



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 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TUESDAY 20TH APRIL 2021 AT 7:15PM VIA ZOOM

Present: Cllr A Parkes (Chairman), Cllr A Brent (Vice-Chairman), Cllr S Avery, Cllr V Flower, Cllr N Orchard

In attendance: Cllr A Dewhirst (DCC), Cllr M Haines, Mrs J Thompson – Clerk
Four members of the public

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

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:17pm. Apologies were received from Michele Berry and Natalie Inwood.

2. 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 held on Thursday 21st March 2019, as a true and accurate record.

The Clerk informed all that there is no longer a need to wait until the next Annual Parish Meeting to approve the minutes, therefore, the minutes of this meeting will be presented for approval at the next parish council meeting.

3. To receive reports:

3.1 Chairman's Report – Cllr Alex Parkes

As Chairman of the Parish Council I am very pleased to present our Annual Parish report for 2020/2021

As we all know this is the meeting which in normal year always gets the biggest attendance, It must be something to do with the wine and chat!

But as we all know this has not been a normal year. With so many personal tragedies which have impacted on so many lives. Our thoughts go out to everybody who have been affected by this awful virus.

Hopefully we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel, and we can get back to those better times, and are able to share a glass of wine together soon.

As far as the Parish Councils business goes, this year has been very different also, with virtual meetings being the new normal, new council members, difficult financial decisions, delays to community projects but with great opportunities also.

As far as the personnel coming and goings, a lot has happened in a year, just before the pandemic Gywnn left us, and we welcomed Stephen into the fold.

Early into the lockdown our Clerk Rachel left for pastures green and we conducted virtual interviews for her replacement. Whilst something new to us all we must have got this right because I am very pleased to say that Juliette her replacement has already proven to be an asset to the council.

Then, our long standing Chairman Roger Wills felt that it was time to hang up his hat I was honoured to be appointed Chairman with Ashley as my excellent deputy. Again thank you Ashley for your support.

However with Roger having departed we were very lucky to be able to welcome another longstanding community member into our ranks with Vince Flower joining us. He has already become heavily involved in our work and has taken on the role of Police Community Liaison Advocate.

And finally Michele decided to step back after many years of service to the community. Again we were very pleased when Nick Orchard joined the Council.

Your new team have endeavoured to use this lockdown to prepare ourselves for the forthcoming financial year.

One of our main objectives has been to focus on our accessibility and communication with the community. This included:-

We have provided a **Parish Strategic plan** with a clear **action plan**. Councillors have taken individual roles and responsibilities utilising their considerable skills. I would commend you to take a look at the plan if you already haven't.

We have also published all our financial planning /detail and the agreed Budget/expenditure for 2021 /22.

With regard to these finances we had to had to make the difficult decision to increase this years precept to ensure that we were able to comply with **legal requirements** to hold **sufficient reserves for emergencies**. However this still only amounts to approximately 84 pence a month per household.

Policy Decisions/Projects for 2021/2022:

1. We have taken the decision to increase **Parish Council meetings to 10 a year**, and we have started the process to increase the number of **Parish Councillors to six**.

The reasons for this decision was primarily two fold, firstly to reflect the increased workload on the council. This year we held 11 meetings, with approximately 20 Planning Applications which have statutory deadlines which do not always fit into the scheduled meeting programme, and in excess of 15 enforcement issues within the Parish. And secondly we would like to increase the community representation on the council to ensure that we reflect the communities needs and wishes.

2. Unfortunately the lockdown has for obvious reasons delayed our aim to progress a proposal for the community to produce a **neighbourhood plan**. However Vince who is our lead on this has been working behind the scenes and will start the process once lockdown restrictions allow. Nick has also teamed with Vince on this exciting whole community project.

3. Another exciting proposal which has been delayed has been our aim to work towards developing a **Climate Emergency Action Plan**. Again Ashley, who will lead this project has been waiting patiently to start to engage with the residents to develop enviromental and green policies to encourage sustainable living by changing our working practices.

4. We have also started the process of **updating our Website** to provide a more user friendly site with more accessible information.

5. We have started the process of **updating the guides to the wonderful walks** we have within the Parish with a view to providing more interactive information on the website QR codes on walk posts for mobile phone connectivity, and an updated Parish Walk leaflet. Nick has undertaken to lead on this project and is already working hard collating data, photographs etc.

These are just a few of our ambitious plans, many others are listed on our Strategy /Action plan, so please feel free to discuss with your lead councillors if you would like to get actively involved.

The Parish Council's receipt of a Community Infrastructure Levy of approximately £7800 will give us the opportunity to make noticeable improvement around the Parish.

Vince and Nick will be undertaking community consultation to assist us identify the best possible use of these valuable and much needed funds.

Thanks

1. To our new clerk for her excellent work and support during this lockdown. Hopefully we will be able to meet for real and normally soon.
2. To our previous councillors who have worked so hard for the Parish in this voluntary role.
3. To Mike and Alistair for their continued support and guidance.
4. To our former chairman Roger for his total commitment to the Parish over many years.
5. To Ashley and his volunteers for their work ensuring our footpaths and walkways are available especially during lockdown.
6. To Vince and his team of litter pickers. Your efforts are always clearly visible.
7. To Sheenagh for her work with the neighbourhood watch scheme.
8. To the volunteers who have made the area such an asset of the Parish.
9. To my colleagues for all the hard work, support and dedication to the Parish Council's work.
10. And anybody who I have omitted to thank.

Hopefully you will be able to see /hear from this report that myself and my colleagues are very enthusiastic about the community in which we live.

And I know that many if not all of you feel the same.

I would therefore ask that if you are able to support us in any way, time, involvement in projects fund raising ideas, anything we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for listening to me and I will now pass you over to Alistair for his report.

3.2 County Councillor – Cllr Alistair Dewhurst

County Councillor's Annual Report 20th April 2021 – Coffinswell

The thread running through my reports for the last year has been our response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We started with our first lockdown, the closing of all non-essential business in the County and how communities could help themselves. We all had to grapple with Zoom, Teams and Webex – “Your muted!” has been the phrase of the year.

Gradually we learnt how to control the virus. Devon has been one of the most successful Authorities in the UK – we have had one of the lowest infection rates, our hospitals have managed successfully, and we have had the fastest roll out of the vaccine in the country.

All through this we have been advised by Devon’s Director of Public Health to remember the mantra - It’s vital to continue:

-  Making space
-  Covering your face
-  Washing your hands

Devon’s Trading Standards have been passing on the message ‘stay home, stay safe and stay scam aware’. Sadly, the most unscrupulous in our society saw an advantage – there have been too many scams to list here but you can make yourself aware on the Trading Standards website.

Remarkably quickly a new version of normal life came about. Meetings that had been cancelled became virtual meetings and before we knew it the usual busy round of committees had restarted. We held 18 public meetings broadcast live, produced 78 reports and listened to 8 public speakers. My committee looked at 5G and maintained work on problem gambling, lobbying government on both issues.

An issue for the new Council after 7th May will be how to facilitate in person meetings because government has decreed that even though Parliament can meet virtually, local government cannot. I Chair the Climate Emergency Standing Overview Committee and we will be in the ludicrous position of having to drive across the county to meet for an hour and a half. I met our MP last week and I’m pleased that she is lobbying hard on our behalf.

In September Devon’s householders had the chance to help the county become net-zero by joining Devon Climate Emergency’s (DCE) solar panel group-buying scheme. Solar Together and, with group buying experts iChoors Ltd, they offered homeowners the chance to buy high quality solar PV more cheaply than if they were buying alone.

Research by the University of Exeter shows that 19 per cent of all Devon’s carbon emissions are created by our homes, with more than half of those by grid-supplied electricity. Installing solar panels will reduce the amount of grid-supplied electricity needed for things like hot water, with a transfer to more eco-friendly solar energy.

In November, the County Council sought views on plans for a 5km section of the multi-use trail next to the Teign estuary, starting at the Passage House Inn in Newton Abbot and joining the A381 at La Roche Maurice Walk. From there, a shared use path would link to the junction near Morrisons supermarket, at the western edge of Teignmouth.

As part of the consultation, webinars were held to cover the scheme proposals and provide people with the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback to the project team. The consultation was hugely successful and the Council is now preparing a ‘shovel ready scheme’ and applying for grant funding.

After huge lobbying led by Marcus Rashford more than 15,000 children across Devon received food vouchers over Christmas, as the county council combated holiday hunger. The children were receiving free school meals and their families were able to buy food with the vouchers over the festive holiday.

The £1 million scheme involved vouchers which were redeemable in major supermarkets across Devon (but not the Co-op). After I raised the issue privately and at the County Council arrangements were put in place for families who could not get to a supermarket. Eligible

children in pre-school and young people in sixth form colleges also received the vouchers. Another £1 million was spent to cover half-term and the Easter holidays.

In January I reported about another possible pandemic – avian flu. People who kept just a few birds as pets or thousands, were legally required to keep birds indoors or take appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds.

Poultry and captive bird keepers were advised to be vigilant for any signs of disease in their birds and any wild birds and seek prompt advice from their vet if they have any concerns. They could help prevent bird flu (avian flu) by maintaining good biosecurity on their premises. Keepers were encouraged to register their birds with DEFRA so they could be contacted quickly if there was an outbreak in their area and action required. Owners of more than 50 birds were legally required to register their flock but those with fewer than this number were still encouraged to do so.

I also reported that three companies had been selected to roll-out full fibre broadband networks on behalf of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme.

Airband, Truespeed and Wessex Internet will be installing full fibre broadband across Devon and Somerset to more than 56,000 rural homes and businesses over the next four years. The combined public and private sector investment of around £80million will be in the vanguard of the Government's ambitions to build a Gigabit capable network across the UK.

In the new roll-out, Airband will be expanding its full fibre coverage into rural areas of Somerset, East Devon, as well as areas of Mid Devon, South Hams and Teignbridge.

We had a tough winter – freezing temperatures cause havoc on our highways. Snow showers and freezing conditions swept across Devon in February. Devon's fleet of gritters were working around the clock to treat the salting network and the authority urged people to avoid all but essential travel.

With road surface temperatures dropping to as low as -8C across Devon conditions were hazardous for anyone travelling in the county. During operations, a Devon County Council gritter over-turned near Holne on Dartmoor, highlighting the treacherous conditions. The driver was shaken by the incident but was unharmed.

This spring climate conscious Devon residents were urged to reduce their carbon footprint by cutting down on the clothes they buy and instead get the most out of what they have.

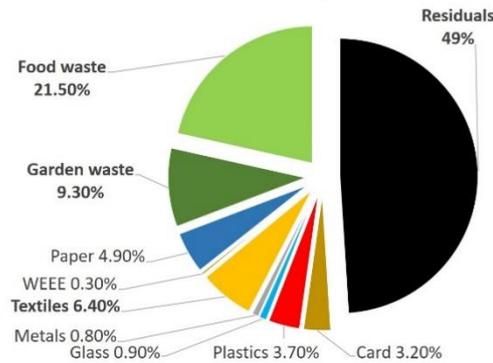
The 'fast fashion' industry is the second highest carbon-creating industry in the world and emissions from textile production outweigh the total carbon footprint of international flights and shipping combined. Producing the clothes we wear creates 1.2 billion tonnes of CO₂e each year, accounting for over 10 per cent of all global carbon emissions.

The production of a single t-shirt creates the same amount of emissions as driving from Exeter to Plymouth, and in Devon around 6,500 tonnes of textiles are still ending up in waste bins each year.

If re-used instead of binned, this would save 33,800 tonnes of CO₂. If residents avoided buying new clothes for a whole year, it would save a staggering 132,860 tonnes of CO₂.

Reducing waste and increasing recycling

TDC Residual Waste Bin Analysis



Monday 1st March started the UK's first Food Waste Action Week and highlighted the link between food waste and climate change. The Food Waste Survey 2019 estimates that, on average, almost one in four potatoes (22.8 per cent) are thrown away uneaten, compared to around a fifth of bread (21.5 per cent), chicken (20.5 per cent) and milk (18.4 per cent).

In March residents were invited to have their say on the draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay.

The new document presented how the 10 councils responsible for waste collection or disposal in Devon, will continue to work with residents to try to reduce the amount of household waste created and continue to ensure that waste is managed in a sustainable and cost-efficient manner.

Finally, I reported on Devon's £578.5 million Budget process. Although almost every budget line had increased – the first time since the introduction of 'Austerity' we were staggered to see that the budget for highways had been cut – these cuts falling on winter operations and Highway management.

Following representations made by my Party and the recommendations made by me as Chair of Scrutiny, the Leader announced an extra £600,000 would be added to the county council's roads budget under a new plan announced later at Cabinet.

The Lib Dem Budget amendment which comprised investing £3.4 million on fixing Devon's roads (filling potholes, routine maintenance, repainting white lines and investing in cycling and walking); £1/2 million on supporting communities who want 20 mph zones; £1/2 million on Green Devon schemes (Bee corridors, wildflower verges); £1 million supporting "Made in Devon" and "Bought in Devon" schemes and £3/4 million for mental health support for children. This all to be paid for by a draw down from the £64.4 million Budget Management Reserve set up to support this very type of thing.

Finally, this amendment sought to end the tax loophole whereby second homeowners can switch from Council Tax to Business rates and then claiming small business exemptions.

You won't be surprised to know that many Conservative Councillors echoed the North Devon MP's call for Highway improvements but failed to vote for the amendment that would have actually given them those improvements!

After 4 hours of debate the Council voted for a 4.99% increase in Council tax which comes down to £1,511.28 per Council Tax band D property for 2021/22. We all received our Council tax bills a few weeks ago.

3.3 District Councillor – Cllr Mike Haines

Coffinswell Annual Parish Meeting 20th April 2021
Teignbridge District Councillor Report

Budget

The Teignbridge band D council tax for 2021/22 increased by 2.85% or £5 to £180.17 per annum.

The economy is fragile, and significant changes to the medium term financial plan have arisen due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This has created significant financial uncertainties for the future.

In addition to some 'Covid' receipts from the Government, the budget process has required £3.3 million of earmarked reserves to balance the budget in 2021/22 and a further use of £2.6 million of earmarked reserves in 2022/23 leaving a budget gap of £1.2 million in 2022/23 and a budget gap of £2.6 million in 2023/24. Further work will be required to identify savings/generate income to balance these future funding gaps and protect reserves.

Planning Policy

The National Formula for calculating housing need gives a figure of 753 homes per year for Teignbridge. This equates to 15,060 homes over the Local Plan period 2021-2040.

The Teignbridge Local Plan Review is being prepared in 2 parts:

Part 1, the policies to guide decisions on new development, these were available for public comment between 23rd March and 13th July 2020.

Part 2 of the Plan contains consultation on site options and policies not previously consulted on or which are subject to a material change. This is due to be considered by Teignbridge Executive at its meeting on 1st June 2021, prior to a consultation.

I Chair Teignbridge Council's Local Plan Review Group, which has overseen the drafting of the Local Plan, enabling all Teignbridge Councillors to have an input into this process.

Further details on the Local Plan are available on the Teignbridge website, under 'planning' on the homepage.

Planning decisions/enforcement

Some applications and enforcement items have attracted higher levels of public interest over the past year. I have assisted the Parish Council in its deliberations on these matters, although the Covid situation has limited my ability to get regular updates from officers as used to be the case when I was able to be a frequent visitor to the Council offices at Forde House.

Mike Haines April 2021

3.4 Parish Paths Partnership – Cllr Ashley Brent

CPC P3 Report

The Parish Council maintains Public Rights of Way (PRoW) across the parish. This is funded through a grant from Devon County Council (DCC) with additional funding from the Parish Council (CPC). Landowners are responsible for maintaining horizontal growth (eg from hedges) whilst CPC is responsible for any vertical growth, furniture (such as styles), waymarking and the surface of the path.

There are four footpaths in the parish and one bridlepath. Additionally, CPC clear vegetation on two unmetalled roads within the parish for which DCC provide no resource.

There are also two permissive paths.

Thanks

The Parish would like to extend its thanks to:

- Milber Estates for maintaining all aspects of BP 8.
- Roger Wills for allowing and maintaining two permissive footpaths across his land which enable safe circular routes within the parish.
- All landowners over whose land run PRoW for their cooperation and assistance in keeping these clear of issues.

Annual Works

In 2020-21, vegetation was cleared once by CPC. This was carried out towards the end of the spring. A significant rise in footfall meant that a second cut was not required.

For 2021-22, it is envisaged that the first cut will be carried out in May with an additional cut carried out as required after the end of the growing season at the end of the summer.

This work is carried out by volunteers. Anyone willing to join the team that maintain PRoWs should contact the parish clerk. Training will be provided.

Additional Work

Last year, the gate at the Dacombe Mill end of FP1 failed. This was replaced by DCC in addition to the annual grant.

This year, the first stile on FP4 will be removed as it is failing. The waymarking post on FP1 at the Dacombe end of FP1 will be replaced.

Environment and Health

Vegetation cutting is kept to a minimum during the first cut to avoid disturbing nesting wildlife such as birds.

This year, operators made the switch to using alkylate petrol. Emissions from this fuel source are significantly less polluting than standard petrol. This is better for the operator as well as the environment. For future machine replacement, CPC is exploring electric machinery in order to reduce its carbon emissions.

To reduce the risk of exposure to damaging vibration, CPC now monitor the length of time an operator uses machinery. This is limited to defined safe working limits to avoid long term damage to operators' health.

3.5 St Bartholomews Church – read by Cllr A Parkes

THE CHURCH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW'S COFFINSWELL PARISH CHURCH

REVIEW OF 2020 AND COMMENTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE PARISH CHURCH

The plight of the parish church is echoed by many rural churches through out Britain. The burden of the "Parish Share", falling attendance and therefore reduced income followed by closure due to the pandemic has placed many churches in a vulnerable state.

The "Parish Share", known as the Common Fund, is a payment that all churches are required to pay to the Diocese. In our case this is Exeter Diocese, the payment is to help fund the Clergy, Mission and Support Services through out the Diocese. We are required to find £11968 in 2021. In 2020 we had to pay £11291, we were only able to contribute £3764. The overdue funds were held back to help fund a possible new/partial re roof of the church.

With reference to the Parish Council contributing £450 per annum, this donation is greatly appreciated by the Church. This payment supports the maintenance of the Churchyard. We have a dedicated Maintenance Fund which was set up many years ago. This is a Trust Fund bequeathed to the Church by Mrs Bridget Stanley a long term resident of the village. When dividend and interest rate returns were high this covered the cost of maintenance but in the last decade this has not been the case. For example in 2019 the income was £1688.15, the cost of maintenance was £3189 which left a deficit of £1500.85 this was reduced by the Parish Council grant of £450 to £1050.85. We have had to reduce the maintenance in 2020 but we were still left with a deficit of £223.19. Income in 2020 £1371.61, maintenance £2044.80, grant of £450 left a deficit of £223.19. The deficits were met by funds from our reserves.

To conclude we thank you very much for your kindness in granting these monies.

The Church council has tried to look on the positive side but we must say that without greater support in the next 2 years the future looks bleak.

We have copied the Annual Treasurers Statement to the Diocese. The Annual Accounts will be made available after the PCC AGM on 20 May.

A SUMMARY OF THE TREASURER'S STATEMENT

"It has been stated in past reports that Coffinswell has been drawing on its Reserves for a number of years and these Reserves resulted from monies left to the Church for its future. As to the future the Diocesan Share for 2021 at £11968 is an almost impossible task and is based on the assumption of an affluent village which, unfortunately, does not reflect on Church attendance or Gift Aiding. The long Interregnum (following the retirement of John Leonard) plus the pandemic has left a great void so far as fund raising/guidance and camaraderie was concerned which has not been replenished to date.

The Churchwardens have worked hard to keep the Church safe and secure for the community but much needs to be done to encourage the Parish Giving Scheme, fund raising and a commitment from the village to secure the Church and its future. We will review our commitment to the Parish Share payment but it is difficult to forecast so long as we have reduced attendance and an ageing population".

Finally we would like to mention the "Struggling, Closed and Closing Churches Report" which was published in 2020. This report states that 340 churches have been closed or closing in the period 2004-18. We do not want to be included in any future report and that once the pandemic regulations have been eased and with support from the village we hope that the Church will be used again for events. If the village lost its Church there would be no further Baptisms, Marriages or Funerals. It is a case of use it or lose it.

Michele Berry
Gordon Bower
Churchwardens

4. Public Session:

Various fundraising suggestions were made to assist St Bartholomew's Church, when restrictions allow.

After a request, Cllr M Haines clarified the processes that Teignbridge District Council take when determining planning applications, and suggested comments the public should make on an application.

Concerns were raised about the changing landscape of Coffinswell and Dacombe and unease about the future.

It was confirmed that the drain outside Norman's was not blocked by concrete, but by silt, and Devon County Council Highways Department aim to clear the drain during this financial year.

Cllr A Dewhirst said it would not be wise for residents or the parish council to request that private contractors jet the drains and expect highways to reimburse them.

Clerk to request that highways clear all drains programmed for clearing on the same visit.

The meeting ended at 8:42pm

Signed:
Chairman of Coffinswell Parish Council

Dated