

EXBOURNE WITH JACOBSTOWE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MAY 25TH 2016 AT EXBOURNE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30p.m.

Those present were Cllrs Luxton (Chairman), Blakeman, Hedley, Foster, Lawson, Cobb and Cllr Mrs. R. Williams.

Cllr Lois Samuel, Borough Councillor for the Exbourne Ward, and Cllr James McInnes, County Councillor for the Hatherleigh and Chagford Ward, were also present.

There were three members of the public present.

Apologies: Cllr Louise Watts, Borough Councillor for the Exbourne Ward, had sent her apologies.

Minutes of the last meeting – May 13th 2015

These have been circulated on the website and noticeboards. Cllr Blakeman proposed that they were signed as a correct record. This was seconded by Cllr Williams. The Chairman signed the minutes.

Chairman's Address

It was with a degree of sadness that he delivers his final report. He thanked the clerk, Mrs Marilyn Weeks, who has sadly given notice of her resignation. He wished her well for the future.

The chairman thanked the members of the Finance Working Group for working on setting the precept each year.

It has been noted that the parish council does have a healthy bank balance, but it should be pointed out that this does include ring fenced reserves. There are reserves for emergencies, which hopefully are not required, but are recommended to hold. There are also reserves for election/referendum expenses, I.T. and maintenance. The funds also include monies that have been accessed for specific purposes and cannot, therefore, just be spent on anything. This position has been achieved without increasing the parish precept, but by strict budgeting and housekeeping.

The chairman thanked Cllr Hedley and his working group for the hard work involved in producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Exbourne. An ongoing project which will require a great deal more work before finalization.

Thanks were also extended to Cllr Foster, who single-handedly organised with the Playing Field Committee a very successful bonfire and firework event to celebrate the Queens 90th birthday.

Planning continues to be an important aspect of the meetings. Thanks were expressed to Cllrs Samuel and Watts for their involvement and liaison with West Devon Borough Council.

The past year has proved difficult for the village hall committee in endeavouring to deal with the accumulated problems that have come to light. With thanks to County Councillor James McInnes funding was acquired to assist with the heating in the hall and with support from neighbouring parishes TAP funding of £4700 was also successfully obtained to enable replacement heaters to be installed in the hall. The parish council also made a contribution of £500 towards the external decoration.

The chairman concluded by thanking his fellow councillors, clerk and Steve Attfield and Tim Laws, the two P3 Co-ordinators.

Borough Councillor's Report:

Cllr Samuel began by thanking the council members for their kindness and guidance during her first year as a Borough Councillor.

West Devon Borough Council has received a lot of complaints regarding planning, but this is being addressed. A My Account section on the website now provides a quicker way of logging an item for their attention. New Enforcement Officers have been brought in to catch up with the backlog of enforcement cases. West Devon Borough Council are looking at new ways to raise income. They are currently

considering implementing a charge for collecting garden waste, but this has caused a great deal of concern amongst parish councils, who have commented that this would lead to an increase in fly tipping. West Devon are looking at it again.

Cllr Samuel concluded by stating that she felt the dual role with herself and Cllr Watts worked well and she was sorry to hear that Cllr Luxton was stepping down.

County Councillor's Report:

Cllr McInnes began by informing the meeting that the budget for 2016/17 is £443 million. This includes a £16.1 million boost for under pressure Care Services. The budget is based on a 3.99% increase, which includes a 2% increase that will go to Adult Social Care. Between 2011/12 and 2015/16 Devon's budget has reduced by £174 million.

The Government announced very late in the budget round some additional funding of £8.4 million. This is not money in the base budget and has been allocated as a one off payment

DCC have been given the projected funding figures for the next four years and unsurprisingly it will be further cuts.

The recent winter has been very wet and has caused a lot of potholes. Cllr McInnes urged everyone to report any potholes. It is very simple to do on the DCC website.

He continues to be busy in his role as Cabinet Member for Children Schools and Skills. An Ofsted inspection of Childrens Services last year saw them move from 'inadequate' to 'requires improvement'. They are now working towards 'Good'. He continues to campaign for fairer funding for schools.

In the Chancellors Budget in March 2016 the government announced that all schools will become Academies by 2022. He supports schools that wish to become an Academy, but he is against this central diktat and is pleased that the government have now changed their minds and it will be a decision for the school governors as before.

Currently 91% of children in Devon attend a Good or Outstanding school.

He is a member (appointed by DCC) of Dartmoor National Park and is pleased that the Government has announced that funding will remain flat and not be further reduced.

He reminded the meeting that he does have a small budget for community projects and was pleased to be able to support Exbourne Village Hall.

The chairman thanked Cllr McInnes for this work over the years and his support for the village hall and community.

Parishioners open session:

The chairman invited the members of the public to address the council with any issues they may have. No-one wished to address the council.

The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.