

**Konsel Pluw Erens
Gerrans Parish Council**

**MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 at 7.30 pm
in the Memorial Hall**



Present:

Cllrs Kate Greet (KG) (Chairman), John Crombie (JC), Jane Andain (JA), Charles Emmett (CE), Ralph German (RG), Joanna Holah (JH), Nev Meek (NM), Val Neal (VN), Amelia Sumner (AS), Laura Wilson (LW); CC Julian German (JG), Steve Skull (Clerk).

38 members of the public attended.

012401

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- None

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE ABSENCES

- None

012402

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

- CE declared he was aware there might be an issue of predetermination at item 7(a) with his membership of local pressure group Save Gerrans Bay but he would use his judgement when the item was discussed.

- NM said he was a member of several organisations which might take a view on the matter to be discussed in item 7 (a), but considered he had no personal interests to declare and was not predetermined.

012403

REPORT FROM CORNWALL COUNCIL WARD MEMBER

JG referred to the matter to be discussed in item 7 (a) on the agenda. He said he was present to listen to what was said. He had requested an extension to MMO's deadline for comment on the 2 applications concerned.

012404

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's invitation, members of the public spoke as follows:

1. Local fisherman Ben Taffinder gave an apology for absence from Robin Edwards, who would have spoken but was unable to attend due to having sustained a serious injury at New Year's Day's firework display. Mr Taffinder spoke in opposition to both applications from the perspective of the potential impact on fishing, safety at sea and local cultural heritage.
2. Mr Richard Robinson, who introduced himself as a Rosevine resident, said that the proposed installations would be in the wrong location, and ignored the MMO's South West Inshore Marine Plan. He said an Environmental Impact Assessment would have been expected, warned that future regattas might have to be moved and that pre-

engagement with the harbour authority had been inadequate. Not enough time had been allowed for the public consultation. Mr Robinson referred throughout to documents he said he would forward after the meeting for the Councillors' further information.

3. Mr Tony Tomlison, Chairman of the Inshore Fishermen and Regatta Committee, said he objected to the proposals because of the potential displacement of fishing activity in Gerrans Bay. He said the cumulative impact of such offshore developments has the ongoing effect of reducing local fishing opportunities, and that from Mevagissey to Mylor there had been objections to these proposals. For more than 100 years, the Regatta and local working boats had used that area.
4. Mr Nick West, of the Mevagissey Fishermen's Association, said the Mevagissey fleet was second in size only to Newlyn in the area, and boats from there used these fishing grounds at some time every year, especially night fishing for sardines, mackerel and bass. Catches here could account for up to 25% of their income. He said a major threat to their industry was the increasing presence of installations such as mussel farms and desalination plants, leading to more and more closed areas for fishing.
5. Ms Jess Fox, a marine biologist and ocean scientist resident in St Just in Roseland, said the proposed installations would scour the seabed, displace all the demersal bivalves and ruin their water purification effect. The applicants had given no evidence of mitigation of these effects over the expected 50-year presence of the plant.
6. Ms Sophia Hetherington, Secretary of Roseland Environmental Action Community Team (REACT), said the 50-year licences seemed extreme, and wondered what would happen in the event the applicants became insolvent during the period.
7. Ms Cherylin Mackrory, MP said she had had a light-touch pre-engagement meeting with the applicants in the spring of 2023. She declared an interest in that she was married to a local fisherman. She said she was trying to be objective in the matter but felt that the location, rather than the idea of seaweed farms in general, was a problem.

No other members of the public asked to speak.

012405

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Those members who had been present approved the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th December, and the meeting of the Finance Committee which preceded it, as being true records of those meetings. KG signed the minutes.

012406

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS - MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

012407

PLANNING MATTERS

a) Proposed Seaweed Farm in Gerrans Bay

Marine Management Organisation (MMO) applications

MLA/2023/00370 and MLA/2023/00371

- The clerk read out a statement from the applicants in respect of two Marine Management Organisation applications MLA/2023/00370 and MLA/2023/00371 for licences to install seaweed farms in Gerrans Bay.

The statement had been received the previous day, a Bank Holiday, and set out the applicants' reasons for withdrawing their previous voluntary offer of a public meeting on January 4th. The clerk also reported that the applicants had submitted with that statement a substantial amount of new, additional

information for consideration. Much of this information consisted of detailed responses to questions from REACT, who had also been copied in to the information. He said he had made all this information available to the local Community Website Roseland Online within hours of receipt but it had not been published.

KG referred to a table of notes ('appraisal') she had circulated prior to the meeting amongst Councillors, inviting comments and contributions. This was based on the PC's response to the applicants' introductory approach in April 2023, and using the original headings of issues of potential concern then expressed by the PC. She said she thought this could be used as a basis for a PC response to the current MMO consultation.

KG then asked each member in turn for their initial comments on the applications.

- JC said Councillors had been overwhelmed with information from all sides in a short period of time and he thought he needed more time to acquaint himself fully with the latest communications.
- VN also said there had not been enough time to arrive at an informed decision.
- JA also said there had not been enough time, and was sad that the applicants had felt unable to go ahead with their own meeting for the reasons they had stated.
- JH said she spoke as the only marine biologist on the Council. She was a member of REACT and Wild Roseland, had been involved in local sealife surveys, and knew the local marine environment from a lifetime's experience. She said she had read extensively on the subject matter of these applications, and considered the issue to be very complex, with definite positives and negatives. She was aware of the emotions stirred up, and also understood the concerns voiced by the commercial fishing community, but said it was important that Councillors arrive at specific and objective comments.
- CE said he was not a marine biologist, but had been doing a lot of research into the issues involved and declared himself passionately against the applications - chiefly on the grounds of potential harm to local fishing and recreation. He said the proposed location was just unsuitable. He also said he was sceptical about the responses received from the applications to REACT's queries, and said that the applications were particularly noticeable for what they did *not* say.
- RG said the lack of information about the prospects for local employment was telling. He said more information was needed from the applicants, but that he thought it would not be forthcoming.
- NM said there should have been an open public meeting called much earlier and the PC should have organised it. He believed the PC should get off the fence and put in a response to the consultation.
- LW said she felt there had been too much information to absorb clearly in a very short time.
- AS said she was confused, and had not reached a firm conclusion yet, but said she was a keen surfer and thought the proposals could destroy the surfing in the area.
- KG then turned attention to the specific agenda items:

(i) To consider submitting a Gerrans Parish Council comment on each application:

NM proposed (seconded LW) that the PC should submit a comment. This was agreed unanimously

(ii) To consider the format and content of any such comments.

NM stated that Councillors could all agree that both applications should be opposed on the grounds of lack of adequate consultation, provision of insufficient information, and failure to provide a formal Environmental Impact Statement. He therefore proposed a vote to object on those grounds. KG asked NM to withdraw this proposal as she did not think there had been sufficient discussion, but NM was not

willing to do so. NM's proposal was seconded by RG, and NM called for a recorded vote. Voting was 3 in favour (NM, RG and CE) and 5 against (JH, JA, VN, JC and KG). LW and AS abstained.

KG called upon Councillors and members of the public to remain calm in the debate and said Councillors would not be bullied into making decisions before they were ready. NM requested that the clerk record his formal objection that KG had accused him of bullying.

JC then proposed (seconded VN) that the PC defer its decision as to its response to a further meeting the following week - still within the MMO's deadline for comment. This was carried by 7 votes to 2, with one abstention.

CE left the meeting at this point due to a prior personal commitment.

b) Cornwall Council Applications

There were two applications for consideration. These are outlined below, and the Council's comments are noted on the Cornwall Council planning website.

| Application | Address | PC decision |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| PA23/09801 | Droskyn, Rosevine | Support (unanimous) |
| PA23/09575 | Percuil House, Gerrans Hill | Support (unanimous) |

b) Decisions since last meeting

- None

012408

AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY AND LOCAL HOUSING NEED

There had been no report received from Roseland Community Land Trust since the last meeting.

012409

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Roseland Environmental Action Community Team (REACT)

A report received from REACT is attached as Appendix 1 and, having been previously circulated amongst the Councillors, was taken as read.

012410

OTHER REPORTS

From Committee representatives, Working Groups and/or liaison members

NM said he regularly attended meetings of the Police Liaison Group on behalf of the PC, and invited anyone with issues that might be brought to Police attention to let him know.

RG had attended the recent AGM of Gerrans Cricket Club and reported that the club was intending to continue playing, but to drop down a league to keep the younger players involved.

012411

FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Accounts for payment

The Clerk had reported that all payments submitted for approval were materially within budget, or within forecast and agreed contingency levels where actual figures were unknown at the time of setting the budget. It was resolved that the outstanding invoices totalling £4,827.21 (including VAT of £440.10) be paid (proposed RG, seconded AS). A schedule of all the payments is available from the clerk.

2. Bank Reconciliation

The reconciled bank balance as at 25th December 2023 was £58,432.89

012412

OTHER PARISH MATTERS

1. Any urgent business

- None

2. New matters to be included on the next agenda, other than heretofore minuted

- None

3. Minor items for report only

- NM reported that The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies had been awarded just under £4k from the Community Capacity Fund. He said he knew that Gerrans P.C. had been consulted, and thanked Councillors for their support.

012413

NEXT MEETING

It was unanimously agreed that Tuesday 6th February 2024 be set for the next meeting of the Parish Council, to be held in the Memorial Hall annexe at 7.30 pm.

012414

MEETING CLOSE

KG declared the meeting closed at 9:45pm.

End of Minutes

APPENDIX 1

Report received from Roseland Environmental Action Community Team (REACT) (Agenda item 9)

REACT update for Roseland Parish Councils – January 2024

CEAP – the CEAP group have continued to work on the final draft Climate Environment Action Plan.

Solar/PV array report Group – have worked through the feasibility report by Atlantic Energy – there are still a few questions to check over with Charmian Larke before the group decided on whether to apply for further funding.

Seaweed farm applications for Gerrans Bay – REACT has been looking into the applications and will submit a response before the 11th January deadline. Discussions with the two companies and with other interested parties during the short consultation period.

Tree Nursery – tree planting and maintenance season. The group are working with the NT at Caragloose and at Pelyn to replant trees – dates planned for mid-January.

Richard Cochrane's Legacy – broad agreement with Roseland Academy on establishing an Eco award for pupils.

Down the Drain will be shown at the Harbour Club on February 6th at 7pm – part of Cornwall Climate Care's documentary film series of Cornwall's Climate Stories. This film looks into issues around fresh water, flooding/drought and pollution concerns.

End of Appendix 1