

## **KILMINGTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2016**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 7.30 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 21ST APRIL 2016 IN THE MAIN HALL, AT KILMINGTON VILLAGE HALL**

**1. PRESENT:** Cllr. M. Collier (Chairman), Cllrs. Bolton, Dare, Jones, Hodges, Huscroft, Mear and Trott, the Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and 32 members of the public.

**2. APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr. Seward and Mrs. Seward and Mesdames Chapman and Lewis.

**3. GUEST SPEAKER:** The Chairman introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Tim Dafforn, People Team Leader from the East Devon Countryside Team.

Mr. Dafforn opened his presentation by giving some background information on the structure and remit of the Countryside Section which, in addition to its more obvious responsibilities, includes some of the District Council's cultural assets such as the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Honiton and the Manor Pavilion in Sidmouth.

Moving on to discuss areas of more local interest, Mr. Dafforn referred next to the Trinity Hill Nature Reserve which is the last remnant of lowland heathland in the east of the District. The aim is to try to get the condition back to that which existed prior to the time when grazing was discontinued. To achieve this Dartmoor ponies have been introduced to graze the area for two months during the summer in conjunction with techniques such as carefully controlled heath burn. Local volunteers have been keen to come forward to keep an eye on the ponies' welfare while they are on site.

Another local site is the Seaton Wetlands, formerly called the Axe Estuary Wetlands. Much new infrastructure has been put in place here to enhance the visitor experience while ensuring that the wildlife is not disturbed. There is a 4km. Long wheel-chair accessible trail, a Discovery Hut and a sand martin wall (which has not attracted any occupants so far). Roles for volunteers include hedge-laying and coppicing and nest-box recording. Twenty different partners support this site, such as Trill Farm and the Ramblers' Association and there is strong involvement of various educational groups.

Other initiatives of the Countryside service include community orchards and the Cranbrook Countryside Park.

Mr. Dafforn concluded his talk by showing a fascinating film clip of barn owls flying in the Seaton Wetlands during the day time following a wet night which had prevented them from hunting. He then responded to questions from the floor.

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Dafforn.

Refreshments were taken at this point, including appropriately iced cake to mark the fact that this was the date of Her Majesty The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**4. MINUTES OF THE 2015 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING:** Cllr. Huscroft, seconded by Mr. Lavender proposed that these be approved. Agreed.

**5. MATTERS ARISING:** None.

**6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** the Chairman began his annual report by mentioning the fact that four new Councillors had been elected in May 2015 and thanking all his fellow Councillors for their help during the year.

A key feature of the year had been the installation of new equipment in the Children's Play Area, which had been achieved following "customer research" by a local parent to ensure that users would enjoy the equipment available.

Another achievement had been the start of work on the affordable housing development in George Lane which was now almost completed. The first residents would be moving in shortly and most would have strong links with Kilmington.

Following the retirement of the first village webmaster after 8 years in post, this work was now being done by a local couple new to the village and continued to have "visitors" both locally and from abroad.

Kilmington's long-serving Tree Warden had moved away from the village and this role was now being undertaken by Cllr. Jones.

Referring to another long-drawn out saga, Cllr. Collier spoke of the Parish Council's frustration that the Highways England Study of A35 Issues in Kilmington had not been received to date, despite having been promised for February. He said that the content of the report would be a priority for the Council to consider once received. He added that any incidents relating to traffic/pedestrian use of the A35 should be referred to Mr. Vickers, whom he thanked for continuing to act as the Parish Council's contact in this matter.

Looking to the future, the Chairman spoke of the decision to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish and asked for volunteers to come forward and help. He said that this would be an important document for the parish and needed the support of residents to help shape its content.

Cllr. Collier spoke next of the ways in which the Parish Council had tried to support various organisations in the village, for example by providing funding to repair the church clock, to enhance the glazing in the Village Hall and in the provision of the monthly skip for green waste.

He concluded his report by thanking the numerous people who had assisted the Parish Council in various ways throughout the year.

**8. PLAYING FIELD REPORT :** Cllr. Bolton emphasised the important contribution made by volunteers in the upkeep of the many facilities for which the Committee was responsible. He said that the Play Area, which had cost £26,000 to upgrade, continued to be a source of much enjoyment for the children. A recent problem had been a break-in which had necessitated the replacement of the doors. Cllr. Bolton said that, despite the provision of dog waste bins, it was disappointing that he had to report that dog fouling remained a problem which not only made the cutting of the grass a most unpleasant task but was also a health hazard for all, including school children, who use the field during the year.

On a more positive note, Cllr. Bolton said that the income from letting the pavilion was holding up and it continued to be an asset to the village.

**9. SCHOOL REPORT :** Cllr. Trott reminded those present that the school was now part of the Axe Beacon Federation. There were six teaching and nine support staff and 101 pupils on the roll split between four classes.

A benefit of being part of a Federation was that it was feasible to employ a handy person to undertake general maintenance across the member schools. It is felt that this could prove more cost effective than having to bring in help from outside contractors. However, outside contractors will be involved in the replacement of the windows in the main building during the summer holidays.

Cllr. Trott ended his report by outlining the role of the Parent Teacher and Friends Association which, through such varied activities as the Kilmington Kanter, bingo, film nights and quiz nights, raises funds to buy items for the school which would not otherwise be funded. Among such purchases during the past year had been a trolley for storage of art supplies.

**10. THE COMMON** : The Clerk said that the Parish Council had gifted £620 worth of maintenance works to the Common during the course of the year. This had included cutting of grass and essential works on trees. She said that monitoring of invasive species continued. An oak tree had been planted by the Royal British Legion in memory of those who had served in the First World War.

**11. WEBSITE REPORT**: the Chairman said that the number of new visitors had increased by 60%. Popular parts were planning and Parish Council activities. It had been particularly busy over the New Year period and in February.

**12. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**: there was nothing to add to what had been said in the Chairman's Report.

**13. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** : Cty. Cllr. Moulding said that as chairman of Place Scrutiny he continued to cover a wide range of matters such as traffic and transport, flooding and the library service. He said that the County Council budget was being increased by 3.99%, half of which would be allocated for adult social care provision. He was pleased that there would be some additional funding from central government for road improvements.

Referring to the local community hospital in Axminster, Cllr. Moulding said he was hopeful that day services would be extended despite the loss of in-patient beds.

He remarked that he had supported the Parish Council in objecting to the proposals for reform of the County Council ward divisions put forward by the Boundary Commission and was seeking the support of the Member of Parliament to get the decision reviewed.

Cllr. Moulding said that he had been working with the District and Parish Councils to try and resolve the unauthorised travellers' encampment on Roman Road via enforcement action. He felt that the process might be somewhat lengthy.

He welcomed the fact that the Parishes Together Funding allocation was to be used to support the Axe Valley Netball group.

**14. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** : Dist. Cllr. Chubb gave details of the new Waste and Recycling contract which would be rolled out gradually across the District as the new collection vehicles become available. This would enable collection of cardboard and a broader range of plastic than at present. He also gave an update on the move of the District Council head quarters from Sidmouth to Honiton and spoke of the recent opening by the Princess Royal of the Seaton Jurassic Centre.

Cllr. Chubb responded to questions from the floor regarding the new recycling contract.

**15. FOOTPATH REPORT** : In a written report, Mrs. Penzer stated that all footpaths had been inspected during the winter for the completion of the Annual Surveys. Among works identified as being required included way marking, replacement of finger posts, repairs of steps and stiles and clearance of vegetation. Anyone who wants to raise any issues relating to the paths should contact Mrs. Penzer on 34287

**16. SPEED LIMIT AND ROAD SAFETY ON A35**: this had been covered in the Chairman's Report.

17. PUBLIC FORUM : the following were among issues raised from the floor:

- a) Condition of Roads in Village – residents expressed their frustration at what they considered the inadequacy of the maintenance of the roads. The surface of The Street appeared to be deteriorating daily and pothole repairs, if undertaken at all, were soon washed out. Only those holes which were more than 300mm across by 40mm deep were considered to be safety defects.
- b) Neighbourhood Plan – the Chairman explained that this would be a long-drawn out process and would build on the work done in the Parish Plan and the Village Design Statement. Cllr. Moulding emphasised that it was about planning and land use and addressed how many houses were needed and where. He said that the Neighbourhood Plan would carry statutory weight in determining planning matters in the parish.

The Chairman said that a public meeting would be held and a steering committee set up.

- c) Fencing by War Memorial – a resident said that the position of the fencing was such that it obscured vision to the left for some drivers. A request will be made to Highways England for this to be altered.
- d) Screening of Affordable Housing Scheme – in response to a question, Cllr. Bolton said that this formed part of the landscaping scheme approved by the District Council.
- e) Celebration of H.M. The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday – the Chairman said that it was proposed to hold a service in the parish church, to place a bench on the Village Green followed by the serving of refreshments in the Village Hall.
- f) Mr. Lavender proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council for the support it gives the community.

The meeting ended at 9.35 p.m.