

Coffinswell Parish Council

Serving the Communities of
Coffinswell & Dacombe



The Cirl Bunting is the UK's rarest farmland bird. The entire breeding population is found between Exeter and Plymouth.

MINUTES OF THE COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 21st MARCH 2023 7PM AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

Present: Cllr N Orchard (Chair), Cllr S Avery, Cllr A Brent, Cllr S Spokes
In attendance: Cllr A Dewhirst, Mrs L Moorese (Clerk) Ms. Cyrena Bell
Nine members of the public

1. The Chairman will open the meeting and receive apologies.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.03pm
Apologies received from Cllr M Haines and Mr M Atkinson.

2. Co-option of a new Councillor

The Chairman advised that originally received six enquiries for the vacancies, but this has now reduced to two candidates. He then went on to explain that as this was the first co-option for the Parish Council, there had been no previous need for a Policy to be in place. Therefore, a new Co-option Policy had been prepared that defined the procedure to be carried out in a fair and open manner.

The Councillors had previously reviewed the proposed policy. It was proposed by Cllr S Avery and seconded by Cllr A Brent that the Co-option Policy be adopted with a unanimous vote.

The two candidates being Michael Atkinson and Cyrena Bell. The candidates were given the opportunity of preparing a statement to be read at the meeting. Cyrena Bell read her statement. The Chairman read Michael Atkinson's statement as he was unable to be present to do so as being in New Zealand.

A member of the public asked if both candidates would be happy to stand in one month's time due to the elections being held in early May. The Chairman advised that he understood they would be happy to do so.

(The Councillors adjourned from the meeting to discuss in private the two candidates and to vote).

3. Election of new Councillor and signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Council meeting resumed, and the Chairman declared that Cyrena Bell had been selected for co-option to the Council and invited her to join the other members of the Council. Cyrena Bell then duly signed the "Declaration of Acceptance of Office".

4. To declare any interests arising at this meeting.

None

5. Reports:

5.1 County Councillors' report. Cllr Dewhurst read his report and a copy appears on the website.

5.2 District Councillors' report. Not read.

5.3 Police Advocate and Neighbourhood Watch reports and updates. The Chairman reported that the Council had not yet replaced Vince Flower as Police Advocate, and this will be done after the May elections by the new Council. Neighbourhood Watch Report was read by Sheenagh Orchard, and a copy appears on the website.

6. Approval to consider, amend as agreed by the Council and approve the minutes of the following meeting:

It was agreed by all to approve the minutes of the meeting of 17th January 2023

7. Finance

7.1 It was agreed by all to approve the payments schedule.

7.2 It was agreed by all to approve the Bank reconciliation for January and February 2023.

7.3 The quarterly budget was presented whereby the Chairman pointed out that the costings were acceptable and in line with the originally budgeted amounts. It is intended to apply some of the equipment expenditure to the CIL Budget and so the Council's operating budget for 2022-2023 is showing a surplus, but this is dependent upon possible costing for May 2023 election should the need arise.

8. Funding & Grants:

It was advised that Teignbridge District Council have confirmed the Council's precept for 2023-2024 at £6155.

An application for P3 funding for next year has been submitted but await confirmation after April 2023.

Julie Gilbrook is currently working with the social committee on an application for Lottery funding for the King's Coronation celebrations in May.

9. Footpaths & Highways:

9.1 Discussion followed concerning the existing electric trimmer and long-reach hedge cutting equipment purchased in 2022 and their practical use. It was proposed by the Chairman to purchase a new electric hedge trimmer, two small battery packs that could be used in either of the hedge trimmers, a harness and a blade cutter for the trimmer. The approximate cost being £650-£700 financed by the CIL Fund. The proposed purchases were unanimously agreed by the Councillors.

It was also agreed that a working party will be arranged shortly to review and work on the hedge growth on the paths over Kerswell Hill.

Cllr Avery advised that due to the dry Winter the drainage situation within Dacombe and Coffinswell appears to be very good. He also confirmed that the Parish Lengthsman had been visiting and working within the Parish.

10. To note any correspondence received

None.

11. Parish Matters:

11.1 The Chairman explained that some of the Parish Council's policies and procedures are still requiring attention, with particular attention to those concerning HR. Cllr Spokes confirmed that she had reviewed the policies under this Agenda item, and she felt the provided NALC templates were acceptable.

The Chairman confirmed that after further review concerning the Sickness Absence Policy (currently being the most important), the documentation had been provided (of which the basis of this Policy was by courtesy of the Exminster Parish Council) in preparation for the meeting today. Due to the fact that not all the Councillors had been able to review this ahead of the meeting it was agreed to defer for adoption at the next Parish Council Meeting.

The other Policies to be reviewed later.

11.2 The Chairman advised that the Annual Parish Meeting format would predominantly be the same as last year in that the Council Chair will give a report on the year and then open the floor for general questions or comments. Following the meeting there will be refreshments provided and an opportunity for informal conversation.

11.3 As mentioned under **Agenda Item 8** application for Lottery grant has been submitted to contribute towards a village celebration of the King's Coronation. Julie Gilbrook confirmed that preparations are under way for 8th May, with various festivities including a hog roast, may pole, skittles, raffle prizes. It was confirmed the venue will be at The Bothy.

12. Planning

It was noted that a decision by TDC is still awaited concerning the planning application under **Agenda Item 12.1** 22/02237/HOU – Court Barton Cottage, Coffinswell – concerning the Photovoltaic solar panels on outbuilding roof.

The Chairman also mentioned that the Parish Council are still awaiting to see the TDC planning decision notice concerning the property in Connybere Woods which was in February 2023.

13. Enforcement Issues:

13.1 The Chairman advised that there had many discussions concerning the caravan in Orestone Lane and under the legislation it is noted as an unauthorised encampment for a homeless person as the DCC does not have sufficient travellers' sites to accommodate transient people. Cllr Avery gave some background information concerning the person residing in the caravan. The Police are acting within their limited power as they are unable to forcibly remove unless there is illegal activity. It was agreed that the Parish Council will maintain contact with the Police Liaison Officer and asked parishioners to report any issues with any supporting evidence.

13.2 There were no other issues.

14. General Public Question Time:

A period of 10 minutes was allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment on the work of Coffinswell Parish Council or on matters arising that affect the Council.

A member of the public asked it would be possible to organise a First Aid course for the parishioners in view of the delays in medical assistance reaching the village. This was considered a very good idea and the Council would look at the possibility of this being organised.

It was mentioned that the posts holding the Defibrillator need to be more firmly established.

Further discussion followed concerning the provision of a further Defibrillator for Dacombe due to the distance and time involved to reach the one established in Coffinswell. It was agreed that this would be investigated.

15. Any other business

The May 2023 elections - the Chairman reminded the Cllrs that the forms had to be completed and submitted by 4th April 2023. And, also to remind all those in attendance that the election is open to all those residing in the parish who may wish to be a Parish Councillor.

16. To note the date of the next meeting:

Annual Parish Meeting 18th April 2023. The meeting ended at 8.45pm

Signed:
Chairman of Coffinswell Parish Council

Dated: