



# 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.

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## MINUTES OF THE COFFINSWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024 7PM AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

**Present:** Cllr N Orchard (Chair), Cllr C Bell, Cllr M Atkinson.

**In attendance:** Devon County Cllr A Dewhirst,  
District Cllr J Taylor  
Four Members of Public  
Mrs L Moorese – Parish Clerk

1. The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm and received apologies from Cllr S Avery, Cllr S Spokes, and Cllr A Brent (due to illness)
2. **To declare any interests arising at this meeting.**  
None
3. **Reports:**  
**3.1 County Councillors' report.** (Read by Cllr Dewhirst and is available to view on the website).

### **3.2 District Councillors' report.**

The Chair invited District Cllr Jane Taylor to give her a report, who spoke of the disbandment of the South Devon Alliance Party, and that she had joined the Independent Party, who currently consists of nine members, allowing them to have a larger influence in committee allocations. She also shared the news of District Cllr John Radford's election as Deputy Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which was seen as a positive development. There was a brief discussion on various ongoing projects, including concerns about the environmental impact of new developments. She also mentioned that progress on planning policies, including reviews of equality and diversity policies, was underway.

A consultation regarding public toilets was discussed. It was noted that the document provided a link but was unclear. Councillor Taylor agreed to forward the information to all councillors for further review. The possibility of converting some public toilets to pay-to-use was mentioned, as well as concerns about the ongoing closure of public facilities across the region. She encouraged everyone to participate in the consultation, particularly if they felt strongly about the need for single-sex toilet facilities.

The Councillors thanked District Cllr Taylor for her report, and she left the meeting at 7.32pm

### **3.3 Police Advocate and Neighbourhood Watch reports and updates.**

Nothing to report.

**4. 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 Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**5 Finance**

The Chair confirmed that that he had viewed the Bank Account with the Parish Clerk, with no matters arising.

**5.1 To agree and approve the payments schedule.**

The Chair firstly explained that that the barrow hire for Footpath 1's work was funded from the P3 budget, while the geotextile matting came from the CIL budget. The additional purchase of four plastic A-frame caution signs for use during footpath work and replaced bolts in the Footpath's kissing gates after temporary removal during the work.

It was agreed by all to approve the payments schedule.

**5.2** It was agreed by all to approve the Bank Reconciliation for the months of September and October 2024.

**5.3** The budget update for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 was presented with no matters arising.

**5.4 To discuss the budget for 2025 – 2026.**

The Chair advised that the draft budget for 2025-2026 had been shared for feedback and thanked those Councillors who had responded to this first draft. He advised that the primary task is to attend to the Parish Council's operating budget. The P3 and CIL budgets were mentioned, noting that the CIL Budget must be spent by October 2025 to avoid repayment. At present this year's spending is below budget, with a small surplus expected by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

It is estimated that a small increase in the precept (around 2%) would be required to cover inflation in fixed costs, with savings achieved in insurance and auditing. Comments and changes to the budget can be made before final approval in January 2025. The Councillors were asked to further review the proposals and provide any further comments prior to the January 2025 meeting.

**5.5 To agree and approve contribution to the Parish Clerk's FiLCA examination fees.**

The Chair advised that the Parish Clerk had successfully completed her FiLCA course, essential financial training for her role as Responsible Financial Officer. She was praised for her achievement as well as being completed in record time. As the Parish Council's policy is to support training, it was proposed that the Parish Council pay half of the £120.00 fee, with the balance being paid by the Clerk's other Parish Council (Manaton Parish Council). Cllrs Bell and Atkinson approved the payment of £60 for this.

The Chair introduced an additional item to the Meeting:

**5.6 Lloyd's Bank charges**

The Parish Clerk outlined the key changes (Bank Account names and maintenance fees) that Lloyds Bank will be introducing from 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to those accounts held by not-for-profit organisations with annual turnover of less than £250,000 per year.

It was noted that although the charges will be £4.25 per month, a debate followed as to whether to switch to a non-charging bank account considering the time-consuming efforts that would be involved in making such a change. The Councillors agreed to keep the current account for the present time and review next year.

**6 Funding & Grants:**

No funding was received.

## **7. Footpaths & Highways:**

To receive any updates on any footpath or highways issues.

The Chair advised all present that there had been a great deal of work on Footpath 1 in September, when a hardworking team of volunteers laid a substantial tonnage amount of chippings covering 270m of the 365m path. He advised that a further 3.5 tonnes of chippings will be required to complete the task but had enough supply of geotextile underlay to complete the task. He advised the path is in good condition with the very wet weather, and the Parish Council will review in January 2025, to decide on requesting funding for the 2025-26 budget. The volunteers were thanked for their contributions for their hard work.

### Strimming courses:

The Chair reported that five volunteers are ready to attend a one-day strimming course. Jon Boyd, PRoW officer at DCC Highways, advised that training is now Parish Council-led, with £250 per person provided to arrange courses. This year, only three places are available, with potential for more in April 2025. The Chair is awaiting course details to determine costs for training the extra two volunteers, which could be covered this year or deferred to April. Cllr Atkinson and Cllr Bell fully agreed on this action.

### 20's Plenty:

The "twenties plenty" initiative (promoting 20 mph speed limits) was discussed. The parish has received fifty stickers, which have been distributed to residents who wish to participate in the campaign.

### Speed limits:

The Chair introduced the subject of reducing speed limits in the area. Various questions were raised, such as whether the speed limit should be uniform at 30 mph or whether 20 mph could be designated in certain areas, particularly around houses. It was evident that the community should be encouraged to get involved and voice their opinions on speed limits, with some proposing a poll or petition to gauge support.

Suggestions were also made to reach out to the community more broadly, including cyclists, dog walkers, and farmers, as they may also be impacted by traffic issues. Also, there were additional concerns about safety near blind corners and roads frequently used by cyclists and horse riders. These also highlighted near accidents, where people take evasive actions, but no actual accidents occur. This would certainly complicate evidence-gathering for road safety issues. It was noted that the importance of camera evidence - footage could provide valuable proof for future speed limit requests.

Several community members were encouraged to participate in the campaign to reduce speed limits by voting on the idea and sharing their opinions through a poll.

It was also suggested that a sub-committee be formed to take responsibility for the review and report back to the Parish Council. It was felt that there would be some Parishioners who would be willing to assist with this work thereby not fully relying on the Councillors. The Chair confirmed that he would ask for volunteers.

## **8. To note any correspondence received**

None.

## **9 Parish Matters:**

### **9.1 St Bartholomew's Church – Update concerning damage by Oak Tree.**

The Chair confirmed that the Oak tree in the churchyard had now been removed, and the community was given the opportunity to take the wood for a small donation. He also informed the meeting that Devon Wildlife Trust offered a free landmark tree to each parish in Devon. Following the decision by the Church Wardens to apply for a replacement oak tree, a request has been submitted, and it is hopeful that one will be allocated for planting in December or January.

## **9.2 To discuss proposed parish events for 2025**

The Chair advised that there were two potential events being proposed for the Parish for 2025:

- Farmfest - a combination of a fete and a farmers' market, which has been suggested by Matt Redmond, who had experience organising events for Torbay.

This event was met with interest but not yet confirmed as awaiting planning progress updates.

- Open Gardens Day – This event is where local residents could open their gardens to the public. This idea had been proposed in previous years but lacked volunteer involvement. The idea was likened to a National Gardens Trust event, where different types of gardens are opened for public viewing, with proceeds potentially supporting local charities and causes, such as the Church.

It was reported that Sally Carr-Griffin, a local resident, has volunteered to help organise the event but needs others to assist.

It was agreed that further conversations should take place to gauge interest and finalise plans. A date was proposed for June, with an effort to engage more participants. Concerns were raised about the challenges related to insurance and the parking situation, particularly the lack of space for vehicles and the risk of traffic congestion.

## **9.3 To receive any further updates on parish matters.**

The Chair advised that he had been contacted by two people requesting assistance from the Council for works on land that is not owned either privately or by the Parish Council.

The first request is that the constant water leak from the manhole on the triangle is caused by the oak tree having spread its roots into the pipe that should take the water from the manhole to the gully on the other side of the road. Although this used to be a private water supply to the farm buildings next to the church, it was the Parish Council who planted the oak tree, and it was suggested that the Council fund the installation of a new pipe from the manhole to the drain on the other side. Concerns were raised about the potential cost and need for permissions, including road closures, but it was agreed that it should be explored further. DCC Councillor Dewhirst asked for the information to be sent to him, and he would investigate the matter further.

The second request has been received from the residents of Swallows Hatch regarding the overhanging beech tree on the corner opposite the phone box. They had been paying for regular pruning but are now requesting assistance as they do not own the land on which the tree stands. The tree is within a conservation area, so permission from Devon County Council is required to manage it. It was suggested that the Parish Council write to Devon County Council for further clarification and action.

The Chair advised that he had been observing the persistent water drainage problem on the corner by The Round House and it was evident that it was because of a blocked culvert. Discussion followed as to the best way to alleviate the problem, and a proposal was made to dig out the ditch and clear the culverts. Although it was noted that the landowner might be responsible for some of the issues it was agreed that further steps should be taken to contact the relevant authorities and resolve the problem.

## **10 Planning:**

**10.1** To discuss the following planning applications:

**Ref: 24/01719/NPA - Marvcombe Footland Lane Dacombe Coffinswell Devon TQ12 4SB**  
Application for Prior Approval under Part 3 Class Q (a) and (b) paragraph W of the GPDO for change

of use of three agricultural buildings to one dwelling house. (*Refusal of request for prior approval issued under 24/01326/NPA*)

The Chair briefly explained to those present that the first application had been discussed at the Parish Council Meeting in September 2024, at which it had received the support of the Parish Council. However, this was subsequently turned down by the TDC due to a discrepancy in the plans - basically a garage that was not part of the original design. The Planning Officers also incorrectly assessed the building's agricultural use, evidencing that it had not been used solely for agricultural purposes for a specified period. After the Councillors' views had been given concerning the removal of the garage from the plans, it was agreed that the Parish Councillors would fully support this application.

**Ref: 24/01779/CAN - The Linny, Road from Courtwell House To Greenacres**

This application relates to the removal of a Lombardy poplar due to its roots lifting the car park tarmac.

The tree was noted to be tall and skinny, located between Edwards Lane and the car park. There being no significant objections, the Parish Council unanimously agreed to support the application.

**10.2 To note the following planning decisions:**

Ref: 24/01398/CAN – The Old Rectory - Approval of Tree(s) works within Conservation Area

Ref: 24/01494/CAN - Court Lodge - Reduction of Large Sweet Chestnut Tree

Ref: 24/01260/CLDE – The Cider Barn – Issuance of a Certificate of lawfulness for existing use of building as ancillary annex.

Ref: 19/01274/COND1 – Connybear Wood – successfully discharging a condition for an underground investigation before building their new house.

**11. Correspondence received by the Parish Clerk**

**Ridge Road Closure:** This has been scheduled for closure on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025, which would affect local traffic. The closure between the stated hours would be due to tree maintenance by BT.

**Public Toilets Consultation** - The Parish Clerk confirmed that the email referred to by District Cllr Jane Taylor in her report had been received and forwarded to the Councillors for their attention.

**.12. Enforcement Issues:**

None

**13. General Public Question Time:**

No public questions were raised during the meeting.

**14. To note the date of the next meeting:**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the Meeting which ended at 9.02 pm.

Signed:  
Chairman of Coffinswell Parish Council

Dated: