

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7th November 2017

Present: Cllrs Lamb (chair), Child, Mathews, Cox and Hyland, DCC and NDDC Cllrs Jeremy Yabsley (items 1718-79 to 1718-83 only), K Ward (clerk), and 5 members of the public.

Meeting opened 7.30pm

1718-79 Apologies – Cllr Warne

1718-80 Public Forum

There was a query on the future of the play area. Cllr Lamb explained this would be covered later on the agenda.

1718-81 Declaration of Interests - none

1718-82 Minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2017 and 26th October 2017

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

1718-83 Report from the District and County Councillor

Cllr Yabsley provided a written statement on education funding and stated that the county council was putting pressure on local MPs for additional funding as rural schools are not getting a fair share of the grant funding.

The DCC highways conferences and NDDC parish forums are being held this month.

NDDC will be collecting green waste through to December from next year in response to comments from residents.

The Highways Community Fund is available for parishes to bid for small local works such as drainage, noting that the TAP Fund will not accept bids for this type of works in the future. Cllr Yabsley's Locality Fund is also available for bids from the parish council and other local groups.

DCC has submitted an application for funding the major roadworks on the A361 South Molton to Barnstaple section.

There is likely to be two days enquiry on the Local Plan in January, and this will probably delay approval of the Plan for a further three months.

Cllr Lamb noted that there were notifications on road closures for the parish, and said there were overgrown hedges on the suggested diversion route which needed addressing.

Cllr Child said there had been a meeting between residents and NDDC on the Batsworthy windfarm and a number of action points were agreed, but that no further action seems to have taken place. If the developers fail to provide further noise monitoring NDDC may fund their own study. Cllr Yabsley agreed to maintain dialogue with NDDC officers on the matter.

1718-84 The Common

- a. Environmental and tree surveys: the Clerk read out an update from Devon Wildlife Trust on the progress on the surveys, noting the reports will soon be finalised.
- b. Play area: the Council acknowledged that there had been complaints regarding the play area and that a new play area is a high priority within the Common regeneration. Cllr Warne has been tasked with talking to the school and local interested groups about what types of equipment they would like. Cllr Hyland said the play area in Sampford Peverell was a good example. Morchard Bishop also. Cllr Lamb stated a key problem with the existing site was drainage so consideration may be given to relocating the play area to the area behind the car park.

Actions:

Cllr Warne to speak to local interest groups about the future of the play area.

Cllr Hyland to visit some neighbouring play areas and report back on good examples.

Clerk to submit the play area to NDDC as a priority for any future S106 funding.

- c. Landscape architects: There was a general discussion on the next stage of the Common regeneration project, and it was agreed that the Council should aim to have landscape architect quotes available for consideration and approval for the meeting in January. It was noted that the designs would need to take into account the findings of the ecological and tree survey and take into account initial aspirations of the Council. The draft designs would then go to public consultation before final designs are drawn up. Cllr Lamb noted that implementation of any agreed final designs would be subject to funding and may therefore be a long term goal.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact a number of architects for quotes, the scoping document prepared in consultation with all members of the Council, and with a view to obtaining quotes in time for the January meeting.

Actions: Clerk to action.

- d. Grass cutting: no progress to report. Cllr Hyland asked if it was possible to roll the football pitch in the winter so it is in a better condition for the summer. Cllr Cox stated that as a minimum the grass on the pitch needs cutting at least fortnightly. It was **AGREED** that the Council should specify the minimum works required and George Phillips be asked to submit a quote for the works.

Action: Cllr Matthews to speak to George Phillips.

- e. General maintenance: Meadow View residents have been cutting back trees and bramble impeding on their gardens and also clearing some scrub on the banks. It was agreed that as the Council is looking to regenerate the Common no further work or planting is carried out, but that in any case, as landowners, the Council must be informed of any proposed works by residents in advance. Cllr Lamb stated that the residents of Meadow View would be specifically consulted on any plans near their properties.

- f. Events on the Common: The Clerk advised that, legally, access to the Common was limited to rights of access by foot only and does not extend to events or festivals. Therefore any local groups wishing to use the Common other than for general access should have permission from the Council first, including the fireworks display, school events, parking for funerals, beer festival, plant sales etc. The intention is not to prevent events, but to clarify insurance responsibilities and make sure of no timetable clashes. The Council should be informed at least 1 week before any event. It was **RESOLVED** to draft a licence agreement for permission to use the Common for organised events.

Action: Cllr Hyland to draft a licence agreement.

1718-85 Highways and Footpaths

- a. Footpaths – defer to next meeting
- b. Bus shelter – Cllr Lamb said that he had had requests for a shelter for children waiting for the school bus as they are currently using Trinity Well. There was a general discussion about the merits of a fixed marquee on the Common, but it was noted this had been previously discussed and dismissed as too expensive, and also concerns noted about a permanent building on the Common. It was **AGREED** that consideration of a shelter / marquee should be discussed in the overall proposals for the Common.

1718-86 War Memorial

- a. The Clerk explained that despite considerable effort, she had been unable to obtain a third estimate for cleaning the memorial. Following clarification of the two quotes that had been received it was **RESOLVED** to submit a grant application to the War Memorials Trust for cleaning the memorial, the preferred option being the higher quote due to the cleaning method, and to agree a maximum of £500 as the Council's share of the cleaning cost.

Action: Clerk to submit a grant application as agreed.

- b. Curtilage works: it was **RESOLVED** to remove the existing rails, posts and trees, and that Cllr Phillips should undertake the work. It was further agreed to defer a decision on any replacements depending on any visual improvement required or damage from cars.

Action: Cllr Phillips to undertake works as agreed.

1718-87 Rackenford Fireworks Display

Cllr Child, on behalf of the Shop committee, fed back that the event had been successful and that more people had attended and more donations received than expected. This, along with a discount on the fireworks meant that the shortfall was much lower than anticipated. Cllr Child noted that for future years, a second BBQ was needed as well as a new marquee. After some clarification, it was confirmed that the Council had resolved to grant the shop £500 towards the insurance, but that as their financial position was improved, the Council would not make a contribution towards the lights (agenda item 12).

There was a general discussion about whether the Council should take over the running of the event from next year and it was **AGREED** to a defer a decision to next Summer pending the costs of the Council's insurance renewal.

1718-88 Trinity Well: Repairs works are progressing, nothing further to report.

1718-89 Snow Warden Agreement

The Clerk referred to the written agreement from DCC and the conditions set out in the agreement. It was also noted that DCC will not automatically fill grit bins unless it is reported that they are empty.

Action: Cllr Lamb to speak to Cllr Phillips to confirm that the Council was compliant with the agreement. Clerk then to confirm with DCC.

1718-90 Request for funding: The request from the shop was refused as per minute 1718-87.

1718-91 Planning

- a. Applications for consultation: after discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to submit the following responses:
- 63886: Alterations to dwelling together with insertion of windows, doors and chimney flue at the Stage Inn, Rackenford – “supports the application”
 - 63887: Listed building application for alterations to dwelling together with insertion of windows, doors and chimney flue at the Stage Inn, Rackenford – “supports the application”
- b. The following planning application decisions from NDDC were noted:
- 63597 Retrospective application for continued use of polytunnel, Creacombe Parsonage – granted
 - 63062 Highfield Farm erection of 2 general purpose agricultural buildings including landscaping works and alterations to vehicular access – granted
 - 63069 Highfield Farm outline application for erection of one replacement dwelling - granted
 - 62724 Reserved matters for erection of one dwelling, Plot 3 Prospect Farm – approved

- c. Applications received after the agenda posted: Reference 63979 Erection of agricultural workers dwelling at Thornfield Farm
Defer item until Councillors have looked at the plans, response by the deadline of 27 November under delegated responsibilities.

1718-92 Finance

- a. 2017/18 budget monitoring: The Clerk referred to the budget report provided and noted the cash balance was high due to grants and precepts received but not yet spent. No other concerns to report.
- b. 2018/19 draft budget: The Clerk referred to the draft budget provided noting that NDDC has yet to provide the council tax information. The draft has been based on the 2017/18 budget, updated for known costs as required. The draft budget was **NOTED**.
- c. Reserves policy: The Clerk recommended that the Council reviews its reserves and also introduces a reserves policy setting out what reserves it needs, their purpose and target funding level. There was a general discussion on the immediate and longer term asset replacement needs and costs, but it was **AGREED** that a Reserves Policy be drafted for discussion at the January budget meeting.
Action: Clerk to draft a Reserves Policy.
- d. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:
- K Ward / HMRC clerks wages £273.85
 - K Ward expenses £26.06
 - K Ward reimburse for purchase of IT equipment £498.97 (£415.81 + VAT)
 - Grant Thornton external audit fees £120.00 (£100.00 + VAT)
 - S Hagley repair works to Trinity Well £505.00
 - Rackenford Community Shop grant for fireworks insurance £500.00

1718-93 Batsworthy Wind Farm: See minute 1718-83 for latest update.

1718-94 Shop / School update

Cllr Child reported there were more volunteers at the shop and they had made a small profit for the year. The Federation's Head of Primaries is currently on sick leave, but no other matters to report.

1718-95 Correspondence

A complaint had been received regarding the condition of the play area and an update of items from the Devon Association of Local Councils.

1718-96 Next meeting: Tuesday 16th January 2018, 7.30pm at Rackenford School

Meeting closed 9.15pm

Signed as a correct record:

Date:
