

EXBOURNE WITH JACOBSTOWE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

was held on Wednesday 25th April 2018 at 7:30pm
in the Village Hall, Exbourne

Councillors present were Steve Blakeman, Adam Hedley, Rose Williams, Ulrik Lawson, Kirk England, John Guy and Borough Councillor Lois Samuel

Also in attendance were Zena Tett, Parish Clerk and 3 members of the public.

2018.1 Chairman's Address: Steve Blakeman, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular, guest speaker Sergeant Penning Channing. He was pleased to report that over the past year the Council has met its statutory requirements and supported the Village in various ways, some noticeable and some less so.

The Council has received a "clean bill of health" from Grant Thornton, the external auditors, who confirmed that in their opinion "the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met." Likewise, the internal auditor has also confirmed that the Annual Return or Annual Governance Statement has appropriate systems and safeguards in place, which of course whilst not surprising is reassuring.

This year the Council has had less requests for grant funding but we were able to support the Village Hall with a grant of £300.00 towards the cost of necessary electrical improvements. We have also provided a grant of £100.00 to the Citizens Advice Bureau, which offers free of charge assistance and advice to our parishioners. The Council has also been able to fund some lengthsman work around the village and we have a budget for further work for this winter. The Chairman specifically thanked Cllr Williams for her work in grant applications and organising the contractors to carry out the works.

The Council's website now has more useful up to date information regarding the Agendas and Minutes, as well as other information for parishioners. A Google search for the Council using various options, tends to result in the council being the top of the first page so it should be easy for parishioners to find the web site and relevant information.

Cllr Elizabeth Batson resigned from the Council in 2017 and on behalf of the Council the Chairman thanked her for her valued contribution. In addition, Elisabeth is also continuing to operate the payroll which is very much appreciated.

The Chairman was pleased that the Council was able to co-opt Cllr Kirk England, and Cllr John Guy, our two latest members, and look forward to their continuing support. The Council is made up of various members having different backgrounds, ages and experiences, which helps to ensure, or at least allows for, constructive discussion.

One of the duties of the Council is to comment on planning applications that affect the Parish and this year, like others, there have been many planning applications, some controversial and some less so. Overall, and whilst the Council has not been able to support all applications, the Chairman would suggest that the Council has taken a pro-active and consistent approach to applicants and applications. While the Council's comments only represent a small part of the information that the planning department needs to consider, the comments that the Council has made have generally been based upon material considerations and therefore are likely to be more helpful to the planning department.

For many years the Council has been able to avoid raising the precept for the Parishes of Exbourne and Jacobstowe, however, this year it has been necessary for a small increase to be made which amounts to approximately £2.00 per household – the increase taken over the past few years is a lot lower than inflation. I would like to offer thanks to members of the Finance Working Group for their time on setting the precept and working hard to keep the increase as low as possible. At the end of March, the Council had a balance slightly below £10000 but would mention that this includes ring fenced reserves for emergencies which hopefully are not required but are recommended that we hold. There are also reserves for election/referendum expenses, I.T. and maintenance. The funds also include monies that are reserved for specific purposes and cannot, therefore, just be spent on other items.

The Council is supporting the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Exbourne and the Chairman would like to thank Cllr Hedley and the other members the Working Group for the hard work and time spent which is required for the production of Plan. Last May a Village

consultation took place which is being used to inform the development of the Plan. There is still a lot of work required but the council will continue to support this process, which will guide development of Exbourne in future years.

The Council has a small amount to expend on public footpaths and the Chairman thanked both our P3 co-ordinators Steve Attfield & Tim Laws for their work during the year.

This year the Council has started exploring the possibility of providing an emergency air ambulance landing site in the playing field and the Council is hopeful of obtaining grant funding to cover at least part of the cost.

In 2017, two facilities within the Village have received important awards:

- The Red Lion has again been named as the best pub in North Devon in the Campaign for Real Ale's Pub of the Year Award
- The Burrow Shop, post office, and café, has been crowned winner in the Rural Community Co-operative Awards for the whole of the south west of England, which is the only National Awards programme recognising community co-operation around the UK.

There can be very few, if any, other Villages with two such awards within the whole of the UK and the Chairman congratulated them on this achievement which in a way makes Exbourne a rather special place.

Our Borough Councillor, Lois Samuel, has been working hard to support the services provided by the Borough Council and has kept the Parish Council informed of the various changes and challenges faced by the Borough. The Chairman congratulated her on being appointed Deputy Leader of WDBC and thanked her for the continuing support she provides to the Parish.

Our Parish Clerk, Zena, has now been with us for some 2 years and the Chairman is pleased she has continued to develop her knowledge of Council matters and fulfils an invaluable role that guides the Council.

Finally, and not least the Chairman thanked all members of the Council for their continuing commitment to the Council and Parishes of Exbourne and Jacobstowe.

2018.2 Minutes of the Last Meeting: the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 26th April 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Hedley, seconded by Cllr Williams, all in favour.

2018.3 Police Update: Guest Speaker Sergeant 4298 Pennie Channing PCSO Pennie Channing introduced herself and gave us a brief history of her time in the police force. She hopes for continuity in the rural community as she has no plans to move on. Crime figures for Exbourne and Jacobstowe for the past year were 14 in total (6 of these were logged for Jacobstowe): there were a couple of garages broken into, minor assaults (domestic related), criminal damage, possession of a firearm without a certificate, misuse of a phone and 4 of the crimes were related to the festival which were 3 thefts of mobile phones and one possession of drugs. PCSO Pennie Channing explained that if crimes are not reported then the resources won't be allocated to the area so please report all crime related incidents to ensure we get the coverage we need.

Cllr Blakeman asked how many crimes were logged for Okehampton and what were the biggest issues – PCSO Pennie Channing answered thousands and they were mainly crimes like shop lifting, drug abuse, domestic violence and a certain amount of disorder.

Cllr Blakeman also asked about internet crime and why was it so difficult to trace – apparently, when money is stolen from people's accounts, money is moved abroad very quickly and therefore impossible to trace.

Finally, PCSO Pennie Channing was asked what was the percentage rate of clearing up crime in this area and she explained she was more interested in what we can do for the victims as in how they can move on from the crime and how it has affected them and offering support.

PCSO Pennie Channing email: Penelope.CHANNING@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

2018.4 Borough Councillor Report: Borough Councillor Lois Samuel B.Cllr Lois Samuel explained one of the main focus in this last year was to seek and attempt to deliver efficiencies and improving the services for residents. They have achieved this by adopting IT solutions and these digital services have drastically reduced the number of calls WDBC have received as well as giving residents more choice on how and when they can access their services. They have already seen significant improvements in processing of planning applications and housing benefits processing times.

The Council has made good progress with the Joint Local Plan by working with South Hams and Plymouth. The Joint Local Plan sets out development and growth up until 2034 and has

just gone through its public examination. At this stage WDBC are confident that the plan will be supported by the inspectors and is on track to be adopted later this year.

The Council is facing a £750,000 budget gap by 2019/2020 which is being addressed. The Council is looking at covering this through a number of options such as generating income through business development and looking at further reductions in service costs.

A few WDBC achievements of interest this year:

- They were able to help 322 households who would have potentially been made homeless
- 290 planning enforcement investigations had taken place
- They made £213,000 disabled facility grants this year
- Over the year they have handled over 63,000 calls, which gives an idea of how many enquires the call centre have to handle

On a personal note she thanked Exbourne & Jacobstowe Parish for their support over this last year. She said she was put in place as Deputy Leader during the year, which she has enjoyed, even though the year has been challenging but looks forward to the year ahead.

2018.5 Statement of Parish Council Accounts: Clerk

The Clerk reported the Parish Council's opening balance for the 2017/18 financial year was £10,211.72. Expenditure for the year was £11,925.16 and total income was £11,485.30 giving a closing balance of £9,771.86.


2018.6 Open Forum

One parishioner asked if the Council would look to use non plastic boxes to collect recycling – B.Cllr Lois Samuel said they are used because they are strong and long lasting but it was a good point.

One parishioner collected a huge amount of litter whilst out walking recently. In view of the recent news about a village being charged at the Recycling Centre for taking in a large amount of litter they had collected, she asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to support a community litter pick if she organised it. Cllr Blakeman said yes, the Parish Council would be supportive of a community litter pick and that provided the litter is taken to the Recycling Centre in a non-commercial vehicle, the Centre should in any case take all the litter without charges provided it does not contain items such as asbestos or hardcore.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 8:10pm

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD:  (Chair)

NAME:  DATE: 