

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE ELECTORATE OF COLYTON PARISH ON WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015 IN THE FEOFFES TOWN HALL, COLYTON**

**Present:** Cllrs A Parr, C Collier, B Collier, P Gibbins, J Hay, C Pady, S Real, R Turner, P Dean, A Jarman, H Evans, K Clifford, G Stephens, Cty Cllr Sara Randall Johnson, 11 members of the public, PC Steve Speariett (for part of the meeting), Claire Rodway (EDDC), 1 member of the press and E Berry (Clerk).

### **Minutes:**

1. The meeting started at 7.30pm and Cllr A Parr welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. Apologies for Absence – Cllr H Parr & G Godbeer (Meeting at Knowle)
3. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd April 2014 were approved & signed as being a true record of that meeting.
4. Any matters arising from the minutes - none
5. Report on local policing matters – PC Steve Speariett  
 PC Speariett reported that 2014 had been the third lowest yearly total (54), down from a peak of (97 in 2009).  
 Criminal damage remains the most common offence and has remained constant at 11 incidents for the last 3 years.  
 There were 2 burglary of dwellings the lowest ever yearly total.  
 May was the busiest month with 9 incidents reported (only 2 so far this year). August was crime free, only the second time ever that Colyton has had a crime free month.  
 There were 10 Domestic related incidents which the Police take very seriously.  
 In 41% of the crimes a suspect had been identified but not necessarily charged.  
 He produced copies of the statistics – **APPENDIX 1**.  
 Cllr Parr thanked him for all the work he had done on his time in the local area and wished him a very happy retirement.
6. **Parish Council:**
  - a. **Review of the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 – Cllr A Parr**  
 Cllr Parr reported that it had been a busy year. The Parish Council has met twice a month, and in addition has attended a lot of other meeting concerning parish council business such as planning site meetings and other organisations which have Parish Council representatives.  
 The Parish Council is very pleased that the second development of affordable housing at Cuthouse Meadows is now complete, There are 12 houses on the site, which when added to the 20 at Seaway Head gives us 32 houses for local, particularly the young.  
 The Parish Council has decided to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan, which, once it has been accepted by EDDC will give us more control on building development in Colyton & Colyford. We will be looking for volunteers to help draw up this plan.  
 The third matter concerns the government's cuts to District & County Councils budgets as part of its austerity campaign. These cuts do feed through to parishes and is seen more obviously in the state of our roads. The Parish Council is continuing to put pressure on the DCC to fill pot-holes and make repairs, however we are going to have to accept that there is going to be less work done unless we take some responsibility ourselves. The council is already working with residents to try to sort out the drainage on Lillylake Road, We will need volunteers to help in other areas of our road network.

The recent elections saw four councillors stand down - Howard West, Robin Pocock, Mark Mann and Sheila Smith. He thanked them for their hard work over the last 4 years.

Unfortunately only 10 people stood for the 13 vacancies so there was no election this year as the 10 automatically became councillors. He welcomes the one new councillor who stood, Paul Dean. Volunteers were then asked for to be co-opted onto the council and 5 residents came forward, with three being co-opted – Huntley Evans, Andrew Jarman & Graham Stephens – he welcomed them to the Parish Council and thanked the other 2 residents who were unsuccessful this time.

He went on to thank his Vice Chair, Cllr Caroline Collier for all her help & support through the year, the chairman & vice chairs of the various committees for all their hard work and the Clerk who has had to deal with all the paperwork, emails and regulations that go with running the Parish Council

## **b. Committee Reports:**

### **Finance – Cllr C Collier**

Cllr Collier presented the receipts & payment account for the past year **APPENDIX 2**

The figures show a difference of expenditure over income, this is largely due to the fact that we have carried out a lot of work at the playing field and receipt of monies for this were included in last year's accounts. We have constructed the tractor shed which has been built to accommodate the ground work machinery and the skate park has been opened. We received funding for the skate park from 106 monies, (monies received from local building work) and a generous donation from the Carnival Committee and the Feoffees. The Skate Park has proved to be very popular with our young people and we have already added further ramps which they have requested. Money has been spent refurbishing the tennis courts and this has been welcomed by the users. Two trees had to be felled at the cemetery, an extra expense we had not budgeted for. The miscellaneous payments included an inspection of the Play equipment, repairs to the wall in Dolphin Street, the registration of Parish properties, an important exercise that we are carrying out to register with the Land Registry all of the Parish Council properties. This is proving to be quite a project and a big thank you must go the Councillors who have been wading through various deeds and documents to make this possible. CPC have also invested £15000 in a short term account. The business rates did not reduce as would appear on the accounts, we actually paid some before the end of the last financial year. She thanked the Handyman, John Rollings in doing an excellent job with repairs and maintenance, he is a real asset. Thanks were also given to the volunteer gardeners, both in Colyton and Colyford, for all their hard work which has saved quite a bit of money. CPC had agreed at the last meeting to allocate some money so that they can purchase plants for this season, we hope this will help them. Most other payments were as we had budgeted

Receipts are much as budgeted. The cemetery income was up on what we had budgeted, this is always a difficult item to budget for. The grants and donations might seem a large figure but this includes a large amount from Devon County Council for the Tractor shed, (this was money allocated from the sale of Exeter airport), The Playing Field Committee also provided a considerable sum for the shed, money from the Parishes Together fund, money from our County Councillors locality budget for the extra ramp for the skate park, we must thank Northleigh Parish Council for coming in with us on this, and money from the Community Council for Devon for repairs to the war memorial, this work is due to commence shortly  
CPC again had a successful Audit and she thanked Ann Horton of Hammett Associates for all her help in preparing the accounts.

The Parish Council appreciate that we are still going through difficult financial times and so we have only asked for a minimum increase in the precept this year, which amounts to 75p per week for a Band D property

Thanks were given to the Clerk, Liz Berry, for her help with the finances during the year,

### **Planning – Cllr R Collier**

The number of planning applications during the past year was actually 6 less than the previous year.

There were 71 Planning applications of which

41 were Full applications

6 were Listed Building Applications,

10 Tree Applications –

5 Change of Use

2 Agricultural applications

4 Outline applications

2 Variation

There was also one application for an adjoining parish when we were asked for our comments on the proposed scheme for Seaton Heights

Each application is considered on its merits and where necessary we hold site meetings

Last year he had reported that work had just started on more affordable housing at Mount View, being built by Sovereign Housing Association, he was pleased to say that the scheme has been completed and the houses let. The Parish Council were invited to view the properties prior to occupation and we were most impressed with the quality of the houses

If any members of the public wish to view any planning applications they can do so by visiting the Parish Council Office at the Town Hall on Tuesday or Thursday mornings when the office is open to the public, or at other times by appointment, just call the Clerk to make sure she is available

As last year, we are still without a Tree Warden, if anyone is interested please let us know. Cllr Collier went on to thank Steve Real, his Vice-Chairman, for his help and support and also to the Clerk for all her help

### **Amenities – Cllr C Pady**

The Amenity Committee met three times during the year in addition to dealing with issues on a monthly basis.

The Council held its Annual Inspection in June.

The Cemetery – once again it is being maintained to a high standard by the contractor, Council Gardens – thanks are to be recorded to volunteers who have planted and maintained the Govers Meadow & St Andrews Gardens, the flower beds and grass areas opposite Colyford Post Office and the village gateways. Since April when our part time gardener finished volunteers have started to look after Bridge Garden as well, Recently the council have agreed to pay for plans for both the Colyton & Colyford gardens as well as appeal for plants to be donated.

The Playing Fields – The tractor shed has been completed and a second hand tractor and mower have been purchased, The Council acknowledges all the volunteer work which goes into the maintenance of the pitches and grass areas. Work is in hand to improve and maintain the cricket wicket with the hope that this will become more used. The three skateboard ramps have proved very popular and recently a spine ramp and grind rail were added.

The junior play area is very popular with young families. Both play areas at the PMPF and Road Green are monitored and maintained to a good standard by the Council handyman, John Rollings. Thanks were given to him for the enthusiastic way he carried out his duties including the care and maintenance of the many seats around the parish. The Carnival Committee have generously offered to provide a roundabout for disabled children and also a basket swing – work to install these is waiting for approval. The committee had spent much time researching a toddler's play area for Colyford. Three sites were identified but each had

problems preventing their use in order to qualify for S106 funds. CPC have made enquiries concerning other sites and has so far been unsuccessful.

The Tennis Courts – there were resurfaced last year which has led to an increase in their use. Thanks are due to the Premier Shop for holding the key & collecting the fees.

The Allotments – whilst all have been rented the CPC is concerned that some plots have become overgrown to the detriment of neighbouring plots. The Allotment Association continues to liaise with CPC and provides help and support for members, this year the Association organised two ‘tidy-up’ sessions with volunteer working parties. The annual open day was well supported.

Footpaths – the CPC is grateful to Bronwen Hocking & Bernard Love for their work as parish footpath wardens, reporting on bridleways in footpaths in the Parish and helping CPC in its involvement with the Parish Path’s Partnership (P3 scheme where DCC provides funds for regular work and essential repairs). There has been one meeting with the County Council Rights of Way team to discuss issues around the parish and a bid for funds had been successful. Special thanks offered to Bronwen Hocking as she is standing down after many years. The CPC is grateful to Paul Marx who has agreed to take over that role with Bernard for another year.

The Picnic Site – another popular amenity – kept mown by a contractor with seat maintained by John Rollings.

The Community Woodland – this is the area below the picnic site and is now managed by the Axe Vale Conservation Society who have organised working parties to cut grass & scrub with two hedges being laid over the past year. He thanked them for their excellent work, The grounds of St Andrews are maintained by John Rollings and again thanks were offered to him for the excellent standard of work.

Finally he thanked all the volunteers who had helped in the parish over the past year.

Planned Works:

Colyford Stop Line Way stalled because of lack of funds

Provision of new workshop/shed at Rosemary Lane

War Memorial to be professionally cleaned with grant aid and two new names added with funds raised by the Royal British Legion.

Registration of Parish Property – progress has been made with the first tranche.

### **c Parish Path Partnership (P3) – Mr B Love**

This year the winter weather has been very good for footpath walking. Two footpaths however remain difficult for quite a lot of the year. These are footpath 36 Holyford Lane to Green Lane and footpaths 23 & 28 Cownhayne Lane to Whitford. In these cases the use of waterproof footwear is advised.

Despite some very strong winds at times during the past year we have had very little problem with fallen trees or branches blocking the footpaths.

Some dog walkers still cause problems by allowing their dog to foul the footpaths and not clean up after them. In other cases they do use the plastic bags but leave them on the footpath, which is worse than leaving the mess to decompose naturally and can present a hazard to livestock.

The steps over the sewer pipe where the footpath crosses the tramway on footpath 25 have been repaired after some delay of several weeks after reporting the danger. People walking from Colyton end could not see the problem. One of the steps on the way down was only fixed at one side, meaning there was a real danger of someone falling to the bottom.

**7 Guest Speakers: Claire Rodway** – Claire gave an informal presentation on Neighbourhood Planning she explained the context of NP and the process the Parish Council needs to go through to achieve a successful NP. EDDC strongly support the request for a neighbourhood plans and there are grants available totalling £10000 which in most cases should cover the production of the plan, There is also help and advice available from Claire and her colleague Tim, EDDC's Local Plan is currently out for consultation and one of the changes made to the parish is that following an assessment of boundaries and a decision to only keep BUAB for larger settlements. The built up area boundary for Colyford has been removed, designating the surrounding area as open countryside.

She encouraged communities to produce a NP as sites could then be allocated for development along with recreational opportunities within the development, or green wedges could be protected within a NP.

There are 30 NP's being produced in Devon mainly by larger towns and 1 (Lympstone) has been adopted. There is Government funding available and an independent assessor has deemed EDDC as leading the way with NP's.

Neighbourhood Plans are the parish responsibility but needs input from the community and other organisations. The suggestion is that a steering group is set up, to include some councillors. The group then applies to EDDC to designate a neighbourhood area and the first tranche of money - £2000 is then available to make a start on the NP. The Steering group invites comment from the residents and gathers evidence to base its recommendations on. There has to be community involvement and there is a grant of £8000 to ensure this is done. EDDC can help with the policy writing and public consultation. The draft NP goes out for consultation for 6 weeks and is then submitted to EDDC which then passes it onto an independent examiner. Finally there is a referendum taken on the Neighbourhood Plan (EDDC pays for this). To date because of good public consultation & engagement there have been no NO votes. The process can take anything up to 2 years. If consultants are used this time may be cut back but there is additional expenses in using a consultant.

Howard West asked what the impact is on Colyford with the removal of the built up area boundary? Claire replied that the surrounding area would be designated open countryside and with Colyford not having a wide range of facilities such as primary schools, shops etc. no development could be consider except in special circumstances such as affordable housing.

HW asked if this would stop people building in their back gardens – Claire answered Yes once the Local Plan is adopted but a Neighbourhood Plan could have a policy which would allow this – it's up to residents.

Sheila Smith asked what the timescale was for the Local Plan which had been resubmitted?

Claire answered that hopefully by the end of the year it will have been approved.

SS asked how many houses were designated for Colyton?

Claire answered that the new Local Plan did not show numbers, it's left to the local community, with the five year land supply now being a defence for any perceived over development.

Cllr C Collier asked what the benefits were in using a consultant in drafting the Neighbourhood Plan?

Claire replied that it could speed up the process and was useful where a lot of parishes were getting together to submit a NP as it maintained consistency. She thought the expertise required could be found in volunteers in Colyton & Colyford.

Cllr Parr asked if changes were to be made to Colyton's existing BUAB? Claire said there was no intention to alter it.

## **8 Colyton Chamber of Feoffees – Mr B Love**

Mr Love gave a brief history of the founding of the Feoffees with its remit 'to do good, godly and commendable deeds'. The Chamber enjoys charity status through the Parish Lands Charity and have funds invested in the Charity's Commission's COIF fund designed for growth but

investing in the more risk free investments. He pointed out that the cost of running the Town Hall is double the annual income from the hall rental payments and maintenance costs and ongoing improvements are all extra expenditure. During the past twelve months financial assistance totalling £4,500 has been awarded to various good causes. The Chamber considers requests for short term help from parishioners in cases of hardship.

Applications for a donation from local students for help with the expenses of training either here or for short periods overseas are also considered. The Chamber also provides financial help towards special projects for local youth groups and schools.

This year the Chamber has also made donations to the Royal British Legion towards the cost of refurbishing the War Memorial, to the Promote Colyton Group and the New Memory Café at the library. The Chamber also hosts an annual Banquet for the community and a tea party for all the over 60's in the parish.

## 9 The Reece Strawbridge Centre –Trustee member.

No report given

## 10 Devon County Council – County Cllr Sara Randall-Johnson

Cllr Randall Johnson commented that a lot of what she was going to say had already been said. She reiterated the fact that money was tight at County Hall

The past year has been as busy as ever,

The Highways Department have changed and are now keen to engage with local councils and help them deliver road improvements.

Works carried out in Colyton, dropped curbs

Stopline Way work is still ongoing to source funding to enable the completion to Cownhayne lane. The section from Seaton to Popes lane is on track, and work will start very soon. The project will probably take about 16 weeks to complete and will be a new walk to enjoy.

Road Wardens

Works carried out past Three Sycamores very encouraging start to joint working with adjoining parishes.

Library's future looks bright and her and the Librarian Team at County Hall are very grateful for all the hard work and enthusiasm shown by the league of friends.

Many worthy organisations in her division have applied and been able to benefit from grants from the Locality Budgets, which she was pleased to support, these included: skate park improvements, Colyford mulching grass mower, Promote Colyton Group website setup

Howard West asked that because the first application for money from the EU for the SLW had failed did she really think the EU would give money for a subsequent application before an EU referendum?

Cllr SRJ said they had to look wherever they can to find the money. There are limited resources from DCC. She explained the background to the SLW and the route it was intending to take through Colyford.

Cllr Gibbins asked why the money that was in place and then used for the Somerset Levels hadn't been reimbursed?

Cllr SRJ said that the money was **not** promised, it was to be the underspend of the Department of Transport – it was this that had been taken away and used elsewhere, HW felt that the SLW was being bypassed for other cycle routes in Devon, we may have been front of the queue once but we seem now to be way back behind other places who have had very large sums of money spent on cycle paths.

Cllr SRJ replied that putting the requirement for the SLW in the Neighbourhood Plan would be a positive way forward.

Cllr Gibbins stated that other communities around us seemed to have money spent on them whereas Colyton Parish appears to be the poor relation.

Sheila Smith thanked Cllr SRJ for the money from her locality budget for the Reece Strawbridge Centre and said that she had encourage Link to approach Cllr SRJ for help in funding someone to co-ordinate the Link car service.

#### 11 East Devon District Council – report read by Cllr Parr in absence of District Councillor.

- **Relocation of council offices-** sale of the Knowle site in Sidmouth and relocation of council offices to Heathpark, Honiton & Exmouth Town Hall given the go ahead. Current buildings dilapidated, not fit for purpose, too large, and costly to run. Modern mobile working means many officers do not need permanent office accommodation. Parkland offered to Sidmouth Town Council as public open space.

- **Local Plan 2014 -2031-** out to consultation until Fri 12 June. Strategy 27 applies to villages and rural areas. Reserve Site at Seaton removed. Around 17,000 homes to be built, 900 per year. Evidence for housing numbers in the Strategic Market Housing Areas Assessment- study based on expected number of new jobs. Most building will be at the edge of Exeter, & at Cranbrook, taking the pressure off the villages.

- **Local homes for local people.** In 2014 some 300 affordable homes were provided for young families. Another 300 will be built in 2015. Housing waiting list cut from 3 years to about 8 months.

- **EDDC council tax** frozen for the 5th consecutive year, no cuts to front line services, the lowest in Devon and 15<sup>th</sup> lowest nationally.

- **Independent auditors** confirmed East Devon provides excellent value for council tax payers and is well run.

- **Cranbrook-** over 1000 homes occupied. Employment opportunities at the nearby Science Park, Sky Park and Exeter airport. New Primary school has 150 pupils, new Through School, from primary to 16, with playing fields and gym for community use. Phase 2 – 3500 homes and the town centre. Eventually will be about the size of Barnstaple. Multi-purpose community building, the Younghayes Centre houses a Doctors' surgery and pharmacy, meeting room for the newly elected Town Council and offices for the Growth Point team.

- **Seaton Discovery Centre-** Regeneration project to support the local economy being developed with partners. Expected to bring in 60,000 visitors to the area.

- **Countryside team** conserving & enhancing our outstanding natural environment for the benefit of residents and the economy/tourism, including the Jurassic Coast shoreline, the Axe Wetlands, Exe Estuary, nature reserves eg Holyford Woods and East Devon & Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- **Leisure- arts, culture & sports facilities** supported, helping to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

- **The Street Scene team** has kept streets clean, bins empty, parks and the gardens in good order for both residents and visitors.

- **Recycling-** Pilot projects have been undertaken with a view to extending the recycling to include kerbside collection of cardboard and mixed plastics.

Cllr Godbeer apologised for not attending the meeting as he has to attend the EDDC Annual Meeting to pass on the Chairmanship to his successor. Over the past year he had recognised the Parish Councils views on various Planning issues within the town and responded accordingly, He

had also tried to resolve a few parking matters for the benefit of residents, He continues to support projects for the young people and will continue to do so. The one particular problem that he remains frustrated with is Ridgeway Lane but he will continue to press for this reinstatement. Similarly the cycle route at Colyford needs continuous input. He will do his utmost to press these and any other problems to be resolved and would like to remind the residents of Colyton & Colyford to contact him with any issues that are the responsibility of the District Council.

## **12 Any matters raised by members of the public**

Mr West expressed his frustration to discover the parish boundaries had been changed. He was disappointed that District Councillors had not kept residents informed of these changes and the implications of them.

The CeramTec UK closure in July was mentioned, with the CPC reiterating that it wants the site to be kept for industrial use to bring further employment into Colyton, and they will be pressing EDDC to keep it zoned as industrial.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Appendix 2 is attached, should you require to see any others please contact the Clerk on 01297 552460.



