

**HOLCOMBE ROGUS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Held in the King George V Memorial Hall on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024**  
**At 7.00pm**  
**DRAFT**

**1.1 Present:**

Chairman Adam Pilgrim

Parish Councillors: Jane Lock, Nikki Orchard, James Anderson, Frances Freeman and Sally Barker

District Councillors Gill Wescott and Jane Lock

Clerk Leslie Findlay

7 members of the public

**2.1 Apologies:**

Parish Councillor Rupert Snook

**3.1 Presentation by Lucy Jefferson the Culm Catchment Officer**

The Connecting the Culm project is working with nature and local communities to help make the River Culm and its catchment better for wildlife and people. This was an update on how the project is progressing around the area. Lucy is working closely with the local farmers to improve soil management where appropriate and allow flood plains to assist with flooding issues. She will be concentrating on the River Lyner in the near future. Local communities can have access to flood cameras and guage boards and possibly time lapse cameras in order that residents could view on an app if a road is flooded and therefore inaccessible. These cameras are very large and the Parish Council will discuss this further at a Parish Council meeting.

**3.1 Minutes of the previous Meeting**

The Minutes from the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

There were no outstanding issues from the last meeting.

**5.1 Issues raised by the Parish**

A resident raised their considerable concern at the destruction of the verges in the narrow roads around the Parish. There was a lack of consideration from many of the drivers who had large vehicles and were on contract work. *The Chairman explained that this issue has been raised by the Parish Council on several occasions with DCC but they are unable to assist. Farmers are responsible for clearing the ditches but the ownership between highways and landowners is sometimes rather hazy. If a verge has collapsed it was suggested that this is reported on the DCC website and to ensure the exact location is marked the app "3 words" will pinpoint it exactly.*

**6.1 Reports from the Councillors**

All the reports from the Councillors were available to view and are attached.

**7.1 There were no reports from the Parish**

**8.1** There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.35pm

All the reports will be published on the website. The next Annual Parish Meeting will be in April 2025.

**Adam Pilgrim**  
**Chairman**

Attached – All Reports

**HRPC Chairman's Report 2023-4**

I am privileged to work with our Councillors who take their service to our Community very seriously. We act as a link between Residents and the District and County Councils.

There is always a desire to keep the Council fresh and properly representative. Councillors Frances Freeman and James Anderson have been valuable additions in the past year.

Thanks to our Clerk to the Parish, Leslie Findlay, Councillors do not have to worry about the detail of the Council's administration since she ensures that all its systems are working properly. Our Auditors have been very complimentary about her work.

The Council meets monthly except for August and December. Councillors make good use of emails to draw attention to matters that may need to be discussed at meetings.

The agendas of forthcoming meetings are published on the village's noticeboards and the Parish Council's own website along with the Minutes of the previous meetings. Members of the Public are always free to attend meetings and question Councillors during a defined part of the meeting.

I'm always pleased to see the Public attend so that the way in which we work can be seen. Hopefully, some may realise that a Parish Councillor's role can be a pleasant way to help our Community. Each Councillor has an aspect of the Community to concentrate on, often one in which they have a personal interest. There is a Vacancy on the Parish Council that you could fill.

Councillor Adam Pilgrim

**Holcombe Rogus Parish Council Planning Report for 2023/4**

Cllr Adam Pilgrim was appointed as Chairman of the Holcombe Rogus Parish Council Planning Committee following the 2023 Annual Meeting after Cllr John Butler had retired. The Committee now includes all our Parish Councillors to maximise the chances of its being Quorate on any occasion that the Planning Committee needs to meet.

One Application particularly occupied the Committee and our residents in the past year or so.

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary had been using Pondground Quarry for many years as a firearms' training ground with successive ten-year permissions granted by Mid Devon District Council. However, from 2014, no new permission was sought, for unknown reasons. Neither the Constabulary nor Mid Devon District Council pursued securing a new permission. Residents felt that the continuing (unauthorised) firearms' training resulted in

increasingly disruptive local noise levels. Investigation of this revealed the lack of permission for this use of the quarry. Consequently, the Constabulary applied for a new permission; 22/00907/FULL which was Refused in November 2023.

Otherwise, the few Applications and Decisions considered by our Planning Committee have been relatively non-controversial.

Our Councillors have done their best to remain impartial and mindful of the current Planning Policies, undertaking updating training sessions when available.

### Clerk Report April 2023 – March 2024

#### FINANCE

1. Mary Fewings Playpark: After the big expenditure last year and all the equipment installed the playpark seems to be a success. With the remaining £231 left in the Playpark account, we have purchased a new bench to replace one that had become rotten. Total cost was £624.83 with the remaining £ £394 coming from the Solar Fund. This current one is made from recycled plastic so will hopefully have a good long shelf life!  
We have monthly inspections carried out on the playpark and once a year an annual inspection carried out by an independent ROSPA inspector. I am glad to report we received no adverse comments.  
Costs for the playpark include insurance for the playpark which covers all the equipment and public liability. In addition, we have the grass cut and twice a year the hedges are trimmed. Apart from any small miscellaneous charges the other major cost is for the litter bin to be emptied weekly.  
The total costs for the playpark in this financial year are:

ITEM	COST (- vat)	COMMENT
Insurance	549.98	This also covers our general insurance
Monthly & Annual inspections	1008.00	
Litter bin emptying	260.00	
Grass cutting	549.64	
Hedge trimming	330.00	
Playpark maintenance	25.38	
Signs	55.00	
Miscellaneous	76.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2854.00</b>	

2. Income

The Parish Council received the following income in this financial year

<u>Receipt</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Comments</u>
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Precept	11615.00	
Interest	399.61	
Solar Fund	7280.91	Annual grant from Redhill Solar Farm
VAT reclaim	544.42	
Miscellaneous	150.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,989.94</b>	

### 3. Earmarked Reserves

Public Rights of Way	56.24	Used to finance maintenance on the footpaths. New grant applied for
Solar Fund	13,185.58	To be spent on capital projects for the Parish
Baseline reserve	5000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18241.82</b>	

### 4. Grants

The Parish Council awarded the following grants: -

- a. Village Hall Trust - £1500 this is an annual grant to assist with the running costs of the Hall and comes from the Precept
- b. The Solar Fund awarded three grants:
  1. Highway signposts £837.82
  2. Contribution to new bench £393.06
  3. Streetlights £15,000

The signposts were to replace the illegible ones in the centre of the village and at Durlenmoor Cross. The contribution towards new streetlights in the village has ensured that Holcombe Rogus will be receiving new LED lights as part of a trial run by DCC. This will also enable the lights to be programmed.

### 5. Donations

The Council made several donations in this financial year:

- a. £750 has been set aside to assist with the funding of the D-Day Celebrations.
- b. £100 to Citizens Advice
- c. £50 to the Royal British Legion for the Remembrance wreath.

### 6. Expenditure

The Council spent a total of £31,578 in this financial year. With rising costs in all areas, we are likely to see an increase in the general spend on the annual parish

maintenance and insurance, subscriptions etc. The Precept was only raised from £11500 to £11615 in this financial and next year it has risen to £12,245.

7. Internal Audit

The annual internal audit has been completed, several policies have been updated and a new Business Continuity Plan has also been adopted. All documents are available to view on the website.

8. External Audit

All the documents from the external audit are available to view on the website. No comments were raised which is encouraging! [www.holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk](http://www.holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk)

COUNCILLORS

We currently have 7 Councillors and two vacancies. We welcomed James Anderson onto the Council in January.

TRAINING

Cllr Freeman attended all the New Councillor courses run by DALC.

Cllrs Freeman and Cllr Barker attended the DALC webinar on responding to planning applications.

Cllr Snook attended the Landscape Character Workshop in October.

Several Councillors and the Clerk attended the Class Q permitted development conversions run by MDDC.

Clerk attended several webinars run by SCRIBE.

Leslie Findlay

Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer/Proper Officer

[clerk@holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk)

### **Highways Report April 2024**

The last 12 months have been very wet and consequently the parish has seen an increase in the damage to our roads. This has been especially true on the Wiseburrow section of the road out of the village towards Wellington. The potholes and road edges have been patched now, but all look very short term and still subject to flooding.

The road to Westleigh from Durley moor cross is riddled with potholes.

The road to Uplowman above Higher Besley is dangerous.

The road at Durley Moor is falling apart.

The road to Pond Ground is as bad as ever, along with the road past Ford House sorry but it is not all bad news!

The good news is that the road to Sampford Peverell is repaired and awaiting a covering of tar and gravel to make it into a superhighway! Watch your speed and windscreen when this is laid, sometime in the next few months This road now has no markings at Trumps Corner so although the road to Holcombe Rogus has priority there are no markings to prove it.

Please continue to use the Devon County Road repairs web page to report your concerns over dangerous hazards on our roads.

Rupert Snook, Parish Councillor

### **Public Rights of Way Report 2023 – 2024**

There are 9 specified Rights of Way paths in the parish of Holcombe Rogus. They are all regularly used and comments are invited from members of the public. The paths were walked at least once during the year by myself or a volunteer. There was only one serious complaint during the past year, about total obstruction due to a high crop without any way through. This was classed as a temporary obstruction and therefore the footpath was classed as a “Pass”. There was only one “Fail” in the parish. During the year, I was informed of 6 incidents that have been dealt with, involving either fallen trees or overgrown hedges/undergrowth.

All other issues have been dealt with by Devon County Council. Steps were repaired on Footpath 3 near Kytton Barton; a stile was repaired on Footpath 15 together with a replacement gate; a bridge was replaced on Footpath 6 which is in Westleigh parish. I am in discussion regarding amending the rotting fence on a steep section of Footpath 3, which I consider would be best removed.

I have recently been asked by a resident if we can prevent traffic from damaging the verges and hedge banks, but following a similar request last year, the response from Devon County Council is negative. Education is required to understand and respect the valuable assets contained within the hedgerows and verges of the parish.

Frances Freeman  
Parish Councillor

### **2023-2024 Canal Report**

Holcombe Rogus is a “Canal Parish;” it has part of the Grand Western Canal passing through the Parish. The length from Holcombe Rogus to Taunton was finally closed in 1868.

Fortunately, the section from Tiverton to Holcombe Rogus was retained in water for some local trade.

The 1960s brought a threat to abandon this section and fill it in. Some farsighted individuals formed a preservation group which evolved to catalyse the retention of the canal and eventually stimulate its evolution into a major leisure amenity for our communities and many visitors to the West Country.

Our Parish is represented on a non-Executive Joint Advisory Committee that helps form the management strategy for the Canal. I am pleased that I represent our Parish on that Committee. The Canal Manager, Mark Baker, and his tiny team maintain the Canal to very high standards with a budget that has been systematically reduced over a number of years. I

have reasons to think that this goes against the spirit of the original takeover of the Canal from the then British Waterways.

I am campaigning to rectify this funding problem and have the support of our neighbouring Canal Parishes. The outcome of this campaigning is uncertain but our part of the Canal will be degraded if the adequate funding is not secured.

Councillor Adam Pilgrim.

### **Annual Parish Meeting Report by District Councillor Gill Westcott**

During the year I have worked together with Cllr Jane Lock to represent the interests of this and other Canonsleigh parishes at Mid Devon District Council. This has included supporting applications for funding under S106, reflecting views on planning applications, and identifying likely impacts of planning applications so that these can be identified to Planning Officers or to the Planning Committee. We know the PC has been exercised by the retrospective application for the Devon and Cornwall Police Firing Range, and the application for the change of use of a public house and have worked to represent the parish's concerns about these and other issues.

As vice chair of Scrutiny Committee, I've been instrumental in helping Scrutiny consider the issue of water quality and sewage pollution in rivers, as a result of which more questions will be asked of South West Water in future in relation to major developments, we have questioned a representative of the Environment Agency, and will be working with other District Councils to represent our concerns and put pressure on SWW for action to remedy the current situation.

I have been part of two working groups, producing the 'Lessons Learnt' report on Three Rivers Development Ltd and two reports on Inclusion and Diversity in the Council. In the latter investigation we found that many women councillors and those with caring responsibilities have additional difficulties in taking a full part in District Council decisions and have suggested some measures to ease this situation. We note that women are still only 13 of the 42 councillors.

Scrutiny has also looked at MDDC's enforcement record on two occasions and seen that measures are being taken to improve this by recruiting two new enforcement officers.

We both attended the State of the District debate to discuss with and learn from Town and Parish councillors about their priorities and how we can work more effectively together.

### **County Councillor Ray Radford Annual Report**

I have been County Councillor for Willand & Uffculme Division for 16 years. As funding is in short supply, I am always having fights with the Officers to get things done, potholes of course being the biggest, in such cases it is beneficial to have the support of the Parish Councils.

We operate on a 2-month cycle and we are placed on various committees, I am on the Corporate infrastructure and Regulatory Scrutiny (CIRS), the Devon & Somerset and Rescue Authority as well as the Highways and Traffic Committee, HATOC), as the canal runs through our Division that puts me on the Canal Advisory Committee. And the Westleigh and Broadpath Liaison Groups, and this is followed up with a Devon County Full Council meeting at the end of the cycle. Sometimes we are placed on specific working groups.

Each year we have the annual meeting where we select a chairman and Leader for the next year. The Chairman is replaced every year but the Leader invariably continues to the end of each four-year period when there is an election for all 62 members.

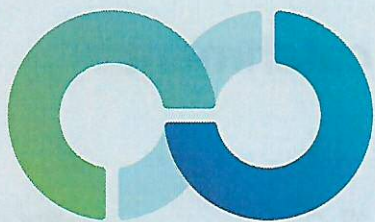
All the time I have enjoyed my job, even with the challenging times, but I do my very best to support and represent this community. Devon County is one of the more successful Authorities to give best value for money with the funding that is available.

I will continue to back what is best for our community, so please contact me if there is any problem that you think I can help with. I have been here a long time and I know my way around and what is possible and what is not quite so possible

Ray Radford

Devon County Councillor

Willand & Uffculme Division



## Connecting the Culm

# Creating a better future for the River Culm

The Connecting the Culm project is working with nature and local communities to help make the River Culm and its catchment better for wildlife and people

### The vision

*The River Culm will be celebrated as a lifeline that connects people with each other and with nature. Land across the catchment will be managed to protect and enhance the River, whilst sustaining people's livelihoods.*

*Throughout the seasons and as the climate changes, the River Culm will have space to flow naturally and safely. The water will run clear, wildlife will flourish, and people will easily access and enjoy all of these benefits.*



### The Blueprint for the Culm

A long-term management and investment plan for the River

#### Flooding

Improve resilience to flooding so floodwaters don't threaten communities or damage homes, businesses and critical transport infrastructure.

#### Drought

Improve resilience to drought so water levels sustain wildlife and are sufficient for farming and business even during periods of drought.

#### Water quality

Reduce pollution entering the river from all sources so that the Culm's water quality is rated as High, it supports thriving habitats and wildlife populations and is a pleasure for people to experience.

#### Wildlife

Rebuild a landscape that is rich in wildlife by improving the management of existing wildlife sites and connecting them together by creating new or improved habitats.

#### Carbon

Whilst delivering actions to improve resilience, restore as much carbon as possible in soils and woody vegetation to help reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

#### Access

Encourage and enable people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities to connect with the river so that they can enjoy it to its full. Provide evidence and information to support wider improvements to transport and access issues that relate to the river.

#### Heritage

Use an understanding of heritage to explore how people have lived with water in this valley through time, and to inform our actions for a resilient future. Protect and enhance key historic features in the landscape.

Scan here



### Want to find out more?

Visit the Connecting the Culm website to learn more about the Blueprint for the Culm [connectingtheculm.com](https://connectingtheculm.com)



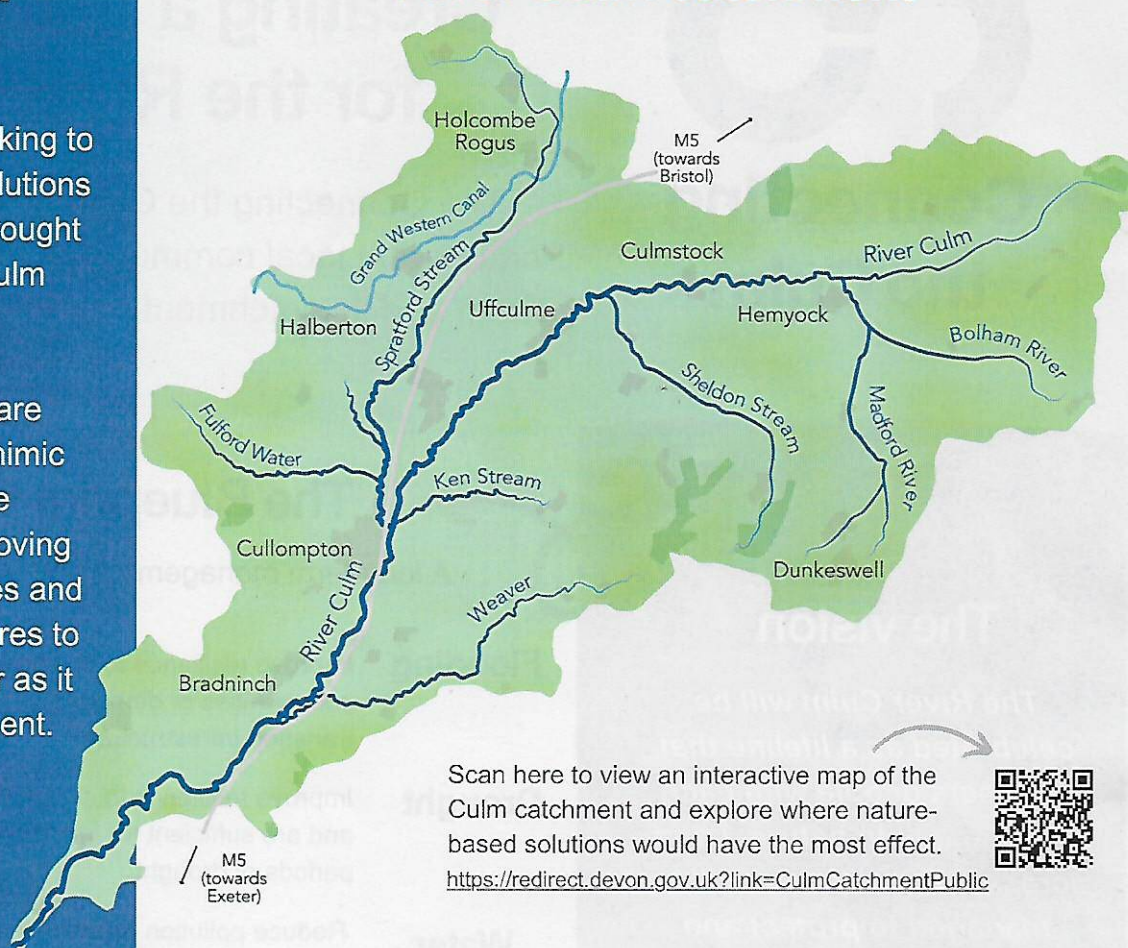
**Blackdown Hills**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Nature-based solutions

Connecting the Culm is working to implement nature-based solutions to improve the flood and drought resilience of the River Culm catchment.

Nature-based solutions are techniques to restore or mimic natural functions in the environment such as improving soil infiltration, planting trees and hedges, and creating features to store and slow down water as it flows through the catchment.

## River Culm catchment



Scan here to view an interactive map of the Culm catchment and explore where nature-based solutions would have the most effect.

<https://redirect.devon.gov.uk/?link=CulmCatchmentPublic>

## How to get involved

### Stay in contact

Sign-up on the website [connectingtheculm.com](https://connectingtheculm.com) for our e-newsletter to get the latest news from the Connecting the Culm project.

### Volunteer opportunities

If you'd like to get involved in helping to look after the Culm catchment, we would love to hear from you! Volunteer opportunities include taking part in vegetation surveys, assessing the water quality of your local stream, joining the Himalayan Balsam Action Group or helping to monitor nature-based solutions.

Email [hello@connectingtheculm.com](mailto:hello@connectingtheculm.com) to get involved.

### Landowners

If you are a landowner in the Culm catchment and would like to find out more about funding available to install nature-based solutions on your land, get in touch with the Culm Catchment Officer Lucy Jefferson.

Email: [hello@connectingtheculm.com](mailto:hello@connectingtheculm.com)

Tel: 07866 212224



[connectingtheculm.com](https://connectingtheculm.com)



[hello@connectingtheculm.com](mailto:hello@connectingtheculm.com)



**Blackdown Hills**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



**Connecting  
the Culm**

# Managing Big Problems in Small Places

Managing Big Problems in Small Places is a Devon wide project funded by Defra as part of the £150 million Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme which is managed by the Environment Agency to develop and test new approaches to resilience tailored to local communities.



## Project Aim

Increase **flood resilience** at a catchment level within communities in rapid response 'type' catchments where traditional flood defences are shown not to be appropriate or cost beneficial.

## Project Objectives

- Empower local communities and stakeholders to participate in the development, delivery, monitoring, maintenance and ownership of flood resilience interventions including Nature Based Solutions for the whole catchment.
- Promote and support the installation of Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures in community assets and with small businesses so that they can recover quicker from flooding.
- Enhance existing warning systems by developing local and tailored surface water flood warning tools so that targeted communities are able to react in time.
- Identify and develop alternative funding models for communities to fund and maintain flood resilience measures.
- Develop new spatial planning tools and approaches which can:
  - support the delivery of flood resilience measures at a catchment scale in Rapid Response type Catchments
  - improve and embed flood resilience in planning and land use policies and decisions.
- Define, quantify and share levels of community resilience and potential for resilience gain within a catchment through the development of Flood Resilience Hub on the web.
- Deliver robust and replicable learning: Demonstrate how different actions work together at a catchment level; identify what level of protection can be afforded to a community; improve evidence on the costs and benefits of innovative resilience actions including co benefits (biodiversity, carbon, socio-economic and health).

Further information available from:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/flood-and-coastal-resilience-innovation-programme-fcrip/>

**The Culm Catchment has been chosen by Devon County Council as an area to receive funding as part of the Managing Big Problems in Small Places project.**

Within the Culm Catchment, six target areas have been identified to be involved in the project: Halberton, Culmstock, Hemyock, Weaver, Lyner and Kentisbeare.

**Lucy Jefferson, Culm Catchment Officer** will be working with communities to deliver the objectives of this project in the six target areas over next five years.

**Lucy.Jefferson@devon.gov.uk    Mobile: 07866 212224**