

COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL - MINUTES
THURSDAY 23 MAY 2019 – ST BARTHOLOMEW’S CHURCH, COFFINSWELL

Present: Cllrs Wills (Chairman), Berry, Brent, Hermsen and Parkes
 Cllr Dewhirst (DCC)

Apologies: Cllr Haines (TDC)

Also present: Rachel Avery (Clerk)
 21 members of the public

No	Subject	Comments
1	The Chairman will open the Meeting and receive apologies.	Cllr Wills opened the meeting at 19.31. Apologies from District Cllr Haines were NOTED and Cllr Hermsen was welcomed to her first meeting as a Parish Councillor.
2	To declare any interests arising at this meeting.	There were no interests to declare.
	<i>The Council will adjourn for the following items:</i>	
3	<u>Public Question Time:</u> A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Council or other items that affect Coffinswell. <u>County and District Councillors' Reports</u> <u>Police Report</u>	Concerns were raised regarding a new opening onto the highway from land adjacent to The Bungalow, Dacombe. There is no visibility into and out of the field and a potential hedgerow issue. Action: Clerk to raise with TDC. Further to planning refusal, clarification of the situation at The Bothy was requested. It was NOTED that there are more vans on the site than before. County Cllr Dewhirst stated that if there is an appeal, enforcement cannot be involved in the site until after the process has been followed. Action: Clerk to raise with TDC. County Cllr Dewhirst’s report forms part of the minutes. There was no police report.
	<i>The Council will convene to conduct the following business:</i>	
4	Approval to consider, amend as agreed by the Council and approve the minutes of the following minutes: 21 March 2019	It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes.
5	To consider the following planning application: 19/00850/MAJ Use of additional land for camping purposes (Manor Farm, Dacombe)	<i>Standing orders were suspended.</i> The applicant explained that this application had been submitted for the site to be legal. The application is to increase the allowance to 40 days (an increase of 20 days) for the summer season and to allow for more space on and between pitches. There was confusion over the licence, with Cllr Parkes stating that it runs from the Thursday prior to Easter to 01 October. Another licence states 20 May to 20 September. The applicant accepted that they had followed an incorrect rule last year with regards to the opening of the second field. This application had followed from conversations with TDC’s enforcement officer. He stated that the second field would be linked to the existing site and its current conditions. Cllr Parkes expressed concerns regarding the lack of information about sanitation, with no indication within the application of temporary structures. The use of site facilities is limited to 75 tents; without additional provisions the licence would be in breach due to legislation requiring appropriate provision of sanitation. The applicant explained that the application is a time increase application, but no details of temporary infrastructure have been included and may be something that requires revision.

It was NOTED that there had been a campsite in Dacombe for a long time and the relationship between it and residents had generally been harmonious. Recently, there has been a huge increase in complaints. There have been licence breaches and a general lack of site management. Therefore, any further extensions to the site would cause great concern.

Cllr Parkes reported that he had driven past the site regularly, and on three occasions, there have been camper vans with awnings. There is no provision for vans within the current licence. This was accepted by the applicant, however the camper vans on site did not pay. The police were contacted but could not deal with this issue. He reported that there has been a reduction in single sex and student bookings due to complaints. Whilst the management does not have to do this, it is appreciated that these types of bookings are disruptive and problematic. Their online booking form has also been amended to show this. Due to a huge loss in bookings, this years' takings are down £5000 already. Part of the site's management must be finance-led and it is difficult to balance this.

The owners are trying to increase summer booking potential and in turn, improve site management. The applicant went on to report that due to ash dieback in the woodland, there is a real need for a financial input from the campsite which had not been required before. Last year, it had doubled or trebled in turn over which is why it caused issues. Cllr Wills stated that profitability is not part of the planning application.

It was NOTED that the application states neighbours were consulted, but members of the public said that this was not the case at all.

A resident stated that a general lack of management control is the main issue. Whilst there is sympathy towards the applicant, campers are left to do what they wish, and the noise is a serious problem. The opening of the second field makes this worse. The rules were ignored last year, and the second field was used far more than the licence allowed. The management are unable to deal with the increase in waste created and rubbish is taken off site to be disposed of elsewhere.

Overnight control is very important and is a very normal procedure for running a campsite. There could be additional signage on site, but 24-hour surveillance is a must.

Additional concerns were raised regarding the ecological report which forms part of the application. It states that there are no bats or rare birds. There are cirl buntings and seven species of bats including the possibility of greater horseshoe bats. There are also ponds which do not abut fields but are in the vicinity.

If the application is approved, concerns were raised regarding the requirement for additional toilet facilities. The current facilities offered should be better controlled and managed on the basis that one of their selling points is that the valley is quiet and peaceful.

Last summer was a classic example of lack of management and a condition of the planning application and licence should include 24-hour site management. Once the shop is closed, there is nobody on site at all. At one point last year, there were at least 300 people on site.

The current summer booking numbers were requested, and the applicant stated that bookings are incredibly low due to group booking cutbacks. Cllr Brent asked that if numbers are down, there may not be a need for the extra space. It was NOTED that it was hard to gauge whether the field is needed, but it would safeguard its future use if required.

Other villages were cited such as Stoke Gabriel, where there are four campsites with no issues. It was felt that this is due to 24-hour coverage

		<p>and noise control (for example, no noise after 22.00). Whilst the management are clearly making steps to improve this, there are still serious issues which require addressing.</p> <p>It was NOTED that the campsite is materially changing the shape of Dacombe, and this has not happened before. Dacombe itself sits within a bowl, and noise travels significantly throughout the valley. It was suggested that there is a possibility to increase revenue by changing clientele and increasing the price. The applicant stated that the owners are keen to have children on the site, but he accepted that the overall management needs to be dealt with. He had dealt with particularly difficult people on the site and appreciated that there may be a need for additional management.</p> <p>There was an additional suggestion that campsites with motor homes are usually quieter, which could be considered. It was NOTED that that did not form part of this application.</p> <p>It was NOTED that the roads around the campsite are very narrow and an increase in size would cause additional road use and were not suitable for an increased use with motor homes visiting the site. Cllr Brent suggested that the application was submitted based on numbers from last year. Whilst the lengths taken to address issues have been excellent, there is no need at present to open the additional field. He suggested that the applicant assess this again after this year's summer season.</p> <p><i>Standing orders were reinstated.</i></p> <p>Cllr Wills PROPOSED REFUSAL. This was SECONDED by Cllr Brent and APPROVED (5:0). The reasons for refusal were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The extension of the site is excessive and unnecessary - Existing road infrastructure is not suitable for such a large increase in traffic - Serious concerns surrounding a lack of 24-hour site management - The ecological survey states that there are no bats or rare birds, but the valley has at least seven species of bats and ciril buntings - The application site and surrounding area is formally designated within the Teignbridge Local Plan (2013-33) as an 'Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)' and as such Policy EN2 A applies.
6	Notice boards usage and key inventory.	<p>It was NOTED that the right-hand side of both notice boards are for Parish Council use, but the left-hand side can be used to advertise social events and for village information. It was requested that posters be removed when an event has taken place and that consideration is given to other notice board users.</p> <p>It was NOTED that there are five keys and the clerk would maintain an inventory.</p>
7	Enforcement Issues.	<p>It was NOTED that CCTV notices have been added around the Connybears Wood site and there appears to be increased activity in the field. Substantial works have taken place on the site and it was requested that the clerk contact TDC again as the enforcement issue remains outstanding. Action: Clerk to contact TDC.</p> <p>It was NOTED that the abandoned car on Orestone Lane, reported at the meeting in March, had been removed.</p>
8	Tree Management Plan.	<p>The clerk had circulated the draft tree management policy. Cllr Brent had submitted some amendments, which would be made and recirculated for consideration at the next meeting. Cllr Parkes reported</p>

		that he would provide an appendix to the policy regarding ash dieback. Action: Agenda item for July.
9	<p>Finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To agree accounts for payment • To approve the Annual Accounts 2018/19 • • To consider and approve the documents for the 2018/19 annual external audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 - Accounting Statements 2018/19 • Update - Lloyds bank account 	<p>It was RESOLVED to APPROVE accounts for payment. Accounts for approval and bank balances form an appendix to the minutes and the document was signed by Cllrs Wills and Brent.</p> <p>Cllr Wills PROPOSED that the annual accounts be ACCEPTED. This was SECONDED by Cllr Brent and APPROVED. It was NOTED that the asset register would be an item for the July meeting.</p> <p>The clerk read out the annual governance statement and it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the statement.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the external audit accounting statement. Cllr Wills duly signed the AGAR documentation.</p> <p>It was NOTED that the new Lloyds account is now open, and the two Barclays accounts had closed. Cllrs Brent and Wills signed the forms relating to the use of internet banking, and it was hoped that this would be set up in preparation for the July meeting.</p>
10	Neighbourhood Watch.	<p>Sheenagh Orchard reported that 45 properties have now signed up to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The new signs have been put up. Two more will be delivered; if there are any areas where signs would be useful, it was requested that she be contacted. The new signs are very smart and easy to see. Sheenagh Orchard explained that she also has more window stickers available.</p> <p>It was agreed that the scheme is a great source of information and Sheenagh was thanked for her work on this.</p>
11	<p>Funding and Grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Aid 2019 	It was NOTED that there were no projects for consideration.
12	Engaging with the community.	The clerk reported that the Facebook page was working well, and she had been posting to it regularly. The page is called 'Coffinswell Parish Council'.
13	<p>Footpaths and Highways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No parking sign at Princess Cottages • To discuss the possible removal of Petasites Fragrans (Winter Heliotrope) on Church Way (as requested at the APM) 	<p>Concerns had been raised regarding parking outside 1 Princess Cottages, where the road's width is significantly smaller. It was NOTED that when a car is parked there it is difficult to get a small car through, so emergency services and farm machinery would be unable to do so. It was NOTED that a fire engine would move the car with force if required. County Cllr Dewhirst explained that a modest sign doing a useful job would be acceptable to DCC Highways.</p> <p>It was NOTED that the pub owners would speak to patrons and try to add a sign in the pub as this area is used when the pub car park is full. It was AGREED that councillors would keep a record of the frequency of parking in this area, for further consideration. Action: Item for July meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Brent reported that this weed spreads underground and can be found in many areas around the village. He stated that only the female plant is found in this country. Whilst there had been a request for removal, it is well established and would be difficult to remove. The plant is most active in winter, so native hedgerows are not likely to be affected. The initial area of concern in Church Way is against a water course, so removal with the use of chemicals would be inappropriate. It was RESOLVED that the council would not undertake removal.</p>

		<p>Cllr Brent reported that DCC have been very good at filling potholes once they are reported online. All the potholes he had reported had been filled within two weeks. A resident reported a pothole on Dacombe Hill, which Cllr Brent would look at and report.</p> <p><i>Standing orders were suspended</i></p> <p>A resident reported that there has been a sandstone slip on land adjacent to Dacombe Hill and is approximately six inches from the telegraph pole in the road. Further information is awaited from structural and geotechnical engineers. She reported that the slip is much worse than anticipated and there has been mention of Dacombe Hill being closed. This was NOTED.</p> <p><i>Standing orders were reinstated.</i></p> <p>Concerns had been raised regarding the discharge of water across footpath two. There was discussion around a septic tank leak and the clerk would contact the Environmental Agency. Cllr Brent reported he would be undertaking path and tree maintenance work on footpath two on Tuesday, and if anybody wished to help it would be appreciated. He would look at this issue and report back. Action: Clerk to contact EA regarding possible septic tank issue and Cllr Brent to investigate and report back.</p>
14	To note any correspondence received.	Clerks and Councils Direct.
14	To note the date of the next meeting: Thursday 18 July 2019.	This was NOTED. The meeting was closed at 21.20.