

# **CHIDEOCK ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 2023**

## **Reports**

## Report re Parish council 2022-23

It has been a year of change and constant activity for the Parish council. We have lost one councillor due to moving out of the village - a great loss given his expertise and constant research on environmental matters. Furthermore, just this week, Cllr coates has resigned and once again we have been grateful for all of her involvement, but especially the work she has and continues to have supporting Maish in the development of a tramper path to Bridport from Chideock.

The Parish council is the lowest form of local authority governance and there are many who would say what is the point ? Parish councillors are effectively volunteers and no one here claims expenses - our individual reasons for joining the council have usually revolved around a specific issue such as pollution or the A35 - but when you actually become a councillor you realise that there are many strands to the role and a local voice is much better than a remote one.

I have said it before and I will say it again, chideock Parish Council may be small but we hope that we have an effective and persuasive voice at the many different levels of government and with a variety of partners.

Over the last year, we have continued to communicate, become actively involved and raise issues about the A35 - the high levels of congestion on a road that is not fit for purpose and the lack of safety in the village due to poor pavements and the lack of additional pedestrian crossings. This year we have joined with the other A35 villages in West Dorset and East Devon to raise the very similar issues. Maintenance issues are regularly raised due to subsidence and the impact of heavy HGV traffic. This coming year we will contribute to the next phase of National Highways plans for the next five years of funding (RS3), in an attempt to once again raise the very serious impact of this road on our lives and how we consider it could be different.

In order to widen this brief, the Parish council invited Bristol University to carry out a research project on pollution in the village. This year the scientifically evaluated results are due to be presented in a formal report in May - already the A35 pollution group ( Anna/ George and Vanessa), have met and had shared some early findings.

This work will complement the new Air Quality Action Plan that Dorset council have produced and now have responsibility for under the new Environment Act. The A35 pollution group have now met on two occasions with the Service manager and her staff who are the designated leads . In future this will include National Highways and Public health - although small this is progress and something we have been requesting for a number of years .

Last summer following several attempts to find out who was responsible for monitoring pollution at the lagoon in , we eventually managed to get Dorset Council to complete some testing. From

this it became apparent that there was a need for a community response - the rest in a way is history as you have already heard from WRAG - the council is in full support of the initiative.

So from a PC perspective delivering for the health and well being of all the village is our primary function - this includes Cllrs raising a variety of issues through a number of external meetings, with Dorset Council about the maintenance of local roads, speed restriction considerations, the maintenance of public rights of way, the still outstanding issue of the Mill lane byway and a variety of consultations from local government and national government departments. In addition to this we continue to have a planning function. The Parish council continues to support Clapps mead and Cllr Anna Dunn is our lead in this area.

Before I close, I would like to express my thanks to the many volunteers who support the Parish to maintain various activities in the village including repairs and clearing out ditches and drains. Last but not least, it is with great sadness that I share that our Clerk, Sal has decided to retire - this will be her last Parish meeting as clerk. Sal , came to us with little experience of the role, but her worth, her memory and her invaluable guidance has supported the Parish council through thick and thin.

Thank you Sal !

## Clerk's Report.

### 1. PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

14 planning applications have been considered.

### 2. CORRESPONDENCE.

Too much!

### 3. FINANCES.

#### a) External Audit.

There is now no requirement for External Audit, provided that income and expenditure are both less than £25,000. Internal audit is still required, the same forms must be completed and there must be a period when the public can inspect the accounts. All information will be put on the website.

Mr Ian Wigglesworth had been our internal auditor since 2008 but decided to "retire" after doing the 2022 audit. Cliff Allen has agreed to take on the role.

#### b) Precept

The precept has been increased by £188, which equates to a Band D Council Tax increase of £0.84 a year.

#### c) Accounts.

The accounts for 2021 - 2022 have been finalised and there is an overspend of £17.21 which has been taken from the General Reserve.

The Internal Audit will take place in May.

The accounts are available for anyone to view at any time, by prior arrangement with the Clerk.

#### d) Foss Orchard.

All income from the car park is reserved for repairs to and maintenance of the car park and is supplemented by provision in the precept.

National Highways funded the installation of 2 electric car charging points, and the Parish Council receives £833.34 each year in rent.

The hedge is cut twice a year by the Bridport Lengthsmen (excluding "Chideock").

The garden area was be tidied up by the Bridport Lengthsman, and Rob Murray has taken on the job of keeping it all spick and span.

#### e) Clapps Mead Playing Field.

The required RoSPA checks for insurance are now conducted by Mr Ken Hussey, who does this for other parishes, including Bridport. The checks are done every 3 months and any minor repairs are done there and then.

Councillors conduct visual inspections every 2 weeks.

The beam on the double swing rotted out – Caledonia play replaced it free of charge even though it was out of warranty. However, the Parish Council had to pay £150 for it to be delivered. Ken Hussey installed it.

George Dunn and Mike Kelson put in a new post for another piece of equipment – they will not be doing that again as it was a bigger job than they had envisaged!

New goal posts and nets have been ordered from Huck Sport.

The Parish Council thanks Cllr George Dunn, Mike Kelson, and all others whose names I do not know, for helping with general maintenance tasks.

f) **Bus Shelters.**

Bus shelter cleaning is now being carried by Luke Bennett.

g) **Grants made.**

From precept

- £200 to Bridport Citizens Advice Bureau
- £700 to the Chideock News
- £700 to Chideock Village Hall for maintenance.
- £1000 to the Winniford River Action Group – this money is being held by the Parish Council on behalf of the group.

This totals more than the amount which was set in the budget for 2022-2023 - £765 was taken from the “Devolution of Services” reserve which was set up prior to the demise of West Dorset District Council and has not been used.

The following customary grants were made from the precept: -

- £675 to St Giles PCC towards Cemetery Grass Cutting.
- The Parish Council continues to put aside £230 a year for 3 years to pay for the next 3-year village clock service contract.

## **PSCO Bishop's Report.**

We are of course lucky to be able to live and/or work in this area, particularly because it is a beautiful place to be, but we are also lucky that it is a low crime rate area. Traditionally, rural areas like this are often a target for non-dwelling burglaries, such as breaks to outbuildings, sheds, etc. Offenders often looking for power tools, machinery, etc. Fortunately, since the lockdown periods, this appears to have reduced. We saw a period last year, between September and November, where we saw several thefts of vehicles (2 Land Rovers from the Drimpton area, 1 Land Rover from the West Bexington area which was later found dumped by the thieves with parts stolen from it) and several thefts of catalytic converters (2 in Beaminster, 1 in Lyme, 1 in Broadoak and 1 in the Marshwood area). Catalytic converter thefts have become a National issue, due to the rise in certain precious metals, which the parts contain. These thefts often take a matter of seconds to commit but can often cause a vehicle to be written off due to the expense of the parts. Japanese model vehicles seem to be the most targeted, as they seem to use a higher quantity of precious metal inside the part.

The beginning of this year saw a few caravans stolen from the Lyme Regis area. Other than this, there have been very few spates of thefts or breaks. That is not to say they are not happening, as there have been the odd one or two here and there across the Bridport Section, but we are not seeing a traditional pattern to these types of crimes. I like to believe that one reason for this is that many people are taking up the advice we have been giving, particularly in the farming community, around crime prevention and the use of security methods to help prevent these crimes from happening. If anyone is interested in any crime prevention advice, please contact us.

I have mentioned in previous reports that scams are rife. Again, this is a national issue, which appears to be more common than most crimes put together. There is probably more to say that I could put in a report, but for the best advice, or to report any scams, contact Action Fraud on [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk), or call them on 0300 123 2040. Their website, along with ours – [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk), contain a lot of scam prevention advice, to prevent you getting caught out and helping to recognise how scammers work and what they are asking. I always advise people to screen calls before picking up, such as asking for a call screening service from your phone provider, or using an answer machine to take unexpected calls, so you are not having any contact with scammers directly. The vast majority of unsolicited calls will be scams, so please have a look at the websites provided. Do remember to NEVER give out any personal or financial details to any callers, even if they seem genuine. Always question to yourself, why they would need them in the first place and if you think the reason may be genuine, HANG UP and call the company/Bank back

directly, to see if the call was genuine. Banks will never call you and ask for any details, or ask you to confirm any details, so never trust someone just because they say they are from a Bank or other legitimate company.

Whilst we have seen a reduction in the amount of Police Officers locally over the last few years, Dorset Police have been running recruitments to employ more PCs over the last couple of years. This will take some time to filter down to local teams and we will not see a rise back to previous levels, at least not for some time yet, but it is looking slightly more positive. I advise people on a regular basis to keep reporting things to us, as even if we are unable to respond immediately, if there are things we can do retrospectively, we will, or if this provides us with intelligence so that we can target specific people or locations, we can look to do specific operations. There have been some good results in Bridport and Lyme Regis in recent months, where we have conducted Misuse of drug Act warrants, based on intelligence communities have been feeding into us.

Last October, our Rural Crime team were asked to come out to the area to engage with residents who have concerns around rural matters. My colleague was happy with the response of those that came to see her at Felicities Farm Shop. If this is something you would like to see again in the future, please let us know, likewise if there are other engagement opportunities, such as coffee mornings we can attend.

Best regards to all,

Alex.

**CHURCH OF OUR LADY, CHIDEOCK**

**REPORT 2022-2023**

We are pleased to report that congregations at the church are now back to normal after the difficulties of the past few years, and that the church and museum are receiving as many visitors as they did before the pandemic.

Several groups arranged special days at the church during the year, including the Arts Society of Dorchester, a large group called England Uncovered, a Pilgrimage from a church all the way from Launceston, and the Latin Mass Society. There were also several weddings at the church and a couple of christenings.

In September we were delighted to welcome members of the Chideock WI to the church where a special area has been permanently reserved in the museum for a display of their memorabilia and artefacts. This area had been very kindly decorated and painted by WI members in advance, which was much appreciated. About 25 members and friends gathered for an Opening Ceremony followed by tea and cakes, and a chance to look around the museum and the church. The WI display is a very welcome addition to the museum.

Also in September, after an absence of 3 years, Dorset Architectural Heritage Week returned and the Sacristy in the church was specially opened, along with the Weld Memorial Chapel. Many thanks to the kind helpers who enabled this. Although Richard Benjamin was not able to ride for the Chideock Churches on Ride & Stride day, we raised over £200 for this very worthwhile cause.

Thanks go to Steve Warre who continues to open the church every day, rain or shine, and to Martin Barnes, Barney, who keeps the church path and the Memorial Chapel grounds mown and tidy along with the the carpark. Also the team of helpers who lock up in a rota. Without all this help the church would not be able to function, and the Trustees are deeply grateful. Thanks also to our parish priest, Fr Keith Mitchell, who gives us such support.

The church and museum are open every day of the year, 10-4pm and all are welcome.

**Annual Chideock Village Meeting 2022/2023**

Since the last Annual Village meeting, we have successfully registered with the Charities Commission a new Village Hall Constitution. This is thanks to the hard work of our secretary Paul Ramsden who has taken into account all the comments and recommendations received and agreed into this new constitution.

There will always be a continuous maintenance programme required to keep the Hall in good order. Thanks go to David Jones for his sterling efforts to supporting this work. In addition to the day-to-day maintenance, we have undertaken agreed works aimed specifically at reducing our running & maintenance costs. The final wood window has been replaced thanks to Hussey & Briggs honouring a quote which was several years out date. Also, as part of general improvements, the disgusting carpet in the committee room and corridor has now been replaced with laminate flooring which is easier to clean and maintain. We have added a concrete support fence to stop further land slipping onto the rear fire escape area.

A success story has been the replacement of the unsafe cast iron guttering along the side of the Hall adjacent to the A35 in September of last year. A project which seemed too costly to pursue was made possible due to the co-operation of National Highways. With this Agency's willingness to support the use of traffic lights to enable safe working we were able to present a plan which satisfied our Insurance Company and put a team together of villagers to complete the work. I will not bore you with the details but would like to thank the team of people involved who carried out the work in just 7 hours. Tony Norman, David Jones, Jeffrey Batten, Roger Carey, Paul Ramsden, Steve McHugo, Nathan Vincent-James and providing refreshments to keep us going Annette Jones, Gloria (Cake) Ritson and Diane, who turned up with lunch only to find us all drinking coffee and everything finished & cleared away.

Despite best efforts, the committee are finding it difficult to maintain regular bookings. However, the film-night is making a strong come-back and we are exploring a number of new ideas.

We have now had two 'Best Breakfast' Beer & Boogie night these have been fantastic events, for the Hall with the assistance of Suey & Jane (the Chideock Chatters) and their army of helpers, too many to name. On behalf of the Hall

Committee and the Village in general many thanks for all their hard work. Other events are planned for later in the year such a vintage tea and another wine tasting, So please keep a look out for more events which we would like you to support.

Whist is back for the winter months thanks to Duncan & Philippa Salter, whist nights stopped with lock-down I have to say I have been amazed and humbled by the need for this community social event with people come from as far away as Wool, Axminster & the surrounding villages, prizes arranging from a joint of meat to a pack of biscuits and so far, 28 to 30 people have attended on each occasion.

I can announce that thanks to Roger he has been successful in obtaining a grant from Sport England to enable us to have short mat bowl in the hall so please look out for that.

The Chideock Village Hall Community Café has also been a success enabling, people to meet & talk over coffee & cake. This has been, running now for over 6 years, including the break due to Covid. Started by Jane, assisted by Gloria and now ably run by Gloria with help from Julia, Sue, Jane, and Francis. This is not a Hall fund-raising event, all donations are given to local charities, distributing almost £3,000. 00 over the years. So, a big thank you to Gloria and gang and to all of you of you who regularly attend and give so freely.

On top of everything else Lee and Paul Ramsden are involved in they manage to find time to maintain our garden which has received a number of complementary remarks by passers-by.

## St Giles PCC Report.

### St Giles Report for the Village meeting 26th April 2023

We, at St Giles, have been holding weekly services once again. We had a well attended Carol Service at Christmas with an augmented choir. The flower displays in church were superb as always, thanks to the flower arranging team. We had beautiful flowers for Harvest as well, with donations of tins and packets included in the arrangements that went to Cupboard Love, the food bank we support in Bridport.

Before Christmas, we held monthly coffee mornings and cake stall in the church, but not this year as the cold weather was against us. Our biggest worry is the cost of heating the church since the price has gone up dramatically. We are investigating alternative means of heating.

We held a Grocery Tombola at the village fete and a chocolate stall at the Christmas Fayre in the village hall. A very successful plant stall was held in May. Our main fundraiser is the Village Quiz which is held in the Village Hall every three months. It is a good evening to attend. It costs £10 and includes not only the quiz, but a super supper, you have to bring your own drinks and glasses. There is also a raffle. The next one is on Friday 28th of April (~~whatever~~ <sup>despite what</sup> it said in The Chideock news) You need to contact Lynn Stapleton to book a place. See the posters round the village.

A well attended service, led by Jim Pettifer, our Licensed Lay Minister, was held in the marquee at Clapps Mead for the Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth. The Remembrance Day service was held at St Giles Church as usual.

The wildlife garden at the back of the church is being brought back under control and looks much better now, thanks to Rob Murray and volunteers.

We hold a service in St Giles every Sunday. <sup>Each month</sup> We have two short services, the Village Service and Chideock Praise led by members of the PCC <sup>which</sup> ~~and~~ are followed by coffee and biscuits, and two Holy Communion Services run by the clergy. The notice ~~s~~ outside the church announces which service is being held each Sunday. Everyone is welcome to attend.