	S137 should be identified separately in the accounts even if there is no spending	<b>Accepted</b>	By July 2017 meeting
4	Grant funding policy – recommend that a policy be put in place	Refer to Council	On agenda at July meeting
5	Anti-fraud and corruption policy – recommend that a policy be put in place	Refer to Council	On agenda at July meeting
6	Training policy – recommend that a policy be put in place	Refer to Council	On agenda at July meeting
7	Risk management – recommend backup be placed in fire-proof cabinet away from office	<b>Accepted.</b> Filing cases already fire proof, and will be moved into garage. Backup memory stick to be kept in garage when Clerk is away. Backup of key documents also on email.	Implemented
8	Information Commissioners Office – ensure correct registration for data protection	Referring to DALC Legal topic Note 38, the council may be exempt – <b>Take advice and review alongside retention of records policy.</b>	Defer to September
9	Data protection policy – recommend that a policy be put in place	Refer to Council	On agenda at September meeting
10	Freedom of information – recommend that a policy be put in place	<b>Accepted.</b> Approved at May 2017 meeting	n/a – review annually
11	Complaints – recommend that a policy be put in place	<b>Accepted.</b> Approved at May 2017 meeting	n/a – review annually
12	Minutes should be consecutively numbered	<b>Accepted</b>	Implement from April 2017
13	Minutes should record “correct” rather than “true” record when signing	<b>Accepted</b>	Implement from April 2017
14	“Matters arising” should no longer be used	<b>Accepted</b> – items to be included on agenda	From July 2017 meeting
15	Payslips should be produced	Not required by Clerk, P60 produced at year end	n/a
16	Working from home allowance entitlement for Clerk	Minimal for hours worked (97p per month)	n/a
17	Staff appraisal / pay reviews should take place at least annually	Pay review undertaken at May meeting.	Appraisal in September 2017 (1 year in post)

18	Bank reconciliations should be counter signed by a member	<b>Accepted</b> , on May agenda	Implement from May 2017
19	Cheque stubs should be initialled by 2 councillors	<b>Accepted</b>	Implement from April 2017

## **Rackenford and Creacombe Parish Council – 4 July 2017**

### **Agenda item 8.1: Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Theft Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Rackenford and Creacombe Parish Council is committed to ensuring that public money, assets and resources for which it is responsible are safeguarded and the Council is committed to the prevention, detection and investigation of all forms of fraud, corruption and theft.

For the purpose of this policy, fraud, corruption and theft are defined as follows:

*Fraud:* The intentional distortion of financial statements or other records in order to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain. Fraud is the deliberate act by an individual or group of individuals, and is therefore always intentional and dishonest.

*Corruption:* The offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence a person's actions.

*Theft:* The dishonest appropriation of property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of that property.

#### **Culture of Openness and Honesty**

The policy is backed up by encouraging a culture of openness and honesty in all Council activities for both members and the Clerk. It has adopted the Code of Conduct for Members setting out the requirements regarding transparency in public life, and this is backed-up by a declaration made by all members when they join the council.

The Council also adheres to the Transparency Code in its publication of information and decision making.

#### **Prevention**

As elected representatives, members have a duty to ensure that the Council uses its resources prudently and legally. They must operate and adhere to the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and other approved policies. They must declare personal and pecuniary interests at each meeting, and also declare relationships, gifts and hospitality which impact on their Council activities.

The Council aims to employ staff who have high standards of honesty and integrity achieved through taking up references before appointing staff and will take disciplinary action against staff where fraud, corruption or theft is identified.

The Council has also adopted a statement of internal control which is reviewed and approved annually and will implement training on anti-fraud and corruption as required.

### **Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer**

The Clerk is also the Council's Responsible Finance Officer and therefore has statutory responsibility under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure proper arrangements for the administration of the Council's financial affairs. This role is supported by having an annual independent internal audit.

### **External Audit**

From 2017/18 there is no longer a requirement for the Council to be subject to external audit provided it complies with the Transparency Code, however the internal auditor or members of the public will still have the ability to engage with external audit should there be any concerns over Council activities.

### **Investigating allegation and suspected fraudulent or corrupt activity**

The adopted statement of internal control has been designed to deter and detect fraud. However if despite the best efforts of the Council a fraudulent or corrupt activity is suspected or alleged, then the Council will appoint an independent auditor to gather evidence and investigate as soon as is practical. Upon completion of the investigation, a report will be issued to the Clerk or Chairman as appropriate who will determine what further action, if any, needs to take place. This may include referring the matter to the District Council Monitoring Officer, External Auditor, Police, or taking disciplinary action.

It is important that:

- information around the allegation is dealt with consistently;
- an effective investigation by an experienced auditor takes place;
- any response and action taken is properly implemented; and
- that any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the relevant statutory Regulations.

### **What should you do, as a member of the public, if you suspect fraud, theft or corruption?**

Please note that your identity and personal details will be kept confidential in most cases by the Council. The Council will only divulge them when the law requires this or with your consent.

Note your suspicions in writing to the Clerk: Karen Ward, 8 Peard Road, Tiverton, EX16 4LQ. Mark the envelope "confidential" and include all relevant details such as what was observed, details of conversations, the date, time and name of the parties involved. Do not attempt to investigate the matter yourself.

If, after raising your concerns, you are not satisfied with the action taken, you may wish to take the matter to one of the following organisations:

- The National Association of Local Council (responsible for external audit appointments)
- The Devon Association of Local Councils
- Mid Devon District Council (Monitoring officer for member conduct)
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- The Local Government Ombudsman
- The National Audit Office

- HM Revenue & Customs
- The Information Commissioner's Office

## **RACKENFORD AND CREACOMBE PARISH COUNCIL – 4 July 2017**

### **Agenda item 8.2: PROPOSED GRANTS POLICY**

1. Rackenford and Creacombe Parish Council does not have a regular or annual process for awarding grants, however should a local group or organisation require funds, then these will be considered in exceptional circumstances. The applicant must demonstrate a clear need for financial support, and demonstrate how it benefits the Rackenford and Creacombe parish area or residents.
2. Requests must be in writing and sent to the Clerk at: 8 Peard Road, Tiverton, EX16 4LQ, or emailed to rackenfordparish@gmail.com.
3. Requests for funding must include:
  - Name of the group / organisation
  - Contact name and contact details
  - A summary of the scheme or project what you need the grant for
  - Total cost of the scheme / project
  - Amount of grant requested
  - A note on what other sources of funding have you sought
  - A Description of the benefits of the project / scheme, in particular describe how the Rackenford and Creacombe parish area or residents will benefit, and how many will benefit.
  - What will happen if your grant request is unsuccessful
  - Confirmation that you accept the Conditions set out below.
4. The council may request to see your most recent accounts or bank statements, and written constitution or aims and objectives before making a final decision.
5. Requests will only be considered at council meetings, please see website for future meeting dates.
6. The Council's decision will be final.

#### **Conditions**

1. The group / organisation must be a charity or not-for-profit.
2. Requests will **not** be considered for projects that discriminate on any grounds.
3. Grants will only be awarded to local groups or organisations and not individuals.
4. Groups / organisations must have their own bank account where at least 2 signatories are required for payments.
7. If the council chooses to award a grant, it is not an indication that future requests for funding will be also be successful.
8. Requests for retrospective funding will not be considered.
9. Only one request may be made each financial year.
10. If awarded, the grant must be used for the purpose for which it was awarded and within 6 months of being awarded. After 6 months from awarding, any unspent sums will be returned to the council within 2 weeks.
11. If requested, the group/ organisation will provide evidence on how any grant funds were awarded.
12. If grant funding is awarded, the parish council must be recognised in any advertising / marketing you carry out.

13. Canvassing of individual councillors is not permitted.

Draft, July 2017

**Rackenford and Creacombe Parish Council – 4 July 2017**  
**Agenda item 8.3: Draft Training policy for Councillors, Staff and Volunteers**

**Introduction**

The Council is committed to providing Councillors, the Clerk and any volunteers with the necessary training to ensure that the Council can meet its aims and objectives in providing services and representing the parish. This includes maintaining standards and keeping up to date with new legislation and recognised good practice.

**Training needs for Councillors**

- Newly elected Councillors will be provided with an induction file with sufficient information to allow them to undertake their duties upon election. This will include the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Further support will be provided by the Clerk as required.
- Newly elected members are encouraged to attend the DALC ‘New Councillors Short Course’ or other relevant induction training.
- Other training requirements for Councillors may be identified by themselves, the Chairman and Clerk. They are encouraged to attend on-going development training relevant to their office and can request to attend courses at any time. .
- The Clerk will notify Councillors of any courses brought to her attention including training events held by other councils, as well as relevant briefings and newsletters/magazines
- Council will also reimburse reasonable travel costs to training events.

**Training needs for the Clerk**

- A newly appointed Clerk will be encouraged to attend induction training.
- The Clerk will be expected to hold or be working towards the CiLCA qualification (as a minimum) and the Council will provide appropriate training and support in order to achieve this.
- The Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector such as new legislation and best practice, as well as being proactive in identifying their own training and development needs in order to achieve the aims of the Council and to meet Continuous Professional Development requirements.
- Training needs will be discussed through an annual appraisal, meetings and other informal discussions and highlighted to the Council.
- Relevant additional training may be requested at any time.

**Training needs for Volunteers**

Should the Council engage volunteers it will:

- Brief on relevant health and safety matters and the scope of their work prior to starting.
- Assess skills, knowledge and capacity to complete the task in hand.
- Brief on the safe use of any equipment provided by the Council.

Training for volunteers will not be beyond that which is necessary for their role.

**Review**

After training, Councillors and the Clerk will be expected to reflect on the training regarding its relevance, content and appropriateness, and where applicable, share new learning and information with the rest of the Council. The Council as a whole will monitor and review the training policy and budget at least annually.

**Training Budget**

Funds are allocated to a training budget each year to enable Councillors and the Clerk to attend training and conferences relevant to their position. Further, the Council subscribes to the Devon Association of Local Councils in order to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

## Rackenford and Creacombe Parish Council – 4 July 2017

### Agenda item 9: Review of contract procedures – supplementary information 3

1. At the May meeting of council it was resolved amend the Standing Orders to clarify the role of members and the Clerk in obtaining quotes, attending site visits and agreeing any changes to works, including stipulating minimum numbers of members in attendance and the need for written notes (Minute ref 1718-8).
2. In summary the current Standing Orders for Rackenford are:
  - Procedures for contracts under £1000 are set out in Financial Regulations:
  - Contracts over £1000 are subject to full tendering procedures:

The Financial Regulations have different thresholds!:

- Under £100 - no specific rules
  - Over £100 and under £3000 - the Clerk shall “strive to obtain 3 estimates”
  - Over £3000 - three or more quotations should be obtained for all orders and official orders or letters must be issued for all works or goods, unless a formal contract is in place.
  - Contracts over £60,000 - full tendering procedure with at least 3 tenders selected from an approved list
3. However, in reviewing the rules amendments to both documents are also needed to take into account the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. This Regulation sets out specific procedures that must be followed for contracts over £25,000. Below this threshold councils can establish their own rules for contracts and these rules must be set out and approved in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
  4. Appendix 1 sets out proposed new sections for both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to take into account both the new Regulations and further controls proposed by Council in May. Amendments are in **bold type**. Subject to approval the rules will now be:

Standing Orders:

- Procedures for contracts under £25,000 are set out in Financial Regulations:
- Contracts over £25,000 are subject to full tendering procedures in accordance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015

Financial Regulations:

- Under £100 - no specific rules
- Over £100 and under £3000 - the Clerk shall “strive to obtain 3 estimates”
- Over £3000 - three or more quotations unless a formal contract is in place.
- Contracts over £25,000 – tendering in accordance with the Regulations.

Site meetings and amendments to contracts

- Site meetings for all contracts will be organised by the Clerk and all members shall be invited.
- Meetings shall not take place unless at least 2 members are present
- At each site meeting the Clerk if in attendance, or a member will record the meeting and present the notes of the meeting at the next council meeting.
- Amendments to contracts can only be approved by council. No individual member can approve changes to orders or contracts.

5. Please also note: decisions can only be made at Council meetings: members cannot not issue orders or make contracts on behalf of the council outside of council meetings.

**It is recommended that council review and approve the revised standing orders and financial regulations as set out.**

K Ward, 15/6/17

Appendix

Revised Standing Orders Extract

**18 Financial controls and procurement**

- a The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
- i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
  - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. procurement policies (subject to standing order 18(c) below) including the setting of values for different procedures where a contract has an estimated value of less than **£25,000**.
- b Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c Financial regulations shall confirm that a proposed contract for the supply of goods, materials, services and the execution of works with an estimated value **in excess of £25,000 shall be procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 including use of the Contracts Finder website.**
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council **or the Public Contracts Regulation 2015**, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works over **£25,000** shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
  - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one

- vi. councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;  
tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed £164,176 (or other threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time) the council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 5, as amended) and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (SI No. 6, as amended) apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the council must comply with EU procurement rules.

## Revised Financial Regulations Extract

### **1. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES**

- 1.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 1.2. Order books **and orders** shall be controlled **and issued** by the RFO. **The RFO shall inform council of the names of the any individuals or firms from which quotes or tenders have been sought.**
- 1.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 **(2.1 in this extract)** below.
- 1.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 1.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

### **2. CONTRACTS**

- 2.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
  - a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
    - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
    - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
    - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
    - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;

- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
  - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. **Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations.**
  - c. **The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time).**
  - d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
  - e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
  - f. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
  - g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders [ 18 ], and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
  - h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than **£25,000** in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below [£3,000] and above [£100] the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above (**1.3 in this extract**) shall apply. **All quotes or tenders shall be in writing and addressed to and opened by the Clerk.**
  - i. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
  - j. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

### **3. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)**

- 3.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 3.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 3.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.]

### **4. SITE MEETINGS AND AMENDMENTS TO CONTRACTS**

- 4.1 **Site meetings for all contracts will be organised by the Clerk and all members shall be invited.**
- 4.2 **Meetings shall not take place unless at least 2 members are present**
- 4.3 **At each site meeting the Clerk if in attendance, or a member will record the meeting and present the notes of the meeting at the next council meeting.**
- 4.4 **Amendments to contracts can only be approved by council. No individual member can approve changes to orders or contracts.**

## **Rackenford and Creacombe Parish Council – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

### **Agenda item 12.1: The Common - Supplementary information 4**

A draft scoping document is set out below for Council comment. Please note £2000 grant from DCF has already been awarded for the ecological survey, but a decision is still awaited on the subsequent application of £6000 for the landscaping plans and consultation.

Other considerations:

- Council may wish to review the priority of the play area in the plan given that the current equipment is coming to the end of its useful life. Similarly, priority for those facilities used by the school?
- Depending on the final project, ongoing costs will need to be built into the annual budget and reserves – in particular grass cutting, tree works, maintenance of pathways, increased insurance costs, future replacements etc.

### **DRAFT - Invitation for expressions of interest Rackenford Common Regeneration Project**

#### **Introduction**

Rackenford Common is owned by the parish council and extends to approximate 5ha, in three defined areas. The Common was predominantly culm grass some years ago but since then it has become choked with invasive woodland, alder and willow to the extent that the culm grass and other rare flora are at threat. There is also mature oak and beech to the boundaries.

A small area of the Common is managed and houses a hard court tennis enclosure, an aging children's play area and small football pitch. This mown area hosts an annual firework display, primary school sports day, Village Day activities and previously a biannual beer festival

#### **Objective of the regeneration project**

In summary, the intention of the regeneration project is to reclaim a large proportion of the Common to grassland and form a pathway around the largest section.

The vision includes having a Common that is usable by the whole community for recreational, educational and social activities. To achieve this a large percentage of shrubby woodland would need to be cleared to allow the construction of an orbital metalled pathway, to meander between specimen established trees, with hard surface spur paths leading to points of interest and usage. The pathway would connect the top of the village with the village community shop and play area without walking on the road.

#### **Project stages**

The Council believes a phased approach to the project will enable it to have the flexibility to establish costs, funding and priorities at each stage. It has initially identified the following key phases:

1. Ecological/environmental survey
2. Landscape architectural plan for consultation
3. Village consultation on the plan
4. Final landscape architectural plan to tendering stage
5. Arboreal works
6. Ground works (ecological)
7. Ground works (structural)
8. New play area
9. Exercise equipment
10. Improved football pitch
11. Seating stations
12. Maintenance equipment

Other long term consideration include possible provision for a Devon Air Ambulance landing site and public toilets.

### **Location**

Ordnance survey map reference: SS8518SW

Google map reference (approximate centre of the Common;

50 degrees, 57' 11" north

3 degrees, 38' 19" west

### **Current position**

The Council has been awarded funding to carry out the phase 1 ecological survey, and is current bidding for funding to carry out phases 2 to 4 for the landscape plan and consultation.

### **Scope of works**

The Council is initially looking for expressions of interest from a suitable qualified, experienced and insured company to produce the landscape plans and potentially oversee the ecological survey.

Subject to plans being approved and funds being awarded, the Council may wish to engage the company to project manage the latter phases of the project.

The Council is only looking for expression of interest at this stage as the works will be subject to a tendering exercise in due course. Any expressions of interest received will be invited to tender.

### **Contact**

Please submit expressions of interest to Karen Ward (Parish Clerk), 8 Peard Road Tiverton, Devon EX16 4LQ, or email [rackenfordparish@gmail.com](mailto:rackenfordparish@gmail.com).

Similarly if you if you require further information or wish to visit the site, please contact the Clerk.

**Disclaimer**

The information in this document is provided in good faith and to the best of our knowledge. The Council reserves the right to amend or withdraw the project at any stage.

Expressions of interest and tenders will be submitted at the company's expense and the Council accepts no liability for expenses incurred.