

BIGBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th April 2014 in the Memorial Hall, St Ann's Chapel at 8.10pm.

PRESENT: Cllr S Watts, (chairing the meeting), Cllrs: B Carson, P Cook, A Klidjian and R Owen. Five members of public were present.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Cllr T Boys. PCSO Paul O'Dwyer and Mr W Mumford

2 ANNUAL POLICE REPORT

PCSO O'Dwyer had apologised for not being able to attend or secure another officer in his place but asked the clerk to report the following:-

In the year 2013-2014 there had been 10 crimes against 11 of the previous corresponding twelve months. During the last 30 days there has been one crime reported – that of possession of a Class B drug whereupon the offender had been given a fixed penalty notice. Police patrols within local parishes will be increased shortly.

3 ANNUAL C.CLLR'S REPORT. Following his resignation, Mr Mumford was unable to attend this meeting but submitted the following report :-

- DCC decided to increase Council tax for 1st time in 4 years by 1.9% - foregoing Government Grant which was only guaranteed for a few years – this is to avoid significant hikes in years to come to catch up with inflation pressure
- Well on the road to setting in train necessary measures to secure the £100m+ savings required over next 3 years in response to Comprehensive Spending Review
- When elected as our C.Cllr, budget excluding schools direct grant was a little over £600m p.a. At end of 1st term in control, budget was reduced to about £500m and over next 3 years will have to reduce again to about £400m.
- Youth Service – consulting on shifting DCC away from an open access universal provision to just a targeted service focussed on those with greatest need. Will be seeking other parties to deliver the universal provision including where other organisations take over existing DCC assets. Have already had a number of strong expressions of interest from community based organisations and support of the new Early Help strategy being deployed county wide.
- Day Centre Review. It has been necessary to launch a review of the number and location of day service providers. Deployment of personal budgets has meant that service users are now freer to choose who and what to spend their allowance on and this has put pressure on demand.
- Residential Homes: A review has started to embrace all of DCC's residential homes. A core component will be the capacity in the private sector to take on any further commissioned activity.
- DCC Children's Homes. A consultation has taken place on possible closure of all 3 of these following changes with Ofsted Guidelines. Ofsted are adamant that DCC homes are too large and that each should be no more than 3 residents as against DCC's 6 or 7. DCC have invested substantially in its in house Fostering service.

- With large extent of damage caused during recent floods, widespread structural damage and a massive increase in the number of potholes and deterioration of highway surfaces there will be a need for vast funding to rectify.

Mr Mumford finished by stating it had been an honour to have been able to represent the parishes and hoped that he had been able to make a difference. He thanked the Parish Council for its help and support. It was agreed a letter be sent expressing the deep appreciation of the parish council and residents.

- 4 ANNUAL D.COUNCILLOR'S REPORT. D Cllr Carson reported that sharing costs with West Devon is helping in cutting costs - savings of over £600,000 p.a. are being made. The New Homes Bonus from the Government is equivalent to Council Tax on new homes for 7 years and this can support new houses to be built. The Government will be cutting out grants to District Councils at some time in the future. Boundary Commission Review means there will be fewer councillors which will entail covering a larger area – ours of Charterlands to include Modbury. Aveton Gifford has been moved into a new ward which includes Loddiswell, Churchstow etc – these changes will be implemented at the next District Council elections. Work will soon start on Sherford with millions being spent on a new spine road serving the new town. Richard Sheard retired in March as Chief Executive and has been replaced by two directors. Much damage was caused at Beesands and Torcross during the winter storms which will entail money to put right.
The Chairman thanked D Cllr Carson for all his work on behalf of the parish.

- 5 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT. Cllr Watts submitted the following:

This has been my third year as Chairman since election in the autumn of 2011.

Throughout the year I have been very grateful for the help and support of my fellow councillors and the Clerk, especially as we have been one short of our full complement of 7 councillors for much of the time. As ever, I am very conscious of the fact that Bigbury Parish Council should act as a focus for local opinion and provide a way to get things done in the best way for our community. Therefore, I'd like to thank all those parishioners who have helped to point the way forward either by attending and participating in meetings or by taking the trouble to contact individual councillors in person; I encourage others to do the same. Our Bigbury community website (<http://www.bigburycommunity.co.uk>) continues to offer an effective method of rapid two-way communication and for maintaining awareness about local affairs.

This year, we set our parish precept at the same level as last year, recognising the general pressures on incomes and aiming to make up any deficiencies in our parish budget with external funding. However, a reduction in the Council Tax Support Grant and a change in the way this grant was incorporated in setting the precept resulted in an increase of 3.5%, or about £1 per property per year, for Bigbury. Nonetheless, we have been very successful in acquiring external funding for the three (ever-popular) rubbish skips, for on-going maintenance of the viewing platform at BoS, for improvements to road safety (e.g. Folly Hill), and for extra lengthsman services to keep our country roads and ditches clear.

One of the most time-consuming, important and controversial areas of activity for your parish council is in assessing and commenting upon planning applications. SHDC has asked for our view on about two dozen applications of varying degrees of complexity over the last year, including wind turbines and a phone mast. Many of these applications have required site visits by councillors to clarify the implications and we have made requests for alterations or have objected to plans on several occasions in the interests both of neighbours and of the parish at large, guided by our Parish Plan. Communication with the planners has become better as a result of changes in their way of working following the amalgamation of SHDC with West Devon DC. These changes include opportunities for better participation and collaboration in early parts of the planning process together with a continuing programme of training events for parish councillors. However, we are amateurs in a world of professional planning officers, developers, architects and agents so there is always room for further improvement.

Our plans for affordable housing in the parish are continuing but at a slower than ideal pace. The South Western Housing Society is now working on development of the site adjacent to the Memorial Hall for around 14 houses although they have encountered an, as yet, unresolved problem regarding pedestrian access.

The sudden closure of the Royal Oak last November has upset many people for various reasons. The parish council's main concern is to revitalise the centre of Bigbury village as quickly as possible and to this end, we are working with the site's owners and customer representatives to find a mutually acceptable solution. Eventually, we hope the pub will be able to re-open, in some form.

As last year, a sustainable community requires far more than just the efforts of the parish council. Therefore, my thanks are offered to all the people who produce and distribute Bigbury News on a regular, monthly basis; to the organisers of events such as the Fun Run and Carols on the Green (Bigbury Fayre); to everybody who helps in keeping our roads and beaches relatively free of litter; to all those running the Memorial Hall, its associated groups and events; to those supporting the Church; and, to the local businesses which provide employment and sustenance. I am very grateful to John Simes, our excellent Footpath Warden, for helping to ensure that our precious footpath network is adequately maintained and safe to use. Last, but by no means least, I am grateful to County Cllr William Mumford (recently resigned), District Cllr Bryan Carson and to the police for their work on the parish's behalf.

6 ORGANISATION REPORTS;

Bigbury News: Cllr Owen reported that the News Committee have hired a Xerox Workcentre from Pinnacle and it is now into its second year of lease. It has been a great asset to the publication of Bigbury News. The production and distribution remains the same and we have received many positive comments about the success as a community magazine. We have been able to do two or three private printing jobs since the acquisition and it is hoped that others will use this facility in the future. During 2013, we put an appeal in the magazine for the bi-annual request for donations – this was very successful and helped the bank balance look healthy for another year. The News is also supported by the Parish Council by giving an allowance towards the cost of stationery.

Last year we received a kind donation of a new heavy-duty stapler from Fiona and Peter Dukes and another very generous donation of a new desktop printer from Alice and Richard Taylor. This September will be the 400th edition of

Bigbury News and will have been in continuous production for 40 years. The first newsletter was published by Mary Smallwood in September 1974.

Bigbury Memorial Hall: Charles Harrington submitted the following report:

- The committee have tried their best to contribute to the community life of the parish and to increase cohesion between the various centres of population by providing a venue for regular group activities such as fitness classes, bowls, the history society and South Hams Shrimps.
- Unfortunately the Youth Club does not meet at the moment, although it is hoped that it will resume within the coming year.
- A new group, French conversation, now meets on a weekly basis.
- Regular social events are staged during the year. Events have included two wine tasting evenings, a quiz evening, Bigbury Garden and Produce Show, the Church Bank Holiday bazaar, a film and fish ` chips night and two Villages in Action events.

The hall has been well used for private functions and this has increased markedly as a result of the building improvements made over the last few years.

Bigbury Fayre Committee: Mrs Linda Brown had informed the clerk that she and her husband, Martyn, will not be running the Fayre Committee any more. Due to personal health reasons, they now feel it is time to hand over the reins and they will be submitting a report in Bigbury News relating to the matter.

7 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT. The clerk presented the following:

Income		Expenditure	
Brought forward	9,618.44	Subs & Donations	703.00
Precept (after DAPC sub)	7,469.53	Office expenses	496.28
Bank interest	4.47	Clerk	1,464.24
SHDC recycling credits	197.04	Hall hire, playing field	311.00
Lloyds ex gratia payment	250.00	Insurance	248.82
DCC grants	1,500.00	Audit fees	210.00
		Environment	4,395.38
		S137s	150.00
		VAT	535.12
		Website/Broadband	490.14
		Bigbury News	500.00
		Councillors expenses	<u>271.04</u>
	<u>19,039.48</u>		9,775.02
Deposit account	6,976.39		
Current account	<u>2,813.07</u>		
	9,789.46		
- unpresented cheques	<u>525.00</u>		
	9,264.46		
+ expenditure	<u>9,775.02</u>		
	19,039.48		
	=====		

The clerk explained that £1, 056.97 of funds held is P3 money which can only be spent on public footpaths in the parish. In answer to questions, she also stated that following the installation of the new children's playground equipment, a sum of money out of these funds is reserved for replacement of any of that equipment as necessary. On top of this, funds are set aside each year to meet the cost of parish council elections.

8 FOOTPATH WARDEN'S REPORT: John Simes reported that FP 7 (back of Park Dean has needed work including replacing a bridge across the stream. Ringmore Parish Council has contributed some funding. He thanked John Tucker and the other landowners who promptly carried out work to clear the footpaths on their land following the winter storms damage. A considerable amount of work will need to be effected on the footpaths on Burgh Island – including the possibility of having to move the eastern one a bit closer in. Peter Guy (DCC Footpath Warden for our area) had arranged for repairs to be carried out on the South West Coast Footpath from the entrance to BoS car park to Sedgewell. There is a need for a bit more signage and a dog gate at Doctor's Wood. The chairman thanked him for all his considerable hard work.

9 OPEN SESSION

A resident considered that the proposed phone mast at Houghton was on a public footpath thus making it less attractive to users. Residents also enquired about progress of the marquee application for Folly Farm and also the wind turbine application. They were informed that various reports had been requested by SHDC and the matter not yet determined. A resident stated that she now realises the amount of work the Parish Councillors put in to determine planning applications submissions. Those present, councillors and residents alike, all expressed their sorrow that Will Mumford had resigned – he had been An excellent and diligent councillor and will be sorely missed.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.15pm