



## ROCKBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025** in the Village Hall, Rockbourne, at **7.00pm**.

**Members Present:** Cllr Wise (Vice-Chair), Cllr Branagan, Cllr Carmichael, Cllr Wallis and Cllr Wiggins. Also present Mark Baulch (Clerk & RFO).

There were also ten members of the public from the parish and a record of their names is held.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Cllr Leeson (Chair) and District Cllr Richards.

#### **2. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Correspondence Received**

The Council had received a number of e-mails as follows.

27<sup>th</sup> February from Ringwood Town Council with regards to devolution training on 9<sup>th</sup> April, which had been circulated to Councillors.

28<sup>th</sup> February from Hampshire Association of Local Councils also with regards to devolution and also circulated. A training session will be held by Teams on 19<sup>th</sup> March and the Clerk will attend.

8<sup>th</sup> March from Kelvin Winch of Ringwood and Fordingbridge Footpath Society. The pertinent point is that they will be meeting at the Village Hall on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May for a circular walk to Whitsbury and back.

10<sup>th</sup> March from New Forest District Council with a copy of some information on devolution which has been distributed to Councillors.

12<sup>th</sup> March from the Planning Department confirming that the planning application at Threeways Cottage had been refused.

15<sup>th</sup> March from Helen Latcham of Alderholt Youth Football Club about using the Recreation Ground which will be discussed later in the Agenda.

18<sup>th</sup> March from New Forest District Council offering training on devolution to Councillors on 28<sup>th</sup> April. This had been circulated and requires a response by 5<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **4. Public participation time**

The new owner of Cae Malwen Campsite was in attendance and said that concerns about numbers, traffic and noise had been heard. They have made a decision to make the numbers smaller, around 20. Currently 11.

Hopefully, this will address concerns. They have a no music policy, dogs on leads and Site Manager on site at all times. Also have plans for an organic market garden in half an acre of the smallholding. This will supply local people, eateries etc. No facility to buy on site, no farm shop. There will also be an application for siting a poly-tunnel. Taken on board comments. No more than half an acre. Spoken to Keith Honeychurch from Hampshire County Council about improving footpath network across the fields. Have removed an obstruction and the stile in the top left hand corner will also be taken out. Eventually looking to replace with gates. The bottom boundary behind the barn will be gates too. Seeking help with funding and might need volunteers to install them. Looking to re-fence site and reinstate hedges.

Cllr Carmichael asked whether the Site Manager would be in a tent? The answer was that it would be the owner, probably in a camper van. With regards to bins, New Forest District Council business waste department will be dealing with them. Also looking to adjust guest arrival times to avoid school times. 50 pitches was the maximum, working on less.

The owner of Mists Farm was in attendance and said that they wanted to improve footpaths and move fences too. They have owned Mists Farm since the Second World War. They are applying to Natural England for a wild

beaver release licence. Early conversations suggest that they probably will not get this. They are only interested in Sweatford Water, about a 1Km stretch, with water meadows each side at the moment. The farm had been tenanted and the tenant died about three years ago. The whole farm is now in hand with 10 cattle and 2 pigs and they have planted the meadows with 25 disease-resistant Elm trees, plus 210 mixed trees from the Hawthorn Trust. They have camera traps and have seen Otter, Badgers, Foxes, Moorhens, Mallards, Roe Deer and other wildlife. The aim is to improve wildlife.

Cllr Carmichael asked where the beaver in the village had come from? The response was that they did not know. Nobody has seen it, although some trees have been gnawed. It is possible to remove any dams or lodges that they build within two weeks. The Beaver Trust will help if they need to. Cllr Wallis asked how many beavers they would release? The answer was that there is room for 2 or 3 families. Beavers will help with flooding in Fordingbridge as well as improving fish stocks and helping water voles, invertebrates, frogs, toads and grass snakes. They are a keystone species and have been tested in Europe for 40 years. They do not eat fish or hurt people. They were here over 400 years ago but were hunted out of existence. Cllr Wise asked about the impact of the beavers on their own property and the answer was that they should turn the water meadows into pools. They understand the concerns about flooding in Rockbourne. Unfortunately, this will only help downstream. There are 60 acres of water meadows and so they can hold a lot of water. The river should be teeming with fish. It will probably be years before this happens and want to keep everyone informed. Anyone wanting a visit, please let them know.

A member of the public said that a beaver has arrived and damaged some trees. Another asked how many kits they have? The answer was that they keep their kits for 2 years. A litter is around 2. If the area is too crowded, they will postpone having litters. They only have one litter per year. So the public asked how many animals this meant? The answer was 2-4.

Moving on, another member of the public spoke about the meeting last Wednesday with regards to saving the pub. The building is safe, but the running of the business is not. They will be having a share offer to finance the future of the pub.

#### **5. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

All confirmed that they were a true record and they were signed by the Vice-Chair.

#### **6. Action points from the minutes of the last meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

All completed or covered in this Agenda with the exception of the insurance for the cricket nets. **ACTION:** Clerk to follow up with insurance company.

#### **7. Reports by the Downlands & New Forest Ward Councillor and representatives on outside bodies**

District.Cllr Richards had sent her apologies and whilst there was nothing to report, offered to help the Council in any way that she could.

Another Council had reported that they were trying to contact County Cllr Heron for a report and had not been able to do so for some time.

#### **8. Payment of outstanding creditors**

The Clerk presented the latest invoices and statement of accounts to the Councillors. The financial year end of 31<sup>st</sup> March is approaching and so the necessary paperwork for that will be raised shortly and the Auditor contacted.

#### **9. Planning Matters**

New Forest District Council is the local Planning Authority and consults Rockbourne Parish Council on planning applications received for Rockbourne Parish.

There were no planning matters on the Agenda. However, Cllr Wallis raised the question of the following application:

<b>Reference</b>	24/10783
<b>Alternative Reference</b>	PP-13307995
<b>Application Received</b>	Wed 28 Aug 2024, revised version Thu 30 Jan 2025
<b>Application Validated</b>	Tue 17 Dec 2024
<b>Address</b>	LAND ADJ PROVOST FARM, ROCKBOURNE SP6 3NR
<b>Proposal</b>	2 no agricultural buildings and associated hardstanding

Cllr Wise said that this was not on the Agenda and the deadline had passed. Cllr Wallis said the deadline is now 28<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr Wise added that a number of deadlines had already passed, the original being 8 weeks from 24<sup>th</sup> September so it was still difficult to consider and that a separate meeting would be best.

There are now 68 documents on the website. A member of the public pointed out that Sweatford Water is now at the maximum for nitrates. Cllr Wise said that there was a lot of technical information. Cllr Carmichael pointed out that the decision had been pushed back due to the concerns of the Environment Agency. Have the National Landscapes (new name for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) team come back? Cllr Wise said that the Environment Agency had now said that they were comfortable but the Environmental Health response remained outstanding. Cllr Carmichael felt that we should try and come back with a response. Cllr Branagan

said that we were never going to understand all of the technicalities. Cllr Wise added that his position would be that we need to support farming, but not necessarily any application and it is hard to determine if this one is right. If we are going to decide, we should defer to New Forest District Council as they have the experts. This has been a very divisive thing in the Village. As it is not on the Agenda, people may not be here tonight to comment. Cllr Wallis stated that she had read it all. I feel strongly that the applicant is not going to put anything into the Bourne. This needs a decision by 31<sup>st</sup> March. Cllr Wise pointed out that the applicant has said that Environmental Health have not responded. The Clerk interjected and suggested **ACTION:** Clerk to monitor the Planning Portal and alert Councillors once that report has been received. Cllr Wise agreed and said that then they could decide. Cllr Carmichael added that they do not need to understand every part of the reports, just enough to make a decision.

#### 10. Users of Recreation Ground and Pavilion

Cllr Wallis reported that a member of the parish had asked to park cars on the Recreation Ground on 29<sup>th</sup> May. Cllr Branagan asked whether there would be a charge and Cllr Carmichael said that a charge had been agreed, but that the Council would normally waive this for locals. This was **AGREED** by all Councillors. Alderholt Youth Football Club [as per Agenda Item 3, email from Helen Latcham] would like to use the ground for training on Monday and Tuesday evenings, from 6:30pm. They need 100 x 50 yards. They do not need the pavilion, but would like the key in case of toilet requirements. They currently pay £5 per team at Alderholt and have one team on a Monday, two or three on a Tuesday. There is the possibility of proper football in the winter. Cllr Branagan asked whether they needed lines? Cllr Wallis replied not for training, but then they will. They will bring goalposts that are 16' x 7'. They will put them away, probably behind the pavilion, after use. Cllr Wise asked whether the Cricket Club were happy with this and Cllr Wallis confirmed. Cllr Wiggins suggested matching the £5 per team charge and Cllr Wise asked about numbers of players? Cllr Wiggins suggested about 33 as 11 per team? Cllr Carmichael suggested charging in the same way as Alderholt. Cllr Branagan asked whether this meant 33 cars? Cllr Wise said that might be an issue. We definitely should be doing it, so let us negotiate the best terms we can. **ACTION:** Clerk to draw up a contract. Cllr Wise said that we definitely need to think about parking and some sort of protection for the ground. Cllr Wiggins suggested having a word with the Club and Cllr Wallis agreed that the parking area will need to be roped off and specified in the contract. Moving on to the cricket nets, the update is that they should be up and ready next week.

#### 11. Working Groups (LGA1972 s7.48)

Recreation Ground had been covered in Agenda Item 10.

In the absence of Cllr Leeson, Cllr Wise spoke about the Bourne / Flooding group and highlighted that a working party had been arranged the previous weekend and that five people had helped to clear a lot of the hemlock, with the stream now running better. Cllr Leeson will be arranging more of this work.

After much delay beyond their control, the Traffic group have got SpeedWatch up and running. Five volunteers have done two sessions on a Saturday morning, primarily for training, and a weekday at 3:30pm. They did not catch anyone but SpeedWatch only records those doing over 35mph. Cllr Carmichael said that when we had the electronic equipment, very few vehicles came through the village at more than 30mph. But, 30mph is too fast. We had some between 30 and 35mph. Cllr Branagan asked if this was still the pre-cursor to something? Cllr Wise confirmed that the primary driver is to apply for a 20mph limit. Cllr Wallis asked whether vehicles had been counted, as the main issue is the volume of traffic? The answer was that huge numbers are coming through. The potholes do deter some of the traffic. Cllr Carmichael asked whether there is a plan to look at the verges? By Minty's Hill, there is nothing left? Cllr Wise agreed that this was a fair point and that we need to get County Cllr Heron involved. Cllr Wiggins felt that it needs kerbing, but that is very unlikely. Cllr Wallis asked that we **ACTION:** ask the Council again not to cut the verges from Toyd Corner to the village. Cllr Wise concluded by saying that more SpeedWatch activity is to be arranged.

#### 12. To arrange the date for the next meetings –

The next meetings will be Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May and Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June @7pm in the Pavilion, Rockbourne. Those wanting to join the meetings are asked to please contact the Parish Clerk: [rockbourneclerk@outlook.com](mailto:rockbourneclerk@outlook.com) for details.