

BIGBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Bigbury Parish Council meeting held in the Memorial Hall, St Ann's Chapel on WEDNESDAY 12th April 2017 at 8:25pm

PRESENT: Cllr B Carson (in the chair) D. Cllr. B Huntley, Cllrs. G Rosevear, S Smith, C Case and H Getley and Parish Clerk R Matthews. Six residents were present.

1.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:
C.Cllr. Hosking and Cllr. Owen.

2.0 MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING April 2016.
Cllr. Rosevear proposed these be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr. Smith seconded the proposal and Councillors voted unanimously to approve them.

3.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT.

In my report of last year, I opened with some remarks about the formation of what was essentially a new Parish Council. I would like to start this year by thanking the members of the Council for their hard work and commitment to a job that is not always as easy as it looks. This time last year the Councillors were George, Sharon, Beth, Cathy, Iain and myself. When Iain Couper moved away we were joined by Rose Owen, who is of course Editor of Bigbury News. We still had a vacancy and are pleased to have been joined recently by Hannah Getley, who runs the beach shop at Bigbury-on-Sea. I am very pleased that we now have our full quota of Councillors, all of whom make a valuable contribution to our deliberations.

Also at this time last year, Pam, our dedicated Parish Clerk for some 30 years had recently retired, and her replacement Richard was just getting to grips with this very demanding role. He is a great asset to our committee. Quite apart from the huge amounts of information and correspondence that he deals with, it is largely as a result of Richard's efforts and expertise that we are now a more up to date Council with all the benefits of the technology that allows us all to view information, maps and plans etc. at our meetings. Apart from the benefit to us as Councillors, I think and hope that it makes the meetings more inclusive for our audiences. On that note I would like to thank all the people who make the time to come and participate at our meetings – the whole point of the committee is, after all, to serve the community.

As a community, we continue to face challenges, some of which are very specific to our area. Last year I mentioned the various businesses we had lost – the shops at Bigbury-on-Sea and Bigbury Village and the Bay Café. I think this has a lot to do with the high and increasing number of holiday homes that we have in the area, which remain empty for many weeks of the year. There is also strong competition from the big supermarkets doing home deliveries. However I do think we are very lucky to have the benefit of Dane and Hilary's very popular shop, the Pickwick, Louise's Unwind salon, Golf Club, Beach shop, and Venus Café. We are better off than some rural communities and it is up to us to give them our full support. We are, inevitably continuing to deal with some contentious planning issues, some of them long standing. Mainly they have to do with the conflict of interests between those of us who live here and want to keep the unique character of our surroundings at the same time as allowing acceptable development and growth, and those who see the area only as a business opportunity, or prime piece of real estate on which to construct inappropriate holiday homes completely regardless of the nature of the area or the concerns, or impact on the permanent homes of local people.

I fear that to some extent this is a sign of the times, but at the same time I am very appreciative, as I am sure we all are, of the huge amount of time and effort that has been put into the development of the Neighbourhood Plan by Valerie Scott and her team. They have made a great deal of progress during the year, and we should soon be able to produce a document for consultation. The level of response to the questionnaire that was distributed to every household was, in my opinion, a little disappointing at 41%, but the nature of the responses was positive. It is to be hoped that the finished, approved plan, together with the continued robust responses from the Parish Council will mean that we will continue to exercise significant influence on the nature of development in our beautiful area.

A significant change during the year has been the resignation of our District Councillor Lindsay Ward, and her replacement by our own Beth Huntley. I am sure we all want to take this

opportunity to congratulate Beth, and wish her well in her new and challenging role. I am sure we all also wish to thank Lindsay Ward for all the work she did for our community. We also thank Richard Hosking, our current County Councillor for his support. Richard's boundary will be changing for next month's County Council elections, when we will be welcoming a new County Councillor.

In conclusion, there are also a number of other people I would like to thank: John Simes, our Footpath Warden, Trish Bagley our new Tree Warden, Stuart Watts for continuing to run the community website, Rose for her excellent work editing and producing Bigbury News, Charles Harrington and the Hall Committee for all the functions and entertainment they organize for us, Jill Gubbins for her exercise classes and Dane and Hilary for all sorts of services to the community. An exciting new addition this year has been the computer classes held here in the hall (with the benefit of the new technology) by Phil Shea, which has been well attended.

4.0 ANNUAL COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr. Hosking stated this would be his last report to the Parish Council and thanked everyone for the support he had received over the past three years. The County was reorganizing its internal boundaries and changing names of some of the Wards; the result of which was that he would no longer remain a County Councillor.

He was unable to provide any update on potential improvements to the road to California Cross, but added that hopefully some additional passing places would be constructed soon. This topic needed to be taken up with the new County Councillor. He confirmed a reduction in the hours available through lengthsman from eight to six per quarter but added that the Road Warden scheme was to be relaunched. He also hoped the delayed repairs to the road between Aveton Gifford and Easton would be completed in the coming year. He gave his best wishes for the future success of the Parish Council.

5.0 ANNUAL DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

D.Cllr Huntley had little to add to the comments made earlier in the evening but stated the closing dates for comments in respect of the Joint Local Plan was 26th April.

6.0 TREE WARDEN'S REPORT

Trish Bagley advised that during the year she had attended several meetings related to tree management. 1) Salford House – tree identification and 2) Follaton House – Ash die back, which was becoming an issue in Devon although had not yet been seen in South Hams. She added there was a resistant variety of Asian Ash which was equivalent to about 25% of the total Ash population.

Within the Parish the only issue related to Folly Hill and overgrown trees around the road near the Slipway.

7.0 REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

St. Lawrence Church.

Mrs Helen Smith provided the following update: It has been a year when progress has not obvious but hopefully all the plans and discussions will bear fruit, this coming year.

We have a very good Church Architect, approved by the Diocese and with his help we are through the initial stage of a heritage lottery grant and are now proceeding with the start of the main application. We have had steeplejacks survey the church tower and spire with the church architect and we now await the estimates for the work that has to be done. The estimates have been delayed due to the difficulty in finding an approved Quantity Surveyor but all is now sorted and we are ready to start on the next phase of the grant application.

In addition to the tower and spire we hope to restore the gates and pillars, hopefully with the financial aid of the Parish Council. We also want to install a disabled toilet in the present vestry, moving the current vestry upstairs to the first floor level. At present there is no public toilet nearer than Bigbury-on-sea and this is extremely inconvenient, if we are to have concerts etc. in the church. It is already a problem with church services, weddings, funerals and baptisms.

The pillars at the entrance are listed, which causes extra hassle and the gates need a thorough overhaul. We are waiting for a second estimate for this work to be done, then we hope with the financial help of Bigbury Parish Council to put the work in hand.

Bigbury News.

Rose Owen confirmed her decision to stand down as Editor of Bigbury News and was preparing a draft communication in respect of its future adding that she was very grateful for the network of dedicated distributors who deliver the magazines in all weathers and appreciative of their help and support.

Bigbury News would like to thank the community as a whole for their donations and positive comments about the magazine, and feel we have a good content of articles from groups and individuals but would always be happy to consider fresh ideas.

History Society

Peter Cook confirmed the organization was financially stable with a membership of around fifty people.

In the past twelve months its members had completed four visits to places of interest,

Meeting closed 09:30 pm

DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY 11th APRIL 2018

Signed.....

Bryan Carson, Chairman, Bigbury Parish Council