

DRAFT

Minutes for General Meeting for Roborough Parish Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 via Zoom at 7.30 p.m.

Present

Councillor Yvonne Isaac Chairman

Councillor Lorna Pincombe Vice Chair

Councillor Michael Folland

Councillor Tracey Stevens

Councillor Martyn Hookway

Councillor Derrick Challacombe

Councillor Chris Hoole

County Councillor Andrew Saywell

District Councillor Rosemary Lock

Any resident from the Parish of Roborough may attend the meeting and under item 3 raise matters of concern, they will also be able to speak briefly on any agenda item.

**Item 1** Apologies for absence: Parish Council condolences to be sent to District Councillor Michael Clarke for his sad loss (AP1)

**Item 2** Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 were taken as read and signed as correct.

**Item 3** Members of the public present to raise any matters of concern. Mr J Bowden in attendance and nothing raised

**Item 4** Declaration of Interests: None

**Item 5 Action Points from previous meeting. 1 – 6 with the exception of AP2 due to coronavirus**

- Condolences to be sent on behalf of the PC to District Councillor Michael Clarke (AP1)
- Clerk to liaise with Ewan Huggons to forward training manuals to Cllr Folland (AP2)
- Cllr Hoole to liaise with volunteers in respect of the BT Kiosk refurbishment (AP3)
- Clerk to provide details of Community Fibre Broadband and contact details for H Jude (AP4)

**Reports from Councillors.**

- TAG representative - Councillor Isaac  
Nothing to report
- Planning Subcommittee - Councillors' Lorna Pincombe, Michael Folland and Tracey Stevens  
Planning application for wildlife pond at Ebberley granted permission  
Planning application Alford Villavin granted permission
- Snow Warden - Councillor Martyn Hookway  
All bins have been checked
- Web Master Councillor – Chris Hoole  
Website log in details received, all seems okay and any additions please advise

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- Highways Councillor – Councillor Derrick Challacombe  
Nothing to report
- Village Hall Committee representative – Councillor Tracey Stevens  
Nothing to report
- Defibrillator management – Councillor Michael Folland  
Nothing to report

### County Councillor Saywell

#### Coronavirus

- Stats – As of 17<sup>th</sup> March the DCC area of Devon now up to 19,703 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic.
- Since the 12<sup>th</sup> March that is a weekly increase of 172 infections, with most new infections coming from a spike in East Devon.
- By way of comparison... in Torridge there were 3 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon 9 in the last 7 days, West Devon 3 cases in the last 7 days.
- There are over 20,000 tests a week being carried out in the County.
- In all 18 Parishes within Torrington Rural there were 0-2 new infections in the seven days up to 12<sup>th</sup> March. When there are fewer than 3 infections the Government does not show the data to protect individuals' identities.

Infection cases continue to fall in Devon, though the rate of decline has now slowed, but overall our infection rate per 100,000 remains very low (21.4), compared with the national England average of 58.7. **In Torridge our infection rate is just 4.4, the lowest in England and third lowest in the UK behind just the Orkney and Shetland Islands!**

**Locally, we are continuing to do well in keeping our infection rates down.** With the rollout of the vaccine and the roadmap out of lockdown we will hopefully see a return to normality later this year, but until then it does remain vital that we keep up our efforts to follow the guidance of staying at home and if and when we are out and about to follow the 'hands, face, space' guidance.

While numbers are so low it doesn't take much, a few cases in a couple of workplaces, for the figures to go in the wrong direction and to see a high percentage increase, so keeping to the rules is still very important. We are still seeing some small, localised outbreaks in some workplaces in Devon and it is too early to say yet impact the 'unlocking' will have with the return of schools, premises re-opening etc.

#### Community Testing

Community Testing for coronavirus is being rolled out across Devon, with testing facilities now in Barnstaple, Okehampton (Tuesday & Friday only), Tiverton, and Exeter.

**Plans are afoot to have a mobile testing facility to cover Torrington, Holsworthy, Hartland and Bradworthy in March, though exact dates to be determined.** The aim is to have testing as accessible as it can be.

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Community testing will help to find individuals who have COVID-19 but do not have symptoms and need to isolate and who may inadvertently be spreading the virus. A positive or negative result will not remove the need to follow existing COVID measures socially and in the workplace.

Rapid lateral flow tests will be used, which will provide a result within thirty minutes. This will not be a substitute for the national coronavirus testing – **if you are symptomatic, people should book a free NHS test via the GOV.UK website or by calling 119. Do not use community testing.**

When this is up and running locally, or if people would like to use the Barnstaple site, please use [devon.cc/testing](https://devon.cc/testing) to book a test.

Please remember, if you have symptoms book a test through the Government website. Don't use DCC Community Testing.

### **COVID Vaccinations**

The rollout of the vaccine in Devon and in Torrington Rural continues to go well.

I sent a briefing note from the NHS to the Parish Council this week but the main points for vaccine rollout:

- **486,522 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose** between 8<sup>th</sup> December – 7<sup>th</sup> March
- **Latest estimate is 95% of over 70s in Devon have received their first dose.** About a quarter of those aged 16-60 have also received a first dose, this group includes frontline healthcare workers and those who are clinically vulnerable.
- The NHS in Devon are focusing on people aged 56-59 and over, and those who are clinically vulnerable.
- **Even when you have been vaccinated, you must still continue to follow the COVID-19 safety rules – stay at home as much as possible and remember hands, face, space.**

This remains a huge logistical exercise, very much dependent upon the speed and rate of vaccine supplies. Please wait for the NHS to contact you when it is your turn. The roll out is getting more localised, those who cannot travel far should be able to get their jab administered locally.

### **Return to School**

It is still early days but so far the return to school has gone very well, with a 95% attendance rate reported for Schools in Devon. The testing regime for Schools also appears to have been working well so far...

### **Support for Families over Easter – Holiday Activities and Food Programme**

Devon County Council has been awarded £1.69 million from the Department for Education to provide Holiday Activities and Food for children aged 5-16 on benefit related Free School Meals.

**DCC are starting this process for the Easter Holidays and would welcome applications from Torrington Rural** if they can demonstrate it is for the eligible children on Free School Meals.

The timescale for the HAF is 4 hours per day for 4 days over the Easter Holidays, which includes a nutritious hot meal, if you would like to contact the relevant officer, Melissa Filby 01392 383000 or

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email at [melissa.filby@devon.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.filby@devon.gov.uk), she would be happy to discuss your project and if it fits the HAF criteria.

The scheme will be run across all of Devon for the summer holidays.

### **DCC Budget**

The main work over January and February at the County Council has been the budget setting process. The Budget was approved at Full Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> February with more cash for vulnerable adults and children, health and potholes.

Key points:

- £37m extra cash injection into vital services, including an additional £21.7m for Adult Care and Health, and £11.4m for Children's Services.
- For Highways there will be an injection of extra revenue into the service including £600,000 for potholes and a new £100,000 fund for Town and Parishes to enhance street features.
- An additional £600,000 into the Hardship Fund, to be distributed to the District Councils, to help people badly affected by the pandemic who may have been made redundant but are not yet receiving universal credit or benefit support.
- The total overall revenue budget will be in excess of £578m.
- To help pay for these increases, Council Tax will unfortunately have to rise – up 1.99% for general services and 3% dedicated solely to Adult Social Care. This will equate to an extra £1.38 a week for an average Band D household.
- I know Council Tax rises are never welcome... but this will mean we both maintain vital services and can endeavour to improve them.
- The backdrop to the budget is one of huge uncertainty and risk – we do not know how long the pandemic will continue for or what the longer term impact on the economy, public health and demand for services will be.

### **Highways**

There has been a backlog of pothole repairs over the last couple of months though anecdotally I am now starting to see evidence that Highways are catching up. There have also been localised flooding incidents in Torrington Rural due to the bad weather patches we've been having, those these are being seen to and addressed. As ever, if there are any Highways problems please continue to report them and any issues with the Reporting then please feel free to contact me.

### **Elections**

The Government have confirmed that the May Elections to Devon County Council **will** be taking place on May 6<sup>th</sup>. I will be re-standing and am hopeful of re-election! I have worked hard for Roborough and over the last four years have been able to help get some significant repair works done in the Parish... though as ever there is still more to do! I will remain at your service until May, and I hope to be afterwards as well.

If anyone is unsure or uncertain about voting in the election they can apply for a Postal Vote or a Proxy Vote. Emergency Proxies will also be available for anyone who is told to self-isolate.

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The Parish Council gave thanks to Andrew for his work over the last four years and wished him well at the next election.

**District Councillor Lock**

Councillor Lock reported TDC have set their budget and Tax band D will increase 8.55p per week. The increase will enhance the hardship fund during Covid-19.

Car parking charges will also increase.

Great Torrington swimming pool is enduring delays to asbestos and there is no date as yet for reopening.

Following concerns raised regarding Roborough Rewilding project Councillor Lock contacted the LPA on whether planning permission was required. It was deemed there was no planning permission required. Cllr Folland reported he has spoken to the owner and that contact was made with TDC and no planning permission was required.

**District Councillor Clarke**

Nothing to report

**Item 6** Defibrillator Management Vacancy

It was agreed the vacancy of management for the Defibrillator to be taken up by Councillor Folland. Clerk to arrange training manuals from Ewan Huggons to Cllr Folland (AP2)

**Item 7** BT Kiosk refurbishment

Interest was expressed to paint the BT Kiosk, by volunteers, if the Parish Council provide materials. The Clerk discussed that the project is quite complex with excess soil behind the box, specialist enamel paint must be used, possibility of reglazing and care of the defibrillator to situ. Volunteers will endeavour to provide costings for the project. It was reported the kiosk is looking neglected. Councillor Lock reported another PC gave a budget of £2500.00 to volunteers, (£1000 spent so far) and the re-glazing is an additional £500.00.

It was agreed Councillor Hoole will contact the volunteers and report further at the next meeting. (AP3)

**Item 8** Financial Report (Clerk)

Nat West Current Account	£ 5229.70
Nat West Reserve Account	£ 380.40
NS&I	£ 1738.12
	<u>£ 7348.22</u>

£2175.14 VAT reclaimed has been received.

Bankers Nat West have confirmed the switching process will end 30th June 2021. However, they do have a Community Account should the Committee wish to apply but will require a new mandate. It was discussed whether to engage online banking and the Clerk would prefer to keep to the same arrangements as there are few cheques to sign per year. It was agreed to take a wait and see approach and include the item on the Agenda for the next meeting.

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**Item 9** Eaglescott Airfield

It was reported the LPA has acknowledged there is evidence conditions had been breached but no formal enforcement notice will be issued at this time.

If the LPA are to move to a formal enforcement notice they will need to show a sustained breach and restart the whole process. The training helicopters have since moved to Bodmin and causing duress.

The pressure group is to re-organise and will have a representative to report at PC meetings and it was reported funding has been raised for legal costs.

Devon Air Ambulance initially agreed to stop training exercises at Eaglescott (in line with LPA planning) but it will be difficult to allow DAA to change its position.

District Councillor Lock reported she was sent correspondence regarding helicopters and was very cross and upset following critical response. Cllr Lock expressed the apology to be sent to all contacts of the group.

Cllr Hoole reported he was sorry the manner, of the reply, was unwarranted but the context was warranted. Following discussion Cllr Lock requested formal apology to be sent to all the group.

**Item 10** Community Fibre Broadband

The Clerk reports that parts of the discussion, on Zoom, were inaudible

Openreach have provided their quotation which covers Roborough, Beaford, Ashreighney and Dolton. Openreach require the contract to be signed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for the grant funding to be locked in and further funding from April is not forthcoming at the moment.

It was agreed Councillor Saywell will contact someone with Broadband knowledge and report back further. Councillor lock will report back with contact details regarding Airband. It was further agreed Councillor Hoole will contact Helen Jude and report back to the PC. The Clerk to provide Helens contact details. (AP4)

**Item 11** Correspondence

Correspondence received regarding litter on recycling days. The clerk has written to TDC regarding this matter and assurances were given that the operatives of the recycling vehicles are to be made aware and to keep the doors shut when driving out of the village.

**Item 12** Cheques for signature

Cheques signed since last Parish Council Meeting: None

Cheques for signature at the meeting:

Vision ICT        £210.00

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**Item 13** Any Other Business

Parish Council meeting for May – the government have announced that meetings from 7<sup>th</sup> May should be face to face. Councillor lock advised NALC and DALC have meetings regarding this matter and it was discussed that the Government has not adjusted legislation for the meetings to be virtual. Security concerns and Hibernating meeting were discussed.

It was agreed that the Parish council meeting for May would be bought forward to the beginning of May 2021 to agree the End of Year Accounts.

**Date of next meeting**

5<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Meeting Closed**

20.45 p.m.