

**THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE  
ELECTORATE OF COLYTON PARISH ON 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2014 IN  
THE FEOFFEEES TOWN HALL, COLYTON**

**Present:** Cllrs S Smith, K Clifford, C Pady, R Pocock, H West, A Parr, B Collier, C Collier, S Real, M Mann, R Turner, J Hay, P Gibbins, Dist. Cllrs G Godbeer & H Parr, County Cllr S Randall Johnson, PC Steve Speariett (for part of the meeting), 15 members of the public, 1 member of the press (for part of the meeting) & E Berry (clerk). **APPENDIX 1**

1. The meeting started at 1930 and Cllr A Parr as Chair of the Colyton Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies for Absence were received from Bronwyn Hocking, Bernard Love and Mr & Mrs B Fowkes.
3. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013 were approved & signed as being a true record of that meeting
4. The subject of dropped kerbs was raised as a continuing issue but would be dealt with by the County Cllr in her report,
5. PC Steve Speariett gave the report on local policing matters.

**APPENDIX 2.**

He reported that 2014 had seen the lowest ever crime figures since 2004. Most of the recorded local crime is petty vandalism caused by teenagers & young adults. The local police force has made an effort to engage with the youth of the area and know most of the youngsters by name and are actively working with them to prevent crimes being committed and issuing first stage ASBO letters where necessary.

Mobile phone crime is on the increase as is opportunistic thefts from motor vehicles. He reminded everyone not to leave personal possessions in motor vehicles.

He explained the recent changes in staffing levels which has seen him take on more responsibility. There are planned rearrangements to staffing numbers and he warned that response times may be longer than he would wish. The district plans to lose 100 officers over the next couple of years, many will be 'natural wastage' through retirement & will not be replaced.

6. Parish Council:
  - a. **Review of the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 – Cllr A Parr**  
Cllr Parr reported another busy year with the Council meeting at least twice a month but particularly in the last year there have been a lot of related meetings & hearings that have to be attended. He thanked the members of the parish council for giving up their time to attend these. The Parish Council have had a number of major issues to deal with during the year. Two matters had carried over from last year. Firstly the EDDC Local Plan, which although it has been adopted by East Devon Council has not yet been accepted by the Inspector. At the moment

Colyton still has to find sites for 35 houses & Colyford for 10 houses. Hopefully this will not be changed in the final plan.

The fact that the plan has still not been accepted led to the Seaton Development application for 170 houses on the green wedge between Colyford & Seaton. This was strongly opposed by the residents of Colyford and the application was refused by East Devon. When the applicant appealed both East Devon & Colyford residents fought the appeal & won. This was a major victory for that particular green wedge.

Secondly the MUGA area at the Peace Memorial Playing Fields. The work to level & landscape the surrounding area was eventually done last summer when the ground finally dried out.

More recently three pieces of equipment have been installed which are proving very popular with the youngsters of Colyton. This was paid for out of S106 money and a grant from the Feoffees. We now need to get the machinery shed built.

Two problems occurred this year, firstly the very wet winter and the damage caused to the roads. We have battled to get these potholes repaired, although we are very aware that Devon County Council are struggling for money due to central government cut back for local government. Secondly it looks almost certain that CeramTech are going to close. The site is currently up for sale and we can only hope that another manufacturer buys it and provides employment in Colyton. Obviously the parish Council will do all it can to support this. On a happier note, work is starting on the 12 affordable houses at Cuthouse Meadow, Hillhead. This will bring much needed housing for the young of Colyton. We are lucky in that this is our second affordable scheme in Colyton.

Finally he thanked his vice chair, Cllr Caroline Collier, the Chairs of the other committees Bob Collier & Colin Pady and the councillors and also offered special thanks to the clerk for handling all the paperwork and organising the meetings throughout the year.

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b. Committee Reports: Finance – Cllr C Collier - **APPENDIX 3**  
Cllr C Collier presented the financial report which shows a difference of income over expenditure, largely due to that fact that we have received monies for work on the MUGA and playing fields but some of the work has carried over into this financial year and payments are yet to be made. She went on to clarify the report, payments were largely what had been budgeted for and she explained where savings had been made and thanked John Rollings, the maintenance man for all the repair work he had undertaken saving the Parish Council considerable money. She also thanked the clerk for her help with the finances during the year. She presented the Council with a cheque for £3750 from the Carnival Committee to go towards the Playing fields development.

A local resident asked if Devon County had stopped paying into the P3 Partnership scheme.

It was explained to him that as we still had a considerable amount of money in our P3 account we received no payment.

#### Planning – Cllr R Collier - **APPENDIX 4**

Cllr B Collier informed the meeting that there had been 77 planning applications during the year, an increase on last year of 12.

He thanked all involved in the recent Green Wedge appeal for all the hard work they had put into it.

He reiterated the Office opening hours (Tuesday & Thursday 1030 -1200) and the fact that an appointment can be made to see plans outside of these hours. (Monday & Friday 0900-1230)

There is still a vacancy for a tree warden they, and assisted by other councillors, he had been looking at the tree work application when they arrive.

He thanks his vice- chair Cllr Real for his help & support during the year and also thanked the Clerk for all her help.

#### Amenities – Cllr C Pady - **APPENDIX 5**

Cllr Pady briefly went through the amenities that had been reported on at the annual inspection in July.

In the main all are looking in good shape, there had been some recent work done at the cemetery to tidy up fallen trees and volunteers are working in two of the gardens in the town, maintaining the Colyford village gateways & plots in front of the Colyford post office with the others being maintained by a part-time gardener.

He reported on the playing field & the recent skate board park and commented on the state of the tennis courts which will be hopefully remedied in the next few months. He thanked the owners of the Premier Shop for holding the tennis court keys and collecting the money.

He praised John Rollings for the enthusiastic way he carries out his duties including the repair & maintenance of many of the seats & equipment around the Parish.

He mentioned that a scheme was being explored for a toddler play are in Colyford using S106 monies.

The allotments are all let and during the year a composting toilet was erected by the Allotment Association with match funding from the Parish Council.

He thanked the footpath wardens, Bronwyn Hocking & Bernard Love for all the work that they do. There had been one meeting with the Rights of way Team to discuss Parish issues and a bid for funds was made for essential work on Ham Lane. He thanked Peter Gibbins for the work he did there in clearing the ditches and improving drainage.

Work had been done at both the picnic Site & the Community Woodland and a proposal is being considered for the area to be managed by AVDCS (Axe Vale & District Conservation Society ) under a more formal agreement. He thanked Mrs Gibbins for painting the new sign.

He mentioned that the seat in memory of Mary Maclean was sited beside the River Coly, paid for by donations from friends & family, the Royal British Legion & the Feoffees.

He thanked all the voluntary help given by the residents of the Parish during the past year.

A local resident commented that dog fouling on paths was a problem and were the Parish Council doing away with dog bins?

It was explained to him that the Council had bought another dog bin to be sited in Ridgeway Lane (cost to empty £200/year plus VAT). The Clerk reiterated that EDDC will accept wrapped dog waste in any litter bin.

c. Parish Path Partnership (P3) – Cllr C Pady - **APPENDIX 6**

Cllr Pady read the report by Mr Bernard Love. Generally the paths are in good condition and can be walked without difficulty providing the weather is kind. Three footpaths need the appropriate footwear as they retain water except in very dry conditions – they are no 36, 23 & 28. There have been problems with a few trees & branches being blown across footpaths but these are the responsibility of the land owner and in most cases have been cleared.

Some dog owners are still failing to pick up after their animals and dispose of it in the bins provided. Others use bags but then leave them hanging on the footpath.

Guest Speakers: John Vanderwolfe – DALC (Axminster Area Secretary). John gave a very amusing & interesting talk to the meeting. He introduced himself to those that didn't know him & explained that Devon Area Local Councils covered 22 councils. It was involved in offering training sessions for councillors and sessions to get people thinking about becoming a councillor. He went on to explain that he worked as a part time clerk for several councils and had a responsibility for about 60 councillors in total. He explained that he felt this was an exciting time to become a councillor and that there were golden opportunities to change and develop policies for the long term future of communities. He explained the Neighbourhood Plan system and the rationale behind it.

He went through the financial changes that had been made to the 1972 local Government act which now meant that Parish Councils could use internet banking & credit card payments. He mentioned the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) that clerks could undertake and the benefits that it could then offer a council, the main one being that the council could then become a 'competent council' and have more say in the decision making processes.

Using a starfish analogy he entertained the meeting and finished by saying that although councils & councillors were sometimes given a bad press they are made up of local volunteers who want to do their very best of their community. He encouraged those members of the public present to put their names down next May when the council elections take place!

A Colyton resident asked if the term 'Competent Council' had a previous name? John replied by saying that the previous name was a Power of Wellbeing.

Cllr Pocock asked what difference being a competent council would make to planning issues?

John responded by saying that EDDC meets with competent councils and they are given powers of decision over advertising & tree applications. Cllr H Parr explained the situation at EDDC which is currently under review. Cllr Mann asked what the time scale for Neighbourhood Plans was? John said that it took about 2 years and the planning authority had a duty to assist parish councils with it and the community & civic societies within

the parish need to be involved as it is a community consultation exercise and once formulated 51% of the population must agree it.  
There is a cost implication but money is available.

7. Colyton Chamber of Feoffees – Chairman – Mr Kevin Budden –

**APPENDIX 7**

Mr Budden gave the annual report on the Feoffees, explaining what the Feoffees were, how they administer their funds in accordance with the Charities Act and how those funds are allocated. He went through some of the more recent donations.

8. The Reece Strawbridge Centre – Cllr Mann

**APPENDIX 8**

Cllr Mann reported that the Reece Strawbridge Centre had another successful year, it has built up its user base and got into a steady revenue stream offering security for the ongoing running of the building. He said that the Trustees were looking at a range of improvements at the centre to encourage even more visitors.

9. Devon County Council – County Cllr Sara Randall-Johnson –

Cllr Randal Johnson praised the strong community of Colyton & Colyford. These are still austere times and confidence in the business market is still not as strong as it once was. DCC has to save £110m over the next 4 years and is looking at making some major changes to some of its service provisions. Services have to be targeted at the most vulnerable.

Running care homes cost the district council 50% more than the comparable service provided by the private sector and more elderly people want to remain independent and live at home.

There is a good voluntary system in Colyton for Youth activities and across the county 16,000 youths are attending uniform events (Scouts, guides etc.) whilst those services provided by DCC attract only 10000 young people.

Devon has a network of 8000 miles of roads and a budget need of £55m to maintain that network. Unfortunately the provision is only £35m so there is a shortfall and work has to be prioritised.

To date no libraries have been closed but several are under threat and she hope the fiends of Colyton Library will rally to the call and take over the service provision supported by DCC.

She explained that the £100m funding for the Stop Line way (SLW) had been redeployed to help homes & businesses that were victims of the recent floods. However with the help of Colyford Burgesses' & Howard West it is hoped that a funding request for European money will be successful and the planning process for the off road route started later this year.

She finished by paraphrasing John Hart (leader of DCC) who had said – ask not what your county can do for you but what you could do for your County – but suggested Colyton be substituted for county!

A local resident asked what had happened to the long awaited, and promised dropped kerbs?

Cllr Randall Johnson explained the problems with the proposed locations but stated that with the persistence of Andrew & John there will hopefully

be dropped kerbs in the next year after a safety audit had taken place. She did point out that if a Neighbourhood Plan was in place the council could ask that low kerbs be automatically provided.

Another resident commented that the delay on the SLW through the Devon section was unacceptable – it appears to have taken over nine years and is still not completed.

Cllr Randal Johnson explained the problems here in East Devon, mainly a reluctance of the Environment agency to allow an off road section through the marshes. It would have been wrong for one authority to go against the wishes of another so there was stalemate and an unacceptable on road route offered. That is where the Burgesses' of Colyford came into play and negotiated with the EA, the tramway & local landowners.

It was important that the community worked together and this was a great partnership that should see the project finished later next year.

A Colyton resident asked her about a recent DCC meeting where a number of youths wished to speak but were unable to. She commented that there were rules & procedure that had to be followed, the young people had been told that they would be unable to speak but stirred up by others they turned up and were disappointed.

He asked if Standing Orders could not have been suspended?

Cllr Randall Johnson reiterated that procedures had to be followed.

10 East Devon District Council – District Cllrs H Parr & G Godbeer  
Cllr G Godbeer.

Cllr Godbeer thanked John Vanderwolfe for his entertaining talk.

He went on to say how much he enjoyed his job, in all the roles he is undertaking but that with his role as chairman of the council he feels he is removed from the decision making process. He enjoys the civic side of the role and enjoys meeting local people. His main role is to conduct the business of the council meeting, ensuring that procedures are being followed. It's a challenging role with sometime some quick thinking on the hoof being required! The business of the EDDC is quite wide ranging. He commented that for the 5<sup>th</sup> year running EDDC had not increased its portion of the council tax, he reminded all present that EDDC only gets 8% of the Council Tax.

He went on to comment on the excellent performance rates of the Council which are published on the EDDC website monthly.

He supported the Green Wedge protection and will continue to do so in the future. He is a great supporter of the SLW and in a small way has tried to help negotiations along.

With regards to the flooding at Ridgeway he commented that resolving it is going to be a slow process but the engineers have appointed a consultant to look at future prevention and resolution.

He is very aware of the great farming heritage around Colyton and has taken note of the recent reports of large farm machinery causing damage to local properties. He will take this up with Highways and ask them to look at the road camber & signage – this will be his personal mission for the coming year.

A local resident asked what EDDC had been doing to promote the area to activity holidays companies, a growth area in the tourist industry and would provide a much needed boost to the economy of the region. Cllr Godbeer more than agreed, in his last role tourism was in his remit and he is more than aware of how dependant the area is on it. The new portfolio holder was encouraged to do all he could and to the best of his knowledge is still working on it.

Cllr Smith asked if anything could be done to monitor & control the larger vehicles that try to come into Colyton? Cllr Randall Johnson interjected saying this was not an EDDC issue but a Highways and DCC one. If restrictions were imposed they would have to be policed, and there isn't enough police or enforcement officers to do that.

Cllr Godbeer said that this subject often comes up, especially with foreign drivers following sat nav unconditionally. But with their limited comprehension of English they possibly couldn't read any signage anyway.

The whole process needs greater thought & planning.

A Colyton resident thank Cllr Godbeer for his support of the Green Wedge campaign & his chairmanship of EDDC and thanked him for voting for the proposed public speaking conditions to go back to the Scrutiny Committee and asked would he vote against it again?

Cllr Godbeer said he would wait for any evidence to support the changes to be made before he would make his mind up

There followed some discussion on the proposed changes and the perception that this is a gagging order.

A resident asked if this was a Conservative initiative to which the answer was No.

#### Cllr H Parr.

Cllr Parr explained the appeal procedures and the role that the Development Management Committee play in it and all applications. She explained that the East Devon Development Management Committee must look at applications in their own rights each application can only be refused on sound planning reasons and that refusal can be challenged if the reasons are not sound planning ones. The DMC is notified of all objections and all has to be assessed under the current National Planning Framework. The officers are professional planning officers but are not the planning authority, The Committee makes the decisions based on all available information.

She explained the current state of the Local Plan which has been very widely reported. It is not an ideal situation but EDDC is not alone in having its plan returned for more evidence to be submitted to the Inspector and a survey & consultation is ongoing to gather the required information.. The distribution of development has to be looked at as well as providing more evidence of co-operation. EDDC is working with West Dorset as well who need to provide more housing and would like these to be in Uplyme.

She said that the planning department had handled 2066 application up to December 2013, 90 of which were major applications. Other nearest council had only handles 1509 applications with 32 being major so it was a

very busy department. As the economy pick up developers are putting in more applications.

In answer to a residents question she clarified that a major development is one where more than 10 houses is proposed.

Cllr Mann asked if because of the delay with the Local Plan being accepted would the proposed housing number requirements of 35 for Colyton & 10 for Colyford be maintained? What happens to the applications already agreed?

Cllr H Parr said that these counted towards the numbers. Other applications would be judged against the NPPF, each is looked on in detailed and a decision made based on the framework document and sustainability of the proposal.

There followed a long discussion on this point of numbers requires and what had already been approved. The numbers just didn't appear to stack up or make sense and there was a fear that the clock would be set to zero and the required housing numbers effectively increased in the Parish.

A Colyton resident asked Cllr Parr if she would vote against the changes to the public speaking restrictions.

Cllr Parr responded by saying that councillors are democratically elected to be on a committee and it is the committees role to make a decision based on all the information gathered by officers from all the comments sent in by members of the public. All the committee members have all that information there in front of them at the meeting, the members of the public are there to emphasis those points.

The Scrutiny Committee will make a recommendation to cabinet & the committee. She cannot accept that limiting public speaking is not giving people their democratic rights.

11 Any matters raised by members of the public

A long term local resident thanked those concerned for providing the handrails at the front of the Town Hall and thanked the Parish Council for all that they do for the Parish.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 2126.

NB: The Appendices can be viewed in the Council Offices within the published times. Please contact the Clerk on 552460 if you wish to see them.