

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ALL SAINTS PARISH COUNCIL Held on Tuesday 7th March 2017 at All Saints Village Hall, ALL SAINTS

Meeting convened at 7.00pm, and the Chairman, Cllr. Alistair Forbes, welcomed all in attendance and pointed out fire exits and outlined fire evacuation procedure.

Present:

Cllr. Alistair Forbes (Chairman), Cllr. Robert Speed (Vice-Chair) Cllr. Anthony Nixon, Cllr. Jacqui Hubbard, Cllr. Doreen Bale, DCC Cllr. Andrew Moulding, EDDC Cllr. Paul Diviani, Kevin Feeney (Tree Warden), Libby Dibble (Hon. P3 Footpath Warden/ Neighbourhood Watch) and Jacqui Baggott (Hamlet representative – Alston). Clerk to Council, Paul Hayward

Rev'd. Clive Sedgewick, Rector Axe Valley Mission Community. 14 members of the public.

1) Apologies

Police Representative, Dave Wicken

2) To receive minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 1st March 2016.

These had been previously circulated to members. Proposed by Cllr. Speed, and seconded by Cllr. Hubbard. Approved and signed as a true record by Chairman.

3) Matters arising from these minutes.

None.

4) Guest Speaker: Rev'd Clive Sedgewick gave a short presentation to meeting. Chairman welcomed Clive to the parish and for taking time to attend tonight.

5) Report from the Chairman of Council, Cllr. Alistair Forbes

Welcome, once again, to all those present at our Annual Parish Meeting.

The past 12 months have seen a great deal of activity on the Parish Council, particularly with regards to our internal financial and administrative arrangements, most particularly due to the ramifications of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or "*The Transparency Code*" in layman's terms.

In essence, the law now requires that all of the councils financial, administrative and legal documents must now be made freely, and publicly, available via our parish council website and, to this end, I am pleased to report that not only does All Saints Parish Council conform fully with the requirements of the new legislation but that we have also been awarded Quality Status for the content and presentation of the information we provide to the parish. We are one of only 8 councils in Devon to achieve this award. I must congratulate our Clerk for his efforts in achieving this accolade.

Thanks must also go to our Honorary Webmaster, Dave Wicken, for his tireless work in ensuring that key documents are uploaded in a timely fashion to keep the parish well informed on what we, the council, are getting up to in your name and on your behalf. As a brief interlude, can I ask all keen photographers in the parish to send through any pictures you have taken that represent and capture parish life so that these can be included on our website for all to enjoy?

Of matters financial, I recognise that there was some opposition to, and concern at, the level of precept we set last year, but I am happy to advise that Council met several times at the latter part of 2016 to consider the budget and precept for 2017/18 and came to the conclusion that no further increase would be necessary this year; in fact, in real terms, parishioners will see a small decrease in the parish council element of their council tax bill. The Councillors and Clerk are currently working on a comprehensive Land Ownership Register within the parish to both identify, and develop relationships with, the various landowners in the parish in order to explain their responsibilities in terms of hedge, verge and ditch maintenance. We are also liaising closely with Devon Highways Dept. to investigate ways in which we, as a smaller parish council, can take on the duties previously undertaken by others; works which we hope we could undertake faster, better and certainly cheaper, thus providing improved value for every £1 paid in local council tax.

It must be made clear, however, that the financial pressures on smaller local authorities from both District and County Councils continue unabated and it is prudent therefore that your parish council continues to carefully shepherd its resources, spend prudently and wisely, and seek out other forms of funding such as grants and subsidies, to ensure that the financial burden of running the council and providing services are not shouldered by the residents in isolation.

The council recognises that, as purse strings are tightened at the Knowle and at County Hall, more duties will have to be undertaken by the parish council in order to maintain and improve the quality of life for all who live in All Saints parish but with a balanced budget, and the continued help from the small army of volunteers close by, we are confident that we can weather this “austere” storm and emerge into calmer seas beyond.

Elsewhere, our fledgling Neighbourhood plan is still in a state of temporary suspension as the Steering group consider best how to gauge parish opinion on matters such as housing, building development and employment; a detailed questionnaire is currently being drafted and this will come out to the parish over the next few months in order to collect in the thoughts, views and concerns of all residents and then use this data to create a plan for the parish that will take us to 2030 and beyond. I would urge all residents to warmly embrace this survey and actively participate as fully as possible so that we can clearly understand what the village wants us, the council, to do for you, and your children, in the decades to come.

It would not be a Chairman’s report if I did not pause to thank all those eager volunteers who help to keep the Parish so tidy, well-organised and well-ordered; My thanks go to, amongst others, Libby Dibble, Alan Storey, Craig Ellis, Kevin Feeney, Bill Coltham, Ron Lancashire, our Neighbourhood Watch team, all of the Hamlet representatives and everyone else who gives up their time and energy to make All Saints such a wonderful place to live and play. Thanks too to our Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team who continue to do a sterling job, despite the pressures and financial constraints they have to contend with daily.

Thank you, as always, to Ann Carter for producing the excellent Parish Newsletter which is delivered to every household in the Parish and which is always well received and well-read. Thank you to all who ensure that our monthly village Breakfast Fayre is a diary date not to be missed; good food, good company and a golden opportunity to catch up, meet up and fill up!

On a sadder note, I have to report that, as part of the recent Electoral Commission Boundary Review for Devon, our sister parish – Chardstock – is no longer connected with ours within the Axminster County Division, but we now have several new parishes joining us, namely Uplyme, Axmouth, Rousdon and Combyne. This council looks forward to working with those parishes for the mutual benefit of all residents. Furthermore, changes are afoot in the District Council wards, as part of another Boundary Review, and it appears likely that All Saints will join Hawkchurch, Membury and Chardstock in a newly created ward which, as yet, has no name.

This issue will be discussed during the meeting that follows this annual parish meeting. No announcements have yet been made as to who our elected District representative might be in 2019 but we will of course keep all residents abreast of events as developments warrant.

Lastly, but certainly not least, may I thank my fellow Parish Councillors – Doreen, Jacqui, Bob and Tony - who all give up large amounts of time and effort – at no personal gain – to serve as the elected representatives on the Council, for the greater benefit of the parish. At the risk of repeating what I said at this meeting last year, it is only right to stress the importance that parish councillors play around the country. Without these volunteers, 20,000 strong nationally, local people would struggle to make their voices heard in the higher echelons of the democratic process and for this fact alone, they have my continued appreciation and thanks for what they have done, for that they do, and for what they will continue to do long after I have stepped away from public service.

6) Report from Devon County Councillor, Andrew Moulding.

I am pleased to present my annual report as County Councillor for the Axminster Division. This will be my last report as County Councillor for All Saints, as I am not standing for election in May, having served the parish for the past 8 years. I will still continue at East Devon, where I have been a District Councillor for 30 years. In my last year as a County Councillor, I have been privileged to be Chairman of Devon County Council. This is a delightful role as I attend civic events all over Devon, amounting to three or four engagements each week. This has included a number of royal visits, with more to come I believe.

New Electoral Arrangements

The County Council elections in May will be subject to the new electoral arrangements with All Saints being linked with Axminster, Hawkchurch, Uplyme, Combyne / Rousdon, Axmouth and Musbury.

County Council Budget

The Devon County Council Budget meeting took place last week, which I chaired and went on for about four hours! This was obviously a difficult budget for County. There is a reduction in core funding of £23m. The basic increase in Council Tax will remain at 2%, but there are new powers to increase the Social Care precept by 3%. Councils will lose part of their New Homes Bonus. Devon County Council will need to use part of its reserves to balance the budget.

Savings of a further £37m will be required in 2018 / 2019. So DCC's Council Tax increase this year will be just under 5%. WE WILL ALL FEEL IT IN OUR POCKETS!

Axminster Hospital

Last year I reported that Axminster Hospital had lost its inpatient beds. We were all devastated by that decision. We now know that inpatient beds will be withdrawn from Seaton and Honiton - so the nearest hospital for the discharge of patients from Wonford will be Sidmouth. However, progress with the creation of a "hub" hospital at Axminster is making progress. I am pleased to report that I am a member of the Axe Valle Community Social Care Hub Steering Group which aims to support the provision of a range of health and social care services within Axminster Hospital.

Parishes Together Fund / Locality Budget

I am delighted that All Saints has joined with others in order to provide a defibrillator for the parish. This has attracted funding from Parishes Together and the Locality Budget. The Queen's Birthday celebration costs were also supported by my Locality Budget. All Saints parish will also be pleased that the "permissive path" from Weycroft Bridge to Millwey Rise is now complete.

I wish you all well as I vacate my position as your county councillor

7) Report from East Devon District Councillor, Paul Diviani.

Cllr. Diviani gave a verbal report but advised that his written report would follow shortly. EDDC Council Tax element to rise modestly by £2.48 p.w. for Band D property. Knowle move still progressing to Honiton.

Clerk to add written report to minutes as an addendum when available.

Cllrs. Moulding and Diviani left the meeting at 7.45pm.

8) Report from All Saints Village Hall representative, Cllr. Doreen Bale.

Cllr. Bale updated those present as to the progress made by the VH committee to maintain and improve the hall, and to all community groups who use it. Special mention made to the Pantomime Society for recent well-received performances.

9) Report from Police Representative.

No reported crimes in the Parish in January and February 2017.

No annual crime figures made available for 2016 as a whole.

Clerk reported recent press release from Office of Police Commissioner that upto 150 officers to be recruited, but at the loss of possibly 220 PCSO's.

10) Report from Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator

Nothing major to report other than ongoing email bulletins and a noticeable lack of liaison between local police and the NHW watch group. This will hopefully improve in 2017/18. Reminder to not leave keys in ignitions UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

11) a) Report on P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) from Mrs Libby Dibble.

*FP41 Holly Farm. Damaged stile will be replaced with a kissing gate.
Fingerposts on FP's 57/49 due for replacement.*

Annual P3 survey returned to DCC and grant request forms submitted.

11) b) Report from Kevin Feeney, Tree warden

Kevin is undertaking a survey of hedgerow trees in the parish. He asked parishioners to get in touch with details of notable or significant trees in the area so he can assess whether TPO's would be appropriate.

12) Report from Webmaster, Dave Wicken.

Over the last year a lot of new material has been add to the website. This is in connection with the "Transparency Code" which has been explained by the chairman in his report. These documents are now freely accessible to parishioners under the headings "Policies" and "Transparency" in the "Parish Council" section of the website. Thanks to the parish clerk for all his hard work on this, which has led to ASPC receiving a Quality Status award.

We also have a new section for photographs, but have not received many to date. So, if you have any good photos that are relevant to life in All Saints parish, please email them to the parish clerk.

Other than that, all I have to report is that, apart from the very occasional glitch, the website continues to operate smoothly.

13) Open Forum for Parishioners.

Several parishioners raised issue of potholes around parish, and gave areas where problem especially dangerous. Cllr. Moulding advised that DCC has 3 weeks (21days) to repair RSD's (Road Safety Defects) which exceed the safety margins and that parishioners should report all such holes via the DCC website, or via the parish Clerk. Cllr. Nixon (Maintenance Lead Member) reiterated this message.

14) Date of next meeting:

6th March 2018 Tuesday. 7pm.

15) *With no further business to attend to, the parish meeting closed at 7.47pm.*

Signed: _____

Date: _____