

MINUTES of WEEK ST MARY ANNUAL PARISH OPEN MEETING

held on Thursday 3rd APRIL 2014 in the PARISH HALL

The Chairman Mr J Ward welcomed 9 Parish Councillors, approximately 35 parishioners, Nicky Chopak, Cornwall Council Poundstock Ward member and PCSO Sarah Ross Community Support Officer for Bude Rural to the meeting

Apologies: Mr R Sowerby and Mrs N May

The Minutes of the Meeting of 17th April 2013 were read by the Clerk, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Reports from Parish Organisations were displayed around the room, and afterwards would be available to browse in the shop, and on the Community Website:

(www.weekstmaryvillage.co.uk).

Chairman's Report

The Parish Council's work covers both day-to-day business and exceptional one-off items. As usual the day-to-day work has included activities such as lobbying about the state of the roads, the management of the playing field, the maintenance of the public toilets, grass cutting and transport. The Chairman advised he would summarise the extent of the Parish Council activities in his report as the activities of the Parish Council are reported comprehensively in the Parish Magazine, available on the Parish Notice Board and on the village website and he commented on some key highlights.

A lot of people think of the Parish Council in terms of planning permissions but the Parish Council is a consultee to the planning process not a decision maker. It is right that applications are considered and recommendations made but ultimately that's all the Parish Council can do. The councillors spend hours discussing planning applications and considering responses. The Parish Council actually have control over some very important things such as the playing field, the greens, the toilets, the footpaths etc.

It feels like the year has been dominated by dog poo and potholes! Dog mess continues to be a persistent and disgusting problem from time to time, with the vast majority of responsible dog owners let down by an irresponsible few. All I can say is that we have to do our best with the limited tools at our disposal.

Reporting potholes is another persistent theme. The Parish Councillors lobby and chivvy on this and so does our County Councillor Nicky Chopak. It will be a recurring theme unfortunately as progressive cuts in funding mean more partial repairs that in turn need repairing even more quickly.

The playing field has seen a new skateboard ramp and the lease of the bottom pitch and changing rooms to the football club. Shortly, thanks to a generous grant of £1000 from Nicky Chopak's community fund, the fence around the tennis court will be replaced. This will cost in the region of £2300.

Councillor Chopak's grant enabled the Parish Council to release £750 of funding to the Parish Hall Committee towards a new boiler, in addition to £800 annual contribution the Parish Council provides to the Hall.

One of the successes this year was to see-off the 26 foot pole that appeared on the village green one Sunday morning. Some forthright negotiations and the provision of important legal evidence by Linda Cobbledick ensured common sense prevailed. It was more touch and go than logic would suggest it should have been. The Chairman regrets they were not able to do anything about the new pole on Stewarts Road. When it comes down to it BT Openreach pretty much has carte blanche to install poles wherever it suits them in the roll out of superfast broadband.

Training has also been a theme this year. Most Councillors, and all the new councillors, have attended Code of Conduct training and some attended Planning Process training. In February a member of Cornwall Council Legal Services Team visited to advise on the Parish Council's corporate and individual positions in terms of handling the Good Energy Windfarm Application. It was a really valuable evening both generally but also specifically in terms of dealing with the Wind Farm application properly.

Although left to near the end, the Chairman extended a welcome to the four new Parish Councillors who have all settled really quickly and made great contributions from the outset; adding that he hasn't dared ask what they think of it so far!

The Chairman thanked the whole Parish Council team who have put in a lot of work, often unseen by the wider community. Thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to Bobbie Heathcote, a truly excellent Parish Clerk who not only is a super-efficient administrator but who works tirelessly for the Parish Council. Bobbie's work and knowledge makes the Chairperson's role as easy as it would be possible for it to be.

Nicky Chopak, our Cornwall Councillor, has provided superb support to the Council. She has been invaluable as a source of information and lobbying on behalf of the community.

The Chairman thanked the people outside the Parish Council who have served on a voluntary basis on various Council sub-groups, particularly Phil Dorren, the Footpaths Coordinator who has done sterling work. Also Linda Mason, a solicitor from Holsworthy, who acts as our External Auditor and completed the legal details for the lease of the football pitch entirely free of charge.

As seen from the various reports presented to this meeting from organisations in the parish, we are fortunate to have such a breadth of people who make a contribution to parish life across a wide spectrum of activities. On behalf of the community, Mr J Ward would like to record thanks to all the people who contribute to the running of groups and activities within the Parish. Volunteering is a creative and positive human trait and we are fortunate in our community to have people who spend hours and hours ensuring their activity is well managed and progresses.

The Chairman advised that the parish council believe they have managed the budget for 2013-14 prudently and have ended with a small surplus. The accounts are published on the boards in the hall and available for inspection at any time.

For 2014 the precept increased slightly and have nonetheless budgeted a small deficit for the year, which is perfectly reasonable in the context of the reserves held. The Council consider that a high level of facilities and services are being delivered relative to many other communities.

Bobbie Heathcote provides the Parish Council with superb financial management information so we can manage our financial affairs effectively. Councillor Peter Coulson, our internal auditor, and Linda Mason, our voluntary external auditor, continue to ensure the Council operates according to best practice guidelines.

The Chairman confirmed he believes Parish Council is effective and delivers valuable services to the community. The objective continues to be to maintain our services to a high standard, to develop new facilities and invest in the future.

Once again, thank you to all the people who work to make Week St Mary a better place to live and work.

Reports were received from:-

Neighbourhood Policing Team - PCSO S Ross introduced PS Jez Theobald (Temporary) and spoke of the changes to Neighbourhood Policing. PC N Jessop has moved to Response at Bude and not been replaced. PC K Bennett is covering the rural area in addition to Bude. Neighbourhood Sgt, J Morris has taken temporary promotion and left the area. There is an

answerphone contact number for the Neighbourhood Team 01288 357502 or they can be emailed. The non-emergency number of 101 costs 15p per call regardless of the length of the call.

Jacobstow Primary School - Head, Mrs S Russell gave a brief update on the school's activities and advised that a new curriculum has been introduced to start next year which is very restricting and poses many challenges. Due to school numbers and budget restraints they will lose a class in September 2014. The results of Cornwall Council's School Transport reviews and the consultation which ends on 28.04.14 is an issue which is causing concern and there is a risk that some children may no longer be entitled to free transport. The School Governing body accepted the offer of a biogas system from Good Energy, purely on economic reasons as it is more efficient.

The Parish Hall Committee - Mr L Davies advised that they increased rent to help cover rising costs.

The Parish Church –Mrs L Cobbledick advised that the United Benefice has been attempting to engage a new Incumbent, however despite 2 rounds of interviews each of which had 2 candidates and on each occasion a candidate was chosen, those preferred candidates refused the post.

The Methodist Chapel Mr J Ward advised that they have their own website and they have had over 215k hits. The Schoolroom has been refurbished with a new roof and ceiling, repaired floor, plastering and re-decorating throughout. They continue to work closely with the Parish Church through a range of worship and outreach activities.

Magazine continues to thrive with 300 copies produced each month.

Football Club (no report) Mr Caeser-Gordon advised that it has not been a good year – there is now 1 adult team who are at the foot of the Kingsley League but they have recently had some better games so things are looking more positive. In contrast there has been an upsurge of younger players with 15 – 18 youths regularly attending. The football club are applying for grant funding towards the costs of improving drainage. Thanks were conveyed to everyone who helps with the training and events and to all the sponsors.

Women's Institute It has been a good year with new members joining and many interesting events.

Web site -The site is in its 10th year and in the past 12 months there have been over 832K hits approx. 2280 hits per day. The headstone information continues to be one of the most popular pages.

Transport Representative Group Travel currently operates the service and there have been concerns about breakdowns and that it is not easy to get on and off the buses. Assurances have been given that the service will continue primarily because it is classified as a minimum service. The current contract ends 31.07.14 – representations have been made that Webbers would be the consumers' choice. The Dial a Ride from Holsworthy still operates and users must register.

Skittles Team – (no report) has 10 players who enjoy playing and taking part.

The Parish Office – (no report). Mrs M Smith advised that Mr P Coulson has given 65 hrs of lessons during the year. The printer/scanner is available for use.

Parish Footpaths – Mr P Dorren advised that 2013/14 was thrown into disarray at the start of the cutting season due to Cornwall Council requiring contractors to have full certification and increased minimum public liability insurance cover. After consideration, Mr T Willoughby decided not to carry on doing the work and Mr Dorren extended thanks to him for his previous good work. A new contractor, Mr J Sachs took on the role but he only had time to undertake one cut and clearance before the bad weather started. Hopefully this year will be without problems.

Coffee Pot no report but the sessions are still running.

Cornwall Councillor – Mrs N Chopak spoke of the range of matters she is called upon to deal with from blocked drains, pot-holes , overgrown hedges to poorly sited BT telephone poles to problems with council tax and housing benefit and major and some minor planning issues. She is a member of two committees, Finance and Resources and Health and Adult Care, both of which are very taxing. She has learnt very quickly, who are the best people to contact within Cornwall Council and advised that the new Chief Executive Andrew Kerr has visited Bude twice since January– he is keen to encourage localism and get to grips with the challenges we face living in North Cornwall.

Election of the Parish Hall Committee – The following resigned from the committee: Len Davies, Ron Harris and Tina Reeves. The remaining committee: Ivor Barriball, Jeff Roberts, Mike Caesar-Gordon Margaret Johns, Hilda Axford, Peter Coulson and Paul Sachs were unanimously elected en bloc. Mr J Ward invited volunteers for the committee but there were not any during the meeting.

Mr J Ward commented that there are many challenges for the committee regarding repairs, fundraising and he thanked them for their hard work and dedication and for the events they have organised which have been very enjoyable.

Other Parish Matters – The plans for the Wind Farm Application were on display before and after the meeting.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.50pm