**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2015 AT 7.30PM**

**GEORGE V MEMORIAL HALL, HOLCOMBE ROGUS**

**Present:** Sheila Muir, Nikki Orchard, John Butler, Rupert Snook, Pete Davies and Dave Authers

Sheila Muir welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting. A statement was read out from the Chairman of the Council as he was unable to attend.

As a council I believe we have made a difference to our local community and this makes the job worthwhile.

Drains have been cleaned and roads are kept clear of snow and ice by Andrew and David. This has made a big difference to all who live in the area.

Money is being raised, to bring a defibrillator to the village, and it would appear that the planners are listening to are comments thanks to John’s knowledge on this matter.

Special thanks must go to Geoff Bell for volunteering to audit our accounts and helping with the annual audit. He will be greatly missed.

Lastly but not least, I would like to thank our Clerk. The council would not be what it is, without Leslie. Leslie, you keep us focused and on task. Thank you and keep up the great work.

**Planning Report**

1. **Planning Applications considered in 2014-15**

The Council and its planning committee considered some 25 applications for planning permission, listed building consent and notifications to carry out tree works in the Conservation Area during the year. In the main, these were small scale domestic residential works and works to trees. The decisions taken by Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) were largely consistent with views of the Council, as statutory consultee.

The most significant planning applications considered by the Council in 2014-5 were as follows;

* 14/00328/MFUL - Erection of agricultural livestock and storage buildings (2107sqm of floor space), construction of new vehicle access, slurry handling, storage and treatment system, private weighbridge and spoil grading/bund at land adjacent to Holbrook Interchange, Sampford Peverell

(*HRPC were asked for their comments even though this is outside the Parish).* MDDC granted planning permission notwithstanding objections raised by the Council.

* 14/01984/MFUL **-** Proposed solar farm on land at Redhill Farm to which the Council did not object. Planning permission was granted by MDDC. The applicants have offered financial contributions to the work of the community and the Council currently awaits a draft document from the applicant’s planning consultants
* 14/01932/MFUL-Proposed solar farm on land at Wiseburrow Farm to which the Council objected. Planning permission was refused by MDDC

1. **Potential further applications**

It is understood that there will be further significant planning applications (a) for a solar farm at Wiseburrow Farm and (b) for a wind turbine at Westleigh Poultry Farm (Knowles Farm).

1. **Monitoring development granted planning permission**

The Ecological Land Co-operative (ELC) have issued their Annual Monitoring Report relating to the development at Greenham Reach. ELC is a social enterprise established to provide affordable sites for ecological land-based livelihoods-low impact living. The Council has been pleased with progress that has been made so far although the pace of development has been slower than originally anticipated. The Council recognises the positive steps taken by the Greenham Reach residents to engage in our community and in particular in School activities.

The Council is aware of concerns about the presence of caravans on site and the adverse visual impact that this creates. This is recognised by ELC in their Monitoring Report and it is understood that steps will be taken to deal with this. The Council is writing to MDDC to this effect and our Council will monitor the position.

1. **Planning Policy**

MDDC have been consulting on the Local Plan Review. The main issue that affects Holcombe Rogus is the proposal to classify Holcombe Rogus as a village on the basis that it has a school, shop and a public transport service. The effect of this classification is that land within the village settlement limit ceases to be classified as ‘countryside’ and there is the potential for some small infill development subject nevertheless to constraints imposed by conservation area and listed building legislation. The latest draft Plan has not changed this proposal or the settlement limit and this was not considered to be detrimental to the village.

1. **Electronic Planning Applications.**

MDDC will be sending all planning applications electronically and not in paper form and the Council have agreed that the purchase of a projector is essential to show the plans to Councillors and members of the public attending Council and planning committee meetings.

1. **Some Planning Changes.**

* Deregulation Act 2015 (Sections 20 to 26 and schedule 7) includes procedures intended to speed up processing of rights of way claims up to 2026, when the government aims to finalise a national series of "definitive maps" of such routes. These powers will limit local authorities' ability to modify protected rights of way beyond this cut-off date, at which point all unrecorded rights of way created before 1949 will be regarded as extinguished.
* New Development Management Procedure Order - One key change will see a new power for applicants for "deemed discharge". This means that if a council fails to make a decision on approving a condition attached to a planning application, the developer may treat it as being discharged. After six weeks, applicants can serve a notice giving an authority two weeks’ notice, and if there is still no response the condition is discharged. However, there will be many exceptions.
* Conservative Party Manifesto - Changes to the law to give local people the 'final say' on wind farm applications and support for brownfield development will be key policies for the incoming Conservative administration. In a recent statement, Eric Pickles said in relation to solar energy, protecting the global environment was “not an excuse to trash the local environment”
* Changes to permitted development rights- The latest set of wide-ranging changes to the permitted development regime, contained in a new General Permitted Development Order, include a three-year extension to temporary rules allowing larger household extensions and a new permitted development right allowing the use of storage or distribution buildings to be changed to residential. The changes also remove betting offices and payday loan shops from the A2 financial and professional services use class, meaning that a planning application will be required to change to this use. Meanwhile, Eric Pickles chose not to confirm whether the government would extend controversial eased rules allowing offices to be converted into homes without needing planning permission.
* Single-storey domestic rear extensions up to eight metres deep for detached houses and six metres for all other houses were exempted from the need for planning permission for three years up to 2016 by a permitted development right introduced in 2013. This replaced the respective limits of four metres and three metres under the previous system. Pickles' written ministerial statement extended this exemption until 2019, but with more restrictions than originally proposed, as well as limiting the life of the measures to three years rather than making them permanent.

**Grand Western Canal Report**

The Grand Western Canal in Devon is shared by the Cranmore Ward of Tiverton Town Council and the Parishes of Halberton, Sampford Peverell, Westleigh, Burlescombe and Holcombe Rogus.

Each has a Representative on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee. This Committee includes District and County Council Officers, Councillors from both Authorities together with members from canal-related businesses and canal-user interest groups. Members of the public are welcome to attend its meetings.

The Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee has no formal Management power but in the past ten to fifteen years has had a strong influence on Grand Western Canal’s Management Policies and Decisions.

Usage of the Holcombe Rogus section of the canal has increased in past few years. Our Parish’s successive Representatives have drawn the Canal Manager’s attention to works that are required to ensure good access and experiences for canal users on and beside the waterway.

Mark Baker, our Canal Manager, has always responded positively. In the past year his team has improved towpath drainage, bankside integrity, signage visibility at Waytown and cleared trees and vegetation from the navigation, the picnic site associated with the wharfage at Whipcott, the Limekilns and from the former collecting basin below Lowdwells Lock.

At the last Canal Advisory meeting in October, I was asked to form a group to help reduce or eliminate the nuisance of dog-fouling on the whole towpath. This is known as the Canal Canine Etiquette Group. It is currently seeking the most effective methods of persuading the few inconsiderate dog-owners to remove dog faeces effectively from the canal corridor. It is pleasing to learn that, in the past few weeks such an owner has been reported in Halberton by a member of the public and has been prosecuted.

Neither the Canal Manager’s team nor your Parish’s Canal Representative can be aware of everything that needs attention so your observations are necessary to help maintain and improve the canal’s offering to us all.

Contacts;

My landline 01823 672992

My mobile 07810 017864

Canal Manager; Mark Baker 01884 254072

**Village Hall Report**

The village hall has had a busy year with many happy occasions taking place. The resurrection of the 200 Club was a great success and is always a good fundraiser. But the community was deeply saddened by the death of one of our most enthusiastic fund raisers Olive Handley.

The income for the year April 14 to March 15 - £6842 which includes

£1500 from the precept

£1117 donations in memory of Olive

Expenditure for year April 14 to March 15 - £4844

There have been no major/exceptional expenditures during the financial year other than £416 on work to oil tank and fitting new oil monitor, therefore the above is a good representation of the general day to day operating costs of the hall.

If you take the donations for Olive and the precept out of the income we are barely washing our faces on the costs income basis. Hall charges may need to be reviewed again and crank up fund raising activities We still hold a good balance of £11k but if we are not careful we will start to erode this on general expenses rather than having reserves for future projects/major expenses.

Our major fund raising this year is to acquire a defibrillator and I know this will be a great asset to the whole community.

**Highways Report**

Flooding issues have been dealt with in three areas in the village where the trouble has occurred. This has been principally achieved using councillors and their equipment.

We have called on Devon Highways several times for potholes to be repaired. The response for the main road is very good but we still have two very poor roads which have not been tackled. The road running parallel to the canal up to the Somerset border and the road running up to lower Besley and beyond. We also have potholes developing on the road to Sampford Peverell and out to Westleigh. These have all been noted on the Devon highways web site which was updated last year.

I attended a Devon Highways Parish Conference on September 17th 2014. It was depressing and the staff were depressed. There is little money for the county with the longest road system where 50% of the roads are unclassified. It was at this conference that it was first suggested that we should have a road warden trained by DH. The parish has agreed to this and is likely to happen soon. I also met Ros Davies who is the Parish paths partnership co-ordinator and again the parish are looking into developing this further for our footpaths.

The weather this year has been kind to our roads and footpaths so we have had little need of our emergency team of snow and frost wardens. Let’s hope this continues as the austerity is bound to continue with our new blue government and Devon has to reduce its roads budget!

There were no members of the public attending so no further issues were raised. It is hoped to encourage more people to attend next year.

Leslie Findlay