**HOLCOMBE ROGUS PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee**

**Held on Thursday 13th October 2022 at 7.00pm**

**APPROVED**

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| **10.1** | **Present:**  Councillors: John Butler (Chair of Planning), Nikki Orchard, Sally Barker, Adam Pilgrim and Jane Lock  Leslie Findlay – Parish Clerk  8 Members of the Public |  |
| **10.2** | **Apologies:**  Apologies received from Councillor George Triggs |  |
| **10.3** | **Conflicts of Interest:** Cllr Barker declared a personal interest in item 2.4.1 and left the room whilst the Application was discussed. |  |
| **10.4**  **10.4.1**  **10.4.2** | *The Council discussed the following applications:*  *1* ***22/01736/CAT*** *Notification of intention to cut back a group of hedgerow trees of Maple, Lime and Hornbeam by 2-3m level with boundary fence within a Conservation Area at Timewells Orchard.*  *Councillors had no objections to this application.*  **22/00907/FULL** Retention of disused quarry for use as two Firing Ranges at Devon & Cornwall Constabulary Pondground Quarry (additional information).  *Further to the Council’s submissions to MDDC dated 15th June 2022 and 6th September 2022 a further meeting of our planning committee was held on the 13th October 2022. The meeting was attended by members of our local community as well as residents in nearby Greenham who are seriously affected by the firing range activities and the proposals being put forward by Devon and Cornwall Police (‘the Police Authority’)*  *These are the further comments of the Council*  *1.* ***Addendum to Police Authority Noise Management Plan dated 7th October 2022***  *In relation to the Addendum to the Noise Management Pl dated 7th October 2022 provided on behalf of the Police Authority (including data provided by Acoustics Consultants Ltd), it appears that the Addendum was not based on a typical day’s shooting but nevertheless it is our understanding that the noise levels shown by the Addendum are not materially different in many respects from the readings taken by Parker Jones Acoustics as set out in the Report dated 21st April 2021. However, no analysis of the findings of Acoustics Consultants Ltd has been provided and they do not dispute the noise assessment of Parker Jones Acoustics.*  *Moreover, the Addendum states that the Police Authority can in circumstances that it determines to be exceptional increase the amount and intensity of use of the firing range even though it is already at an unacceptable level. This provides no protection at all for the local community and is unacceptable.*  *2.* ***Intolerable noise impact****. The noise from the operation of the firing range is making life intolerable for those living nearby and adversely affecting their health and wellbeing.*  *It would in the Council’s opinion be unconscionable to continue to inflict so much pain and suffering on the community.*  *3.* ***55dB benchmark****. The submissions made to MDDC clearly show that a noise benchmark of 55dB has been widely accepted as an appropriate benchmark for firing range uses. Considering that the unchallenged Noise Impact Assessment carried out by Parker Jones Acoustics (see below) shows readings of up to 78dB it is not surprising that the local community is up in arms.*  *3.* ***Due diligence by MDDC***  *Our Council is concerned by the failure of MDDC itself to require or to carry out a robust and objective noise assessment. In the event, the Noise Impact Assessment carried by Parker Jones Acoustics has been provided and its conclusions are not disputed by the Police Authority or MDDC. There has been a failure to carry out an ecology assessment including consideration of any adverse impact on the Grand Western Canal (a Local Nature Reserve /Country Park and Conservation Area), wildlife, other protected habitats, and sites, including heritage assets. Given the level of noise caused by the firing range activities, it seems inconceivable that there are no material adverse impacts.*  *4****. Planning Policy***  *MDDC are referred to the letter to MDDC dated 7th June 2022 from Andy & Alison Hill with an analysis of applicable planning policy.*  ***Conclusions***   1. *After having considered the numerous objections to the Planning Application submitted by the Police Authority and the responses made by officers of MDDC, it is very difficult not to take the view that MDDC has so far in this case abandoned the high standard of due diligence that our Council has come to expect. This needs to be rectified.* 2. *It has been clearly demonstrated by the large number of objections from the local community and the comprehensive and lucid Noise Impact Assessment dated 21st April 2021 (and subsequent Addenda) prepared by Parker Jones Acoustics that the noise levels arising from the use of the Poundground Quarry are far in excess of those that any reasonable person can be expected to endure. The Police Authority has not disputed the findings of Parker Jones Acoustics.* 3. *On the one hand, it has been clearly demonstrated by submissions made to MDDC that there is a widely accepted benchmark of 50dB by which to assess the acceptability or otherwise of noise levels relating to firing range activities. On the other hand, the Police Authority is, it would appear, seeking planning permission without any effective and enforceable controls on the noise levels arising the firing range activities. This is totally unacceptable.* 4. *Unless the Police Authority agrees in unequivocal terms and in legally binding form to restrict its use of the Pondground Quarry to accord with the 50dB benchmark, this inevitably means that the Police Authority will need to move its operations to an alternative site that does not have the damaging effects being experienced in our community.* 5. *It is not an option for the Police Authority to continue to subject our community and those living nearby to the level of harm currently being suffered.* 6. *As matters currently stand planning permission should be refused.* |  |
|  | There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.15pm. |  |

**Cllr John Butler**

**Chair of Planning**

**Planning Committee**

**Holcombe Rogus Parish Council**