**CLERK REPORT FOR THE MARCH 23 FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

**Matters arising** – the letters to the Farmers outlining the concerning the hedgerows was posted on 13th March.

**Environment** -There has been no response from Westleigh Quarry in regard to the raising of the Bundt between the two villages.

The Parish Council have received a letter from the Environment Agency informing them of an illegal burning of waste at Twitchen. The letter has been put on the HR website to ensure everyone is aware of the rules and will be published in the Parish News as well.

**Planning –** Application 22/00907/FULL (pondground Firing Ranges) Following the letter of objection sent to MDDC on 2nd March, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary have written to HRPC taking with paragraph 7

 “*Firing ranges (of the kind previously in use at Pondground Quarry) should follow CIEH guidance. ACL on behalf of the Police Authority refuse to accept that it is relevant notwithstanding that the guidance has, we are advised, been adopted by the MOD and police and local authorities across the country as the appropriate guidance to follow for the type of use proposed for Pondground Quarry. This is no doubt because the Police Authority would not be able to meet those standards and would need to move operations elsewhere.”*

The police response was:

Given the technical references I have sought clarification from our advisors, Acoustic Consultants Ltd, who of course you have referred to above (as ACL). Their response is copied below, which I would encourage you to read. The bold emphasis is my own, made for clarification purposes. Just as a point we are **not** disagreeing with this on **behalf** of Devon and Cornwall. **This is our professional opinion**.

Regarding the CIEH guidance I am sure it has been used for many things (I have seen people trying to use it for skate parks) but that doesn’t mean it is an appropriate form of assessing the level of noise impact from the shooting range. Sometimes people will argue that in the absence of anything else it is the best they have but that does not mean that the guidance levels within it accurately determine noise impact for anything other than a clay target shoot.

This cannot be set out more clearly than in the guidance’s own scope.

[https://www.cieh.org/media/1236/clay-target-shooting-guidance-on-the-control-of-noise.pdfhttps://www.cieh.org/media/1236/clay-target-shooting-guidance-on-the-control-of-noise.pdf](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cieh.org%2Fmedia%2F1236%2Fclay-target-shooting-guidance-on-the-control-of-noise.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CDavid.WHITE%40devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk%7Cf70bea4dba5742240dd708db21606943%7C4515d0c5b4184cfa9741222da68a18d7%7C0%7C1%7C638140470203801768%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=AccJlZtC5O03cqx9Ybgid63qc2yAsNqImRednSoR0G8%3D&reserved=0)

*1.1 Limitation in scope The scope of this guidance is limited to clay target (pigeon) shoots. It should not be taken as having any application to other outdoor shooting events or other gun club activities. Most of the guidance is provided in a general way. This is because local circumstances differ and consequently more or less restrictive controls may be appropriate in certain cases. In particular, where a shooting ground or site has been used for several years without giving rise to complaints, there may be no need for changes. Where specific criteria (e.g. distances, times or noise levels) are given these have been derived from experience and are not intended as precise rules to be routinely applied to every shooting ground or site. The guidance does not deal with safety issues in detail nor is it intended that it should override any restrictions or requirements that may be imposed under any statutory provisions.*

The guidance levels are based on research from the assessment of clay target shooting. That research did not include any other types of shooting so there is no evidence the same conclusions would apply.

Daniel Oldaker BSc. (Hons), MIOA

Director for Acoustic Consultants Limited

PC to discuss draft response

**Mary Fewings Playpark –** The February monthly inspection highlighted that the basket swing had movement where the upright pole meets the crossbar. Has been reported to Sutcliffe Play and fixed.

**Finance** - We have received the following from MDDC in regard to the cost of the Playpark monthly inspections: “*You will be aware of increasing costs and budgetary pressures in the market place. Mid Devon District Council as with all local authority and as a business is exposed to the same pressures.*

*The Council has been considering a raft of measures to reduce cost and increase income to ‘balance the books’ – this task being an increasing challenge year on year.*

*Given the extraordinary circumstances prevailing the Council has resolved to increase its charges for its Parish play area inspection service by 40%. On the same basis as previous the charges for 2023/ 24 will be £1008+VAT – being 12x monthly inspections to include annual independent inspection.*

My recommendation is that although this is a very steep increase, we should continue with our current agreement with MDDC, Mike Watts has a lot of experience and contacts in this field and is very helpful with any queries. It was suggested we could move to two monthly inspections **but I would strongly advise against this**. With children involved I think it is very important that we continue with monthly inspections.

The accounts will be closed on 31st March and prepared for audit. The accounts will hopefully be signed off at the April meeting after the Internal Auditor has made his comments.

**Annual Parish Meeting** – This will take place prior to the Full Council Meeting in April. The following reports to be submitted

Chairmans Report Cllr Pilgrim

Canal Report Cllr Pilgrim

Planning Report Cllr Butler

Highways Report Cllr Snook

Playpark Report Clerk

Clerk Report Clerk

**Local Elections** Nomination papers to be handed in to MDDC by 4th April

Leslie Findlay

Parish Clerk