**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 25th APRIL IN THE GEORGE V MEMORIAL HALL**

**AT 7.45pm**

**Present:**

Chairman Adam Pilgrim

Parish Councillors: John Butler, Nikki Orchard, Pete Davies, Dave Authers, Rupert Snook, Andy Cooling & Guy Orchard

District Councillor Heather Bainbridge

Clerk Mrs Leslie Findlay

Mr Mick Mathews

**Apologies**: Village Hall Committee Chairman Mrs Jane Pilgrim

The Chairman opened the meeting.

The Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

There were no matters arising from last year.

Matters arising:

Cllr Butler has suggested that there should be a speaker at the meeting in 2020 to encourage members of the public to attend. It was agreed that this will be discussed in the autumn in order to give enough notice to publicise the event and book a speaker.

All the reports were available to read. These are all published on the website [www.holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk](http://www.holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk)

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 7.55pm

Adam Pilgrim

Chairman

Attached – All Reports

**Chairman’s Report**

I was honoured to be appointed as Chairman of the Parish Council in 2018 following Stephen Hasell’s retirement.

The Parish Council acts as the interface between members of our community and the District and County Councils. It meets monthly apart from in August and December. Members of the Public are welcome to come along to ask questions and see what Councillors work on.

Our Parish Council membership remains healthy with some new Councillors joining in the past couple of years to replace retirees. We are fortunate to have a nearly “full house”; only one vacancy.

Each Councillor has an area of responsibility, usually only one since we have a good number of Councillors.

If you want to take part in steering the welfare of our Parish, please contact either me or our Clerk, Leslie Findlay. Leslie’s work to keep the Council compliant with all the relevant regulations is invaluable.

Our current focus is on the Play Area. It had been leased and administered by Mid Devon District Council until recently but the District Council decided that it could not afford to renew the lease.

Mary Fewings, who owns the ground, is keen for the Play Area to remain available for the village so our Parish Council is in the process of taking it over from the District Council.

The Play Area will be re-fenced shortly and there are plans to upgrade and replace some of the play equipment.

I look forward to receiving any ideas about how we can increase the appeal of it to the youngsters using it.

Adam Pilgrim

**Planning Report by John Butler, Chair of Planning Committee**

**Parish Council consultations**

The Parish Council has been consulted on approximately 25 applications/notifications over the last 12 months. These were, in the main, applications for extensions to existing dwellings and other minor works including notifications of intention to fell trees in the Conservation Area, the exercise of permitted development rights in relation to the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings and some infill development reflecting anticipated changes in planning policy in the draft Local Plan.

Additionally, there was an application in Burlescombe Parish by Aggregate Industries to vary the approved working scheme to extract an additional 600,000 tonnes at Rocknell Quarry (part of the Westleigh Quarry complex). Planning permission was granted under section 73 of the Planning Act (with a new section 106 agreement) despite objections being raised relating primarily to traffic and environmental concerns.

The issue of finding a new haulage route for quarry lorry traffic (primarily to avoid the impact on Burlescombe Village) remains unresolved.

**Mid-Devon District Council (MDDC) Local Plan**

The MDDC proposed Local Plan, including proposals relating to the development of land at Junction 27 of the M5 has not yet been approved. MDDC await hearing from the Inspector following the public examination of the proposed plan.

It is understood that MDDC do now have five years housing land supply. The failure of planning authorities to have sufficient housing land supply provides opportunities for developers to secure planning permission that might not otherwise be permitted.

**Permitted Development Rights**

In March 2019 the Housing Minister, James Brokenshire, announced changes to the permitted development regime (allowing development without planning permission) including the following:

* a permitted development right to extend upwards certain existing buildings in commercial or residential use to deliver additional homes. The new right to deliver homes will need to respect the design of the existing streetscape and the amenity of neighbours will also be a consideration. This right is likely to be of more relevance to urban areas. (This does not alter controls imposed by the listed building regime)
* there are proposals to allow taller charging points for electric vehicles.
* Some existing permitted development rights are to be scrapped including
  + changes of use from storage to residential use
  + rights to allow telephone kiosks (with advertising attached) to be erected without planning permission.

**The Environment**

The Government recently announced that it will push ahead with proposals consulted upon last year to use the planning system to mandate a net biodiversity gain from all new development. This leaves open numerous questions about how the scheme will work in practice. At this stage, it is difficult to predict how these proposals will impact upon developers and local authorities. It is understood that the Government is considering making exemptions from this policy eg for small schemes.

**Housing Diversity Guidance**

The Government is to issue new housing diversity guidance with the object of encouraging large sites to support a diverse range of housing needs. The revised National Planning Policy Framework already has within it a requirement for a greater mix of housing (a mix of size type and tenure) to reflect the diverse needs of local communities.

**CLERK/RFO REPORT**

The Parish Council accounts are in a very healthy state due to the funding received from the Redhill Solar Farm. There are very specific rules as to how this money may be spent so it has accumulated with few requests for grants this year. However, this will shortly change as the Parish Council assumes responsibility from Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) for the play area in the village. This fund will be used to purchase some new play equipment, unfortunately this will not go that far as the equipment which has to be of a certain standard for use in a public area is not cheap!

It is hoped the fencing in the Play Area will be replaced with a grant from the 106 monies. We are awaiting a decision on this.

The Parish Council received the following funding in this financial year:

£

Precept 7247.25

Council tax grant 52.75

Interest 25.84

Lightsource Solar 5482.84

P3 grant 160.00

Locality budget grant 330.00

VAT reclaimed 812.06

GDPR training 80.00 (received from other parish councils)

Rebate from community fibre broadband 169.46

**TOTAL 14360.20**

**Grants**

The Council received a grant from the Locality budget to assist with the clearing of the drains within the village and paid out £3000 to the George V Memorial Hall.

**Assets**

The Council have purchased through the Solar Fund a salt spreader this year at a cost of £2000 which has been deployed this winter to ensure the roads are kept open. DCC do not grit any of the roads within and around the parish so it is important that wherever possible the roads are kept clear.

**Training**

All Councillors have attended the GDPR training laid on by Microshade and in addition Councillors have attended new councillor’s course, a planning course and a Chairmanship course. The Clerk has attended regular meetings with the local clerks and the Clerks AGM.

Moving forward the Council have had to raise the precept quite considerably to fund the cost of the play area which includes its general maintenance and rent.

All the parish council documents are available to view on the website at

[www.holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk](http://www.holcomberogus-pc.gov.uk)

**Councillor Adam Pilgrim’s Canal Report**

Once again the Grand Western Canal in Devon benefits from the Canal’s Ranger Service’s excellent work. Up until about twenty years ago the canal in our Parish had almost been forgotten by the Canal Management. The channel was allowed to silt-up and the vegetation control, in and out of the water, was neglected.

Mark Baker’s appointment as Canal Manager was a godsend; he was given greater freedom to care for the canal corridor. While his budget has, in my view, been miserly, his creative thinking has seen significant efforts being directed to the canal’s maintenance by enlisting work-experience students, those who have been given Community Service sentences and some supervised volunteer groups from sheltered communities.

There is a marked contrast between the urban atmosphere of the canal in Tiverton and the rural isolation of the canal in our Parish. Mark Baker’s team concentrates on keeping our section of towpath in good order for all-year use and dealing with the frequent tree falls. These can obstruct the towpath and the navigation channel. Their removal has been prompt when Mark has been notified of such a problem.

There has been a programme of surveys working along the canal to identify trees that are unhealthy and likely to create problems. This work has reached our Parish section this year. Diseased trees that can be helped by tree surgery are trimmed appropriately but those deemed too infected are felled and, where possible, replaced with new, indigenous specimens.

We are fortunate since we have two carparks that give easy access to the canal; at Beech between Whipcott and Fenacre Bridges and at Lowdwells where the in-water section ends. The information signage at Lowdwells has been upgraded recently.

Holcombe Rogus has part of one of the best maintained canals in the country on its doorstep.

**Roads Report from Councillor Rupert Snook**

A year on from my last despairing report on the state of the Parish roads I am afraid they are not a lot better.

The problems of the flooding and pot holes of the road to Wiseburrow Farm have been looked at and pot holes have been filled. However the road still floods and holes are developing again.

The pot holes on the road to Sampford Peverell have been filled but again these are opening up. Westleigh road is very uneven by the stream bridge. Parishioners as well as councillors are better at using the on line reporting system. There is just no time or money to do anything about the reports.

We do have a new section of tarmacked road by the playing field in the village, unfortunately this will probably have to be dug up to clear the drain underneath it.

Again our District and County councillors are to be thanked for their endeavours on our behalf.

Hope the roads do not deteriorate too much, work hard to maintain them.

**FOOTPATH REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR GUY ORCHARD**

This year has seen a period of change with Councillor Guy Orchard taking on the overseeing of public rights of way in the Parish from Councillor Katie Smith, after her resignation. The largest project completed in the last twelve months has been the moving of footpath 23 and the replacement of signs, gates etc as required.

Several new signs have been installed across the Parish and vegetation cleared.

SURVEY

We are now part of the Parish Paths Partnerships Scheme (P3) which is an initiative to ensure that local paths are properly maintained. A yearly survey is required to qualify for the grant available. This has now been completed and possible projects have been highlighted, along with suggestions from Councillors and Parishioners for the year ahead.

P3 FUNDING

At present we have £1060 in the account for forthcoming projects.

**THE KING GEORGE V MEMORIAL HALL – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

It was agreed at the AGM of the King George V Memorial Hall that a new charitable trust should be set up to manage the village hall. The AGM appointed Jane Pilgrim (Chairman), Marjorie Mathews (Treasurer) and John Butler (HR Parish Council Representative) as the new Trustees to take the project forward. This they have been doing and the Holcombe Rogus Village Hall Trust was registered with the Charities Commission on 15th February 2019 (1182063).

Three new Trustees were appointed to the new charity, Sarah Gabriel, Joan Phillips and Dorothy Wright. At present the two charities are running in parallel while the asset transfer is made, from the HR Parish Council to the new Trust, the King George V Memorial Hall Trust will then be formally closed down.

During the year a full survey of the premises has been carried out. This raised a few issues but none of major concern and what we could attend to immediately we have done. As part of the survey it was suggested that we alter the locks on the main entrance doors as a safety measure in case of fire, at the same time as that was done we changed the locks on all the doors to comply with the insurance requirements.

An asbestos survey has been carried out and it seems we have some asbestos in the building which need to be flagged up to users by way of signage which we are in the process of doing.

There has been a survey of the emergency lighting and this is all now working and regular checks are being made.

Usage of the Hall is much the same as in previous years and it would be nice to see it used more.

This is the end of year financial breakdown.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Income |  | 9477.01 |
| Expenditure | | 10300.88 |
|  |  |  |
| Hall Funds 31st March 2019 | | 12932.32 |

**Playgroup Report**

A new parent committee was elected at the AGM in October with Julia Heard as the chairman. There are 13 to 15 children regularly attending including several babies who enjoy their interactive baby area while the mums compare notes on lack of sleep

**Short Mat Bowls Report**

Every Monday evening throughout the year a group of around 16 folk gather for a couple of hours of bowls. Including tea/coffee and biscuits all for £2.00 per session plus an annual subscription.

 This has been happening for the last 20 years since the Clubs’ inception. Our numbers have decreased over the years to our current level

Anno domini has been catching up with us and there seem to be more eighty year olds than in previous years.

We have an open door policy and would encourage any old or new residents in the village to try this relaxing pastime.

Why not come for a free session. Contact Peter Costema on 672558

**Annual Report on Holcombe Rogus Monthly Village Lunches 2018/19**

The Village Lunches have once again been very well supported over the year with approximately 20 to 26 people attending. The lunches are held on the last Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall from September through to the end of May. They are not held during the holiday months of June, July and August or at the end of December. Our Christmas meal was held at the end of November and was very well attended by some 36 participants including some guests as well as our regulars.

Mrs Jane Neusinger is our chef, and has been for many years, cooking up delicious feasts for us. The charge is £10 per head and is much appreciate by all who attend, and in particular by those who live on their own, as it is an opportunity to socialise and meet up with friends.

The organisational team for the lunches consist of Mrs Sue Morris, Mrs Sally Tillington-Stevens and myself. This is our second year as organisers having taken over from the previous team in Summer 2017.

Jane Willett