

HOLCOMBE ROGUS PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Meeting

Minutes of the April Meeting

Held in the King George V Memorial Hall on Thursday 24th April 2025

At 6.45pm

APPROVED

4.1

Present:

Councillors: Adam Pilgrim (Chairman), Nikki Orchard, Frances Freeman, Rupert Snook, Jane Lock, Sally Barker & Gill Westcott.
Jackie Lyons Parish Clerk/RFO

**ACTION
TO BE
TAKEN**

Apologies:

Cllr James Anderson

4.2

Declaration of Interests: No interests declared

4.3

Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters arising

Emergency Plan - A meeting was held at the Prince of Wales, Holcombe Rogus on the 24th April at 8.00pm to discuss an exploratory Emergency plan. This was a public meeting and open to all. There was one member of the public that attended.

AP

The March Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record and unanimously approved by all Councillors.

GC/NO

4.3.1

Chairman's Reports.

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council

Chairman's Report for 2024/5.

I was appointed Chairman of the Parish Council again at the Annual Meeting on 23rd May 2024 for the seventh time. While this is flattering in some respects, a change of Chairman could help refresh the Council.

I'm pleased that our Councillors deal with their individual responsibilities carefully and ensure that, where necessary, they interact well with the relevant District and County Council Officers. This means that our residents can be regularly updated on local Authority activities that affect our everyday lives.

We have two vacancies for Parish Councillors and were on the verge of co-opting a new one when, unfortunately, illness thwarted their joining the Council for the time being.

Leslie Findlay had acted as Clerk to the Parish Council for sixteen years but during 2024 decided to retire and devote more time to her home and family commitments. A hard act to follow but Jackie Lyons came forward as our preferred candidate to replace Leslie. Leslie helped Jackie settle in and I feel that Jackie has grasped the intricacies of the post really well so we are lucky to have her.

I gather that some Parish Council's meetings can be very challenging making their Chairmen's work keeping matters civilised and on track quite difficult. I'm fortunate since our Councillors are able to express their differing views effectively without abuse. Long may it continue!

Adam Pilgrim.

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council

Planning Committee Chairman's Report for 2024/5

Our Planning Committee is able to meet every month if there are any possibly controversial Planning Matters arising.

Generally, our local Applications haven't been particularly difficult in the past year; fairly routine matters such as upgrading agricultural buildings to accommodate changing practices or Applications to manage diseased trees and shrubs in our Conservation Area or adjacent some Listed properties. Often, Councillors will indicate their approval of these Applications via emails to the Planning Committee's Chairman and our Clerk passes on our views to the relevant Planning Authority; predominately Mid Devon District Council.

However, a recent Application to insert a new dwelling in Fore Street created some strong reactions from both our Councillors and several Residents. Some lively discussions at our Planning Meeting resulted in our recommending the District Council to Refuse it. Mid Devon's Planners did Refuse it since it was inappropriate in various ways.

Our new national Government intends to streamline the Planning System but how this will unfold is not yet clear, particularly with the forthcoming changes in County and District Councils' boundaries.

We are entering interesting times.

Adam Pilgrim.

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council

Canal Report for 2024/5

I represent Holcombe Rogus Parish Council on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee. Its members represent all the Parishes and Wards through which the Grand Western Canal passes in Devon. There are also representatives from the various interest groups and businesses involved with the Canal.

There have been two issues affecting the Canal in our Parish of late. Firstly, the stream and culverts at Lowdwells, possibly associated with pre-Canal milling, became obstructed and were instrumental in the flooding of some nearby

properties. Devon County Council has been working on clearing obstructions and modifying the road drains to deal with the water more effectively to reduce flooding risks.

Secondly, the County Council's Ranger Service monitors Canalside trees and removes any that fall into the waterway or across the towpath. However, there is a short length of the Canal towpath north of Waytown Tunnel owned by Wharf House so the removal of fallen trees in that section has to be negotiated with the owners. This can result in some delays in removing fallen trees compared to elsewhere on the Canal.

My role on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee extends to weekly checks on Planning Matters that may affect the whole Devonian Canal Corridor, alerting the Committee to these and advising on how the Committee might respond to them.

Adam Pilgrim.

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council 2024 / 2025

Report by Councillor Sally Barker

Planning has been reported on by the Chairman.

Media:

There has been no media interaction with the parish council this year.

Ayshford Trust:

The Trustees have held two meetings and four young people have been awarded grants in 2024.

A resident reported a case of pollution in the White Brook to me, which I passed on to Councillor Freeman, who reported it to the Environment Agency.

Sally Barker.

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council PUBLIC Rights of Way Report 2024 – 2025

This year the footpaths have been kept clear by the landowners and if there has been a problem, the landowner has been quick to rectify the situation, although on just a couple of occasions, it has been necessary to request that a contractor strims the Right of Way.

In July, the Parish Council received a larger than normal grant from Devon County Council, but there is a new Officer in charge of PROW and he has changed

the way the system is operated. We now have to carry out the work and reclaim the cost from Devon County Council by March the following year.

In September, a member of the public alerted me to a kissing gate not shutting properly, thus allowing lambs to escape. Having contacted MDDC to find out how to deal with the gate, Andrew Green, the Environment Officer from MDDC met me and amongst other things, we discussed the issue of dog mess. He offered some advice and some stickers that can be put in affected areas. The main point is that dog mess should be picked up because it is a health hazard and can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness or seizures.

I have also met with the Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Officer who came out to check an issue with a path, which will soon be remedied. Meeting both these Officers will be useful should we need assistance in the future.

The Parish Council are very lucky to have a member of the public who is willing to carry out small repairs to gates etc and we are very grateful for his help.

If you encounter any problems with the Rights of Way paths in our Parish, please contact me.

Frances Freeman

HOLCOMBE ROGUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
CLERK REPORT APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025

FINANCE

Mary Fewings Playpark:

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.

An additional cost this year was the trimming back of the trees and chipping and removal of waste.

The total costs for the playpark in this financial year are:

ITEM	COST (- vat)	COMMENT
Insurance	588.12	This also covers our general insurance
Monthly & Annual inspections	1008.00	
Litter bin emptying	260.00	
Grass cutting	586.47	
Hedge trimming	404.00	

Playpark maintenance	685.00	Increase due to cutting the trees back.
Miscellaneous	47.76	
TOTAL	3579.35	

Income

The Parish Council received the following income in this financial year

<u>Receipt</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Precept	12254.00	
Interest	313.57	
Solar Fund	7529.52	Annual grant from Redhill Solar Farm
VAT reclaim	1066.17	
Miscellaneous	100.00	
TOTAL	21898.26	

Earmarked Reserves

Public Rights of Way	56.24	Used to finance maintenance on the footpaths. New grant applied for
Solar Fund	12791.11	To be spent on capital projects for the Parish
Baseline reserve	5000	
TOTAL	17,847.35	

Grants

The Parish Council awarded the following grants: -

Village Hall Trust - £1500 this is an annual grant to assist with the running costs of the Hall and comes from the Precept

The Solar Fund awarded three grants:

GWC – Touchscreen and noticeboard £3257

2 noticeboards £3205

£165 for VE lanterns

£249 for Armed Forces Flag

The 2 noticeboards were bought to replace the 2 old ones in the village.

Expenditure

The Council spent a total of £20206.62 in this financial year. We are likely to see an increase in the general spend on the annual parish maintenance and insurance, subscriptions etc. The Precept was raised from £11615 to £12254 in this financial year.

Internal Audit

The annual internal audit has been completed and several policies have been updated. All documents are available to view on the website.

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

COUNCILLORS

We currently have 7 Councillors and two vacancies.

TRAINING

Cllr Freeman attended 1 course for Code of Conduct run by DALC.

Cllr James Anderson attended 1 course for Good Councillor run by DALC

Cllr Adam Pilgrim attended 1 course for Planning and Enforcement run by DALC

Clerk Mrs Jackie Lyons attended 3 Clerks Essentials courses run by DALC

Jackie Lyons

Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer/Proper Officer

clerk@holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk

Highways Report April 2025

The parish roads have had another poorly year, although in the last couple of months the white lines around the parish have been refreshed. The road to Sampford has been top dressed and the white lines on that refreshed as well.

The Wiseburrow section of the road out to Wellington is currently average and drainage and flooding problems we have had all through the winter, seem to be now under control, especially as we have not had large amounts of rain for a while. The farmer whose drain/ stream has been causing most of the problems has now dug out the appropriate ditch so this will ease the problems until the next time.

Black lane to Hockworthy has had continuing drain problems which could be cured if the road edge was ploughed and taken away. On request for this it was refused due to lack of funds.

The road to Westleigh from Durley Moor cross has a bad patch of potholes at the top. On request this was considered not deep enough for repair.

The road to Uplowman above Higher Besley is still dangerous and has not been attended to.

The road around Ford has several potholes and the road to Pond Ground is trying hard to be the worst in Devon for potholes

However 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

4.4 Environment

4.4.1 PROW: Nothing to report

4.4.2 Canal Report

Nothing to report

4.5 Highways

4.5.1 White lines have been updated by the school.

4.5.2 Black Lane up to Hockworthy, still nothing to report. Would it be possible to look into getting our own contractor in to carry out the work.

4.5.3 Westleigh Road – The potholes are getting worse through surface loss.

4.6 Planning

4.6.1 Applications to be discussed:

Nothing to report.

MDDC Decisions:

4.6.1.2 Nothing to report

4.7 The Mary Fewings Playpark

4.7.1 March monthly inspections – nothing to report.

4.8 Clerk/Finance

4.8.1 The following income had been received:

March Interest £23.82

MDDC – Parish Precept - £6041.67

HMRC – VAT Return - £1649.77

4.8.2.1 Expenditure to be approved

Internal Audit – Paul Russell - £250

DALC – Membership – £205.83

Mark Gabriel – Spraying of weeds & strimming £128

4.8.3 Expenditure paid out of Committee:

None to report

4.8.4 Signing of monthly bank reconciliation

The Chairman signed the monthly bank reconciliation/accounts for March.

4.8.5 Approved and signed Annual Governance Statement

4.8.6 Approved section 2 of the Accounts for Audit

4.8.7 Signed Public Rights & Publication of unaudited annual governance & accountability return.

4.8.8 Approval of asset register.

4.9 Matters brought forward for information or future agenda

4.9.1 VE Day 80th Anniversary, 8th May

5th May – There is a street party in the village hall car park on the Bank Holiday Monday, which is when the majority of national celebrations will be taking place. Time to be confirmed.

8th May – A tea party for the children, to be confirmed when new head teacher is in place. Time to be confirmed.

8th May - The lighting of the “Lights of Peace” to commemorate the end of the war and the return of peace. This will be held in the churchyard at 9.30 pm.

4.9.2

We have two Councillor vacancies.

4.9.3

Notice boards installation required. It was agreed to get a contractor in to fit both notice boards.

It was noted that the Defibrillator needs to be registered on The Circuit monthly in order for the ambulance’s to be able to locate it’s location. Robert Duke has kindly volunteered to ensure this is kept up to date.

Future Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 22nd May at 7.00pm.

Adam Pilgrim

Chairman

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council