

**REPORTS FOR HOLCOMBE ROGUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**27<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023**

**CANAL REPORT**

The Annual Canal Visit by members of the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee was on 29th June. I attended on your behalf. Frances Freeman also came along.

The gathering was at Tiverton Basin at the later time of 7.00pm to accommodate those new Councillors who were attending a training session earlier in the evening. Overall, the attendance was poorer than usual but new Councillors were well represented.

Mark Baker, our Canal Manager, gave an update on his team's work to keep the canal corridor tidy and the waterway as clear of weed as possible.

His team have been granted new powers by Devon and Cornwall Police to help address anti-social behaviour in the canal corridor.

Unfortunately, the public toilets in the Basin have been badly vandalised again. Mark is keen to re-instate this important facility but is mindful that the work will erode his meagre funds.

The focus of the visit then shifted to our Parish; Lowdwells.

Lock Cottage and a couple of other nearby properties were flooded during the severe rainstorm in May. It appears that the watercourse beside the canal and Lowdwells Cottage overfilled, overwhelmed the old culvert system that passed through the old quarry workings and flushed large amounts of stone onto the road by the northern entrance to Burnhill Farm. Ian and Linda Murray took us into their garden to show us the watercourse around their house which revealed that their house had been a watermill, probably pre-dating the canal.

We were shown the course of the culvert away from the cottage which has been investigated by Devon County Council. A plan is being prepared to improve this so that the risk of flooding here will be reduced.

The visit finished at the entrance to Pondground Quarry for members to appreciate how close the controversial firing range is to the canal.

Mark Baker was thanked for organising the evening which opened the new Councillors' eyes to a part of the canal that some had not visited.

Adam Pilgrim.

**PLANNING REPORT**

Adrian Devereaux, the Planning Officer dealing with the Pondground Application, has advised that there will be a demonstration firing by Devon and Cornwall Police on 5th September for the benefit of new District Councillors.

We were advised by MDDC that Application 23/00905/CAT for removing two Cypress trees at Holcombe Court was approved.

I'm hoping that we will soon have a date for the Planning Training that was cancelled recently.

Adam Pilgrim – HRPC Planning Committee Chairman.

**HIGHWAYS**

No highways work seems to have taken place

No repairs to the faulty street light.

Massive street hole outside the Dower house on the way up to the church

*R Snook*

*Councillor*

## DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

Just a brief report to let you know that we have been briefed by members of the Planning Department on how little scope the District Council has for controlling developments involving commercial renewable energy projects, including Anaerobic Digestors about which there is a great deal of feeling locally due to the extra heavy vehicle traffic to which they give rise.

The Scrutiny Committee will in coming months be looking at how to make progress with the motion passed by Council on Rivers and Seas, identifying where new development may impact on storm overflows of sewage into water courses in dialogue with South West Water. It will also be looking at how the Council can become more diverse and inclusive and represent all sections of the population, given that those in full time employment or with caring responsibilities may have difficulties in playing a part in local democracy. It will also consider the Three Rivers Development Project once all the independent reports on that have been received. Those meetings are open to the public.

Gill Westcott

## COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

This just a bit of update of what is going on regarding DCC's finance. Not aware of any/many problems up in your area, I know the condition of roads are always a problem, I am meeting with our Highways Officer next week and any burning problems can/will be brought to his notice.

DCC Members have received regular budget monitoring reports throughout 2022/23 in which budget pressures and risks have been identified. The outturn underspend of £156,000 is achieved after a contribution to the budget management reserve of £1.5 million and a carry forward of £500,000 into 2023/24 for Highways. The final outturn position is an improvement from the £3.6 million overspend forecast outturn which was reported to Cabinet on 8th March and a significant improvement on the £30.5 million forecast overspend at month 2 at which time there was a further £10 million risk identified relating to in year inflationary pressures. The organisational wide response to the financial challenges faced by the authority, resulted in £25.4 million of additional in year savings, income and alternative applications of funding being identified. Delivery of savings and additional income contained within the budget totalled £33.7 million against planned savings of £38.7 million.

Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Director of Children and Young People's Futures recognises the importance of pay awards in helping us to recruit and retain a strong and dedicated workforce, we are concerned that an unfunded pay rise would have significant impact on our maintained schools. The increase of £1,925 for NJC staff along with the proposed 6.5% for teachers represents an additional £13.8 Million in costs to DCC maintained schools in the 2023/24 financial year. This is an average of 7% of total schools funding of £185 Million (calculated as Schools Budget Share plus Mainstream Additional Grant).

Adult Care Operations and Health outturn is £4.8 million overspent, which reflects significant pressure on unit rates and higher residential and nursing placements volumes and complexity present throughout the year. These pressures have been partially offset by one off grant monies and underspends on staffing budgets which reflect the difficulty in recruiting care management staff

Devon County Cabinet are proposing the decommission the Mobile Library vehicles and provide £25K transition support for vulnerable users to continue to access alternative library provision. The Council would provide funding to help with the transition to other existing and new library services to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the mobile library community continue to access services they value. This has now been called to scrutiny for discussion. If scrutiny and make alternative suggestions, Cabinet do not have to except any suggestion/recommendations. The earliest any closure of the mobile library will not come into force is Sept.

Each of our county councillors has an annual locality budget, to be used as a fund of last resort, of £5,000 that they can use to respond to local needs within any financial year (April to March).

Councillors can, if they wish, make grants to support projects or activities that benefit the communities they represent

Always pleased to follow up on any issues that are causing concern.

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