

**HOLCOMBE ROGUS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the January Meeting**  
**Held in the King George V Memorial Hall on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm**

**APPROVED**

**1.1**      **Present:**      **ACTION**  
**Councillors:** Adam Pilgrim (Chairman), Frances Freeman, Rupert Snook, Sally Barker, Jane      **TO BE**  
Lock, Nikki Orchard & James Anderson      **TAKEN**  
**District Councillors** Gill Westcott & Jane Lock  
Mr Gordon Czapiewski – P3 Co-ordinator  
Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Mrs Leslie Findlay (*The Clerk left the meeting*  
*at 7.40pm*)  
One resident

**1.2**      **Apologies:**  
County Councillor Ray Radford (report attached).

**1.3**      **Co-option of New Councillor**  
James Anderson was co-opted onto the Council and signed the declaration of acceptance office, witnessed by the Proper Officer.

**OPEN FORUM**

Four issues were raised in the Open Forum.

1. A request for an update on the verge ploughing for Black Lane. Clerk confirmed that an email had been sent to the new Highways Officer requesting an update.
2. It was suggested that there should be an organised Litter Pick around the village. Councillors agreed it was an excellent suggestion and should be organised by the Community. Mr Czapiewski volunteered to organise the event and it was agreed it should take place in March. To be advertised in the Parish News and on Facebook. **GC/LF**  
**SB**
3. The 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D Day will be celebrated this year and it was agreed that Holcombe Rogus should celebrate this important Anniversary. Mr Czapiewski kindly volunteered to co-ordinate the event which will be organised by the community. The Parish Council approved a grant of up to £750 to fund the event and to cover any Hall costs that arise on that day. Cllr Orchard will contact the Headmaster of the Primary School to inform them that this event will be taking place and to hopefully co-ordinate it with the school. Cllr Barker will advertise the event in the Parish News. **GC**  
**NO**
4. The road out by Wiseburrow Farm has not been sorted and there is flooding on the road and holes in the road which return very quickly after being repaired. This issue has been ongoing for several years and no solution has yet been found. Cllr Snook confirmed that the PC regularly report the issue to DCC but one of the causes is that there is a stream that runs parallel to the road which is not cleared and causes the flooding. This is a landowner's responsibility. Clerk to raise the issue with the new Highways Officer and Cllr Radford and to request a meeting with Cllr Snooks to review the issue. **RS**  
**LF**

**1.4**      **Declaration of Interests:** Cllr Lock declared an interest in item 1.7.3 as she is a District Councillor at MDDC and therefore abstained from the vote.

**1.5**      **Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters arising**  
The November Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record and unanimously approved by all Councillors.

**1.5.1**      **Matters Arising:**  
There have been no new reports regarding the dogs at Ford Barn Farm.

Timewells House hedge – As the owner has failed to comply with the request to cut the hedge back the Clerk was requested to write a letter to the Highways at DCC requesting them to take action to have the hedge cut back.

LF

**1.6 Environment**

**1.6.1 Public Rights of Way:**

Cllr Freeman has received new forms for completion by March. There is a new person to replace Ros Davies (P3 Co-ordinator at DCC), name not known yet. The privacy sign at South View has been removed. It has been pointed out to the resident that South View is a right of way, for access to the sewage works.

**1.6.2 Canal Report**

Cllr Pilgrim reported that MDDC will be reducing its contribution to the canal by 15% over the next two years. MDDC allocates its Canal payment via the Discretionary Grant system. The Parish council was unhappy with this and agreed to support Councillor Pilgrim in attempting to persuade MDDC to remove the canal funding from the Discretionary scenario. Councillor Lock abstained. *Full report attached.*

**1.6.3 Quarry Liaison Meeting**

The meeting was attended by District Councillor Lock. There were complaints about the lorries backing up on the road. Noise levels with the blasting continues to be monitored and the school had complained about the mud on the road.

**1.7 Highways**

**1.7.1** There were no reports of work to report or have been received.

**1.7.2** Councillors discussed the quotes received:

1. Strimming and weed spraying – MG Groundcare  
Weed spraying from Pound Hill up to the Court £75 x 2  
Strim vegetation along stream bottom of South Street £48 x3  
*Councillors approved these two quotes. Clerk to action*

LF

**1.7.3 2. Grass cutting of playpark**

| Contractor                           | Number of visits | Cost excl vat | Comments                          |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Grass cutting in the playpark</i> |                  |               |                                   |
| MDDC                                 | 7                | £586.47       | Cut and drop & strimming          |
| Countrywide                          | 7                | £789.00       | Cut and drop & strimming          |
| Countrywide                          | 7                | £1632.00      | Cut and collect grass & strimming |
| <i>Cutting of hedges</i>             |                  |               |                                   |
| MDDC                                 | 2                | £352.11       |                                   |
| Countrywide                          | 2                | £342.00       |                                   |

*Councillors confirmed they did not require cut and collect for the grass cutting in the playpark and therefore approved the quote from MDDC for the cutting of the grass and for the hedges. Clerk to action*

LF

- 1.7.4** 3. DCC verges - MDDC £434.68 excl vat - *Councillors approved this quote for the DCC verges to be cut by MDDC. Clerk to action*

LF

**1.8 Planning**

**1.8.1** To inform Council of decisions made by MDDC:

**23/01664/CAT** Notification of intention to coppice 2 Ash trees and remove 1 ash tree within the Conservation Area at Buehills – *No objections*

**23/01707/CAT** Notification of intention to remove 1 Tulip tree (T1) within a Conservation Area at Buehills – *No objections*

**23/01722/CAT** Notification of intention to remove 4 branches and shorten 2-4 branches from 1 Sycamore Tree at Pear Close – *No objections*

**23/01712/CAT** Notification of intention to remove a group of trees within the Conservation Area at Webbers Church of England Primary School – *No objections*

**23/01146/FULL** Erection of a replacement agricultural workers dwelling at Wild Geese Acres, Greenham Reach – *granted full planning permission with conditions*

**1.8.2** The Minutes from the Planning Meeting Minutes dated 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 24 were approved and signed by the Chairman. *These are available to view on the website.*

**1.9** **The Mary Fewings Playpark**

**1.9.1** There were no comments on the completion of the December monthly inspection. Inspections will continue in the next financial year to be carried out by MDDC.

**1.9.2** The Clerk has received notification from Ashfords Solicitor that the Land Registry has now been completed.

**1.9.3** It was agreed that the discussion for a new park bench would be deferred to the February meeting.

**1.10** **Clerk/Finance**

**1.10.1** Income received since the last meeting:

Monthly interest in November £40.17

Monthly interest in December £23.68

**1.10.2** It was resolved that the following expenditure was approved for payment by the RFO:

| Amount £   | BACS/cheque | Payable to         | Comments  |
|--|-------------|--------------------|---|
| Approved outside of Council meeting as no meeting in December (Councillors emailed their approval) |             |                    |   |
| 58.80  | BACS        | SCRIBE             | For Health check of the accounts  |
| 837.82   | BACS        | DCC                | For the two signposts, in the village and Durleymoore Cross. From Solar Funds |
| 195.60   | BACS        | Defib Warehouse    | New Defibrillator pads  |
| January expenditure:   |             |                    |   |
| 50.00  | BACS        | Devon Communities  | Annual subscription   |
| 25.00+ vat   | BACS        | Vision ICT         | Website training for Clerk  |
| 1500.00  | BACS        | Village Hall Trust | Grant for broadband (one year only) & LED lights                              |

**1.10.3** Councillors also approved for the Clerk to book Councillor training for Cllr Anderson.

**1.10.4** Councillors approved and signed the Statement of Accounts for January. *All documents available to view on the website.*

**1.10.5** The Year End Health check carried out on the SCRIBE accounts was completed by SCRIBE and given a clear bill of health with one minor adjustment.

**1.11** **Correspondence**

All correspondence had been circulated to the Councillors.

Councillors were reminded that the State of the District Debate was on Wed 20<sup>th</sup> March and to inform the Clerk if they wished to attend.

There had only been one response to the project on the DRIP Lyner early flood warning system so the parish will not be participating. Cllr Snook will be contacting Lucy Jefferson to discuss the flooding at Wiseburrow.

Councillors and residents are reminded to participate in the survey of Rural Services within Mid Devon. Details have been published in the Parish News.

**1.12 Matters brought forward for information or future agenda.**

**1.12.1** The deterioration of the Old Vicarage Wall was raised and although not a Parish Council matter it was agreed that Cllr Barker could contact the gardener of the property to inform them that there are loose stones falling on to the footpath. **ALL**

**1.12.2** Councillor vacancies We have two vacancies, if anyone is interested, please contact the Clerk for further information.

There being no further business the meeting closed 8.20. The next Full Council Meeting will be on Thursday 22nd February 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall. **ALL**

Adam Pilgrim  
Chairman Holcombe Rogus Parish Council

**CANAL REPORT**

MDDC's Cabinet has agreed to reduce its contribution to the Canal's costs by 15% for the next two years. This means that it will now only pay 20% of what I believe from history, should be its 50% share of the costs; the other 50% paid by DCC.

The Canal Manager is understandably very concerned and feels that he may no longer be able to maintain his excellent service level.

Members of the GWCJAC had objected to this cut, submitting several heartfelt messages emphasising the value of this Canal to our communities and to Devon's tourism.

MDDC allocates its Canal payment via the Discretionary Grant system; allowing it to reduce its payment without its being out of order. I spoke at the Cabinet meeting disputing the validity of this approach because of the historical agreement that MDDC should pay 50% and DCC the other 50%. This has not been acknowledged by MDDC which argues that the Canal is owned and managed by DCC so, in essence, DCC should be pleased to receive anything from MDDC!

I intend work to persuade MDDC to remove the canal funding from the Discretionary scenario. If you support this, I can do this on behalf of the Parish Council and hope that the other Canal Parishes will follow. If necessary, I will take this forward as an individual.

Cllr Adam Pilgrim

## COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Yes, we are into another year, so I hope you all had a good Xmas and this year will be good.

We are now into the time when we have to prepare for the next coming Council's budget. AS always it will be difficult to arrive at a balanced budget, which we have to present to Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. As the budget has not been agreed yet, I can't tell you what the Council Tax increase will be, DCC together with the Police and Fire Authority have to submit it to the MDDC who will then send out the Council Tax request.

The Senior Leadership Team has worked extensively with the service leads and finance officers to forecast costs and to develop plans to manage net service costs within affordable financial target

At Month 8 it is estimated that budgets will overspend by £4.5 million, comprising the £2.9m of in-year additional savings still to be identified plus net £1.6m in other variances. This is an improvement of £9.1 million compared to the Month 6 forecast.

This report provides a brief update on progress in this regard and presents the proposed service budget targets for 2024/25 totalling £743.4 million, a net increase of £43.8 million or 6.3% compared to the 2023/24 adjusted budget.

In terms of the Budget for 2024/25, inflationary pressures continue to be felt across the economy, local government and our partners and social care is particularly impacted by increases to the national living wage. Within the proposed Service Targets, it is proposed to allow for £22.8 million in total inflationary pressures. The rates of inflation used depend on the activity and any anticipated contractual obligations.

The inflation rate has continued to fall, and in November was 3.9%.  
The National Living Wage increase also drives an inflationary impact on our costs.

In the Autumn Statement, announced on 22 November, the Government confirmed the National Living Wage will increase by 9.8% to £11.44 per hour. The Target Budgets set out below include £25.7 million for this additional cost. Despite the rate of inflation falling in recent months the impact of inflation on cost of living, business and service delivery costs places sustained financial pressures nationally, and this contributes to the ongoing impact in terms of price and demand pressures on the Authority's budget.

This is reflected in the proposed Target Budgets with investment of £48.5 million to cover inflation and national living wage plus £44.9 million to cover demand and other spending pressures and priorities. To enable the authority to set a balanced budget, savings, alternative funding and additional income of £49.6 million have been identified. Overall, there is additional funding of £43.8 million or 6.3% for services next year.

It is not currently planned to support the proposed budget targets by using general reserve balances. This reflects a strategy of 'living within our means' and as such to set service budgets that are affordable within anticipated income and funding totals for next year.

The proposed service revenue budget targets for the 2024/25 financial year are set out in the table below:

2023/24 Adjusted Base Budget Inflation and National Living Wage Other Growth and Pressures Savings, Alternative Funding and Additional Income 2024/25  
Target Budget Net Change 2023/24 to 2024/25

|                           | 23/24     | Inflation | 24/25     | Net Change | % change |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Integrated Adult Services | £340,245, | £29,887   | £360,746, | £20,501    | 6%       |
| Children & Young People   | £206,278  | £9,795    | £227,785  | £21,507    | 10.4%    |

|                                  |          |         |          |          |       |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|----------|-------|
| Public Health & Communities      | £21,678  | £533    | £289     | (£755)   | -3.5% |
| Corporate Services               | £49,255  | £2,160  | £48,495  | (£1,310) | -2.6% |
| Climate, Environment & Transport | £81,619  | £6,144  | £85,482  | £3,863   | 4.7%  |
| Totals                           | £699,575 | £48,519 | £743,382 | £43,807  | 6.3%  |

Please be aware, these are only provisional budget figures, yet to be agreed by Cabinet and then Full Council.

We are trying to get on top of the pothole/defect position, the weather has not helped. To give you an understanding of the current level of resources, at present there are up to 26 defect gangs across the County undertaking pothole repairs, supported by 2 additional sub-contractor gangs. With regards to serviceability repairs, we currently have around 8 internally resourced Milestone gangs carrying out larger scale repairs across the County. In addition to this they are being supported by two externally resourced gangs and further work is underway as we speak in potentially bringing in one or two further sub-contractor gangs. Lastly, all four dragon patching gangs are on programmed work this week and will continue whilst the weather remains favourable

Regards,  
Ray

Ray Radford  
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Willand & Uffculme Division  
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