

KENTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting 19th May 2016

Present: 7 Parish Councillors (Cllrs Britton, Thompson, Cowell, Blount, Appleton, Maguire-Walker and Randall), District/County Cllr Connett, Earl of Devon and 62 members of the public.

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Chris Britton (Parish Council Chairman)

190516.01 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and was pleased to see so many parishioners present. He also welcomed the meeting's speakers - Cllr Connett who would be giving an update about his activities as District and County Councillor for the parish and the Earl of Devon who would be speaking about his future plans for Powderham Estate. He also informed those present that Cllr Chris Thompson, in his capacity of Chairman of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, would be giving an update about the Plan.

190516.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

190516.03 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman gave a summary of the Parish Council's activities, month by month:

'A year ago, the Parish Council was in disarray with only two parish councillors. However, following an election in June, five new parish councillors were elected – Jackie Randall, Sue Maguire-Walker, David Appleton, David Blount and Steve Cowell. The year has been quiet, peaceful and uneventful, the main project being the Neighbourhood Plan which Cllr Thompson will talk about later in the meeting.

July

This was the first meeting after the elections. The new heritage panel, depicting sites of interest in the village, was delivered. This was finally installed on the Triangle in December. A walks brochure was also produced. This was a joint project with Exminster and was fully funded through the Elector Fund. Our PCSO, Debbie Sleeman, relocated to Truro and was not replaced. Cllr David Blount became the Parish Council's representative on the Dementia Friendly Village. This group has been hard at work over the past 9 months initiating its projects.

September

The bus shelters were vandalised in South Town. It has proved very difficult to find a company to replace the beading that was also removed. The cost of replacing the glass and beading was very expensive and therefore the Parish Council has now decided not to replace it.

October

There was a final meeting of the West Exe Cluster at which it was decided to wind up the Cluster and divide the residual monies between the five member Councils. The website has not been updated recently as the Parish Council has been looking for someone to administer it. After several months, we think we have now found someone and hopefully it should now soon be brought up to date.

November

The Parish Paths Co-ordinator, Sue Craythorne, reported the flood prevention measures being taken on the Powderham Estate where the footpath crosses the river. Meetings with the contractor, Powderham Estate and DCC resulted in some remedial work carried out over the winter.

January

Two parishioners have been fund-raising for an outdoor table tennis table on the school field. The Parish Council agreed an application to the Elector Fund (£1.10 per elector in the parish) which was successful and a grant of £1000 was made.

February

The Earl of Devon attended the Parish Council meeting to speak about the Big Weekend. Various concerns were put to him. Since then, Cllr Connett, TDC, Exeter City Council and the BBC have held discussion and meetings on the issue. A representative from TDC spoke on the Locally Listed Buildings Project. This is a scheme for non-protected but historical buildings. Cllr Jackie Randall has agreed to represent the Council on this project.

March

The state of the hard court and changing rooms continued to be discussed to enable them to be an asset for the village but not a continual drain on finance. It was noted that there was no appetite to celebrate the Queen's birthday with a bonfire/beacon/event. The Dementia Friendly Village launched its memory café this month in the Church Fellowship Room. The Parish Council, through Cllr Blount, remains supportive of the project.

April

The Council agreed to apply for a Rural Aid grant to repair the oak fencing at the cemetery lych gate. The Council also discussed the provision of a defibrillator for the village.

May

All Councillors agreed to stand in their current capacities at the Annual Meeting of the Council.'

190516.04

FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk gave a summary of the Parish Council's finances:

'The purpose of my report for this meeting is to provide you with a brief overview of the Parish Council's financial activity in 2015/16 - a flavour of how it manages its budget.

Kenton Parish Council's main source of income is the precept - the tax charged on each property in the parish. The precept is collected on our behalf by Teignbridge District Council and is paid in two equal instalments during the year in April and September. It is the Parish Council which agrees how much is to be demanded and it bases its decision on its financial responsibilities for the coming year. The sum demanded in 2015/16 was £14,550 which equated to £21.98 per year for the average Band D property.

Kenton Cemetery also provides the Parish Council with an income and the Parish Council also actively seeks out grants for specific projects such as the new play equipment and toddler area at the playing field which was installed at the beginning of the financial year.

So looking briefly at how your money has been spent...

The Parish Council's annual expenditure is around £20,000. The actual running of the Parish Council itself accounts for around 70% of this. These costs include salaries, general administration, insurance, audit fees, meeting room hire, training, subscriptions etc. An additional cost for the Parish Council in 2015/16 was the cost of the contested election. Total election costs last year amounted to almost £1,600.

In addition to these costs, the Council continues to maintain and improve services for the benefit of the community.

It provides a website for the parish to enhance community engagement and to provide an easy to access platform to obtain information about what is happening and you will see some improvements to this in the coming year.

It continues to subsidise Kenton Village Allotments – which is a great facility for the parish.

The Parish Council also continues to invest in the security of the car park and funds regular security patrols. Having taken over the car park from Teignbridge District Council in 2011, the Parish Council is passionate about providing a free and safe place for villagers to park. Since the patrols were introduced some years ago, following a spate of fuel theft, there has been no criminal activity and whilst we can't guarantee this, the Parish Council considers that minimising the risk by continuing with these patrols is good value for money.

The Parish Council is responsible for keeping the village and cemetery tidy. As I am sure you all know, the Parish Council employs Peter White to do this and we thank him for continuing to do great job.

The Parish Council has power to award small grants to other organisations in the parish. In 2015/16, no applications were received but looking to the year ahead the Parish Council has once again set aside a small budget and so if any community group wishes to apply to the Parish Council for a small grant to help with a particular project then please let us know.

So hopefully this report has given you a glimpse of the Parish Council's financial activity. I will conclude by reminding you that the Parish Council is now required to comply with 'The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities'. This means that the Parish Council is required to publish certain information on its website as part of the new audit framework. This will include the end of year accounts, annual governance statement, internal audit report, list of councillors and their responsibilities, location of public land and building assets and minutes and agendas of meetings. Information pertaining to 2015/16 is shortly to be uploaded and will be freely available to inspect by parishioners as part of the Government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability'.

190516.05 DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Connett thanked the Parish Council for giving him the opportunity to speak and report on District and County matter.

He informed those present that in view of a recent court case, he has asked DCC whether it will suspend any more prosecutions for taking children out of school until the government has clarified the legal position. He has been advised that DCC has agreed to apply to the courts to suspend any prosecutions.

He advised that he had provided two grants towards the cost of providing an outdoor table tennis table.

He has been pushing TDC to provide clip on nets for the recycling boxes. The cost would be £55,000. (£630,000 is raised from the green tax on the collection of green bins).

TDC has increased council tax by 5% and DCC by 4%.

DCC has redefined what a pothole is – small ones are no longer classed as defects. The time taken to repair potholes on rural roads will extend from 7 to 28 days. Government funding is down by £1.5million for DCC this year.

Children in care do the least well in schools. DCC has undertaken work to look at what can be done to improve this for them. Not all children in care get their annual health assessment. Children waiting for appointments for specialist referrals - referral time should be 18 weeks. Pressure is being exerted to improve this.

DCC is now keeping its lollipop men and ladies.

In preparation for the Big Weekend, the pavements have been reslurried and hedges cut back.

190516.06 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Thompson, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, reported:

At the last Annual Parish meeting, you heard that the Parish Council had decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, led by a steering group of councillors and parishioners. Since then, the group has made great progress, for which I thank my fellow group members, in particular the group Secretary, Sue Craythorne, and my deputy Chairman, Rob Williams. Within the group, we have a range of ages, interests and experience and I believe we have achieved a pretty good cross section of village life – although we would love to see some younger people at our monthly meetings, as it is their future for which we are working. And I would also like to thank staff of Teignbridge District Council and to introduce David Kiernan, who has been recently appointed as Neighbourhood Planning Officer specifically to help amateurs like ourselves.

To date, we have obtained funding from a Government agency, Groundworks UK, which has enabled us to commission a consultant, Paul Weston, who is very experienced in this area and has given us advice and guidance, including running a workshop to prepare our aims and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. We

prepared and circulated a questionnaire to all parishioners, looking to find your views on what was good or not so good in the parish. Two of our group, David Appleton and Ian Fulcher, worked with the school and with older children, to find out their views. Both these pieces of work fed into our aims and objectives workshop. We also undertook a major piece of research into the whole background of the parish, looking at subjects such as our environment and heritage, housing, health and wellbeing, economy and jobs, and transport. This work is our evidence base and again, it fed into our aims and objectives.

Both of the questionnaire results and the evidence base can be seen on the Parish Council website and I encourage you to have a look at them.

So, using the evidence and the information we obtained as a focus, we have devised a set of Aims and Objectives for the Kenton Neighbourhood Plan. These are displayed on boards in the room, and we would like you all to have a look at them and give us any thoughts or comments you have. We have also set out our vision of the parish – Kenton, Devon’s finest living village. This is a statement not only that Kenton is a fine place to live, but that it is a living community of people. I hope you agree.

I also want to ask your help for our major piece of work over the next few months. Bearing in mind that the primary focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is housing and land development, we need to determine the housing needs of the parish over the next 15-20 years and where any development would be best sited. We already know some of the needs from our questionnaire, such as downsizing for older people and self-build homes and there is some old information from Teignbridge District Council and Devon County Council about the need for affordable homes and identifying suitable areas for development. We need to update this information, so any help you can give, for example, areas of land which the owner may consider for development, would be very helpful.

After that, our next work will be to translate the aims and objectives into policies which will go into a draft Plan, which we hope will be ready by the end of September. Then, that plan will go into a whole series of revisions, reviews and consultations with the Parish Council and Teignbridge District Council, as required by the Government process. Eventually, the draft will become a formal submission to be reviewed by an independent Examiner who will accept, make recommendations or reject the plan – we obviously hope it won’t be the latter! Even further down the line, parishioners will have the final voice at a – I hate to say the word – a referendum, when you can vote to accept the plan or not. Hopefully, by that time you will have forgotten all about this upcoming referendum.

So, that is where we are with the Neighbourhood Plan and where we are going. I’m sorry if it seems long-winded, but we have to follow the set process and jump through all the hoops to avoid falling at the hurdles – sorry about the mixed metaphor. But you can help us enormously this evening, by looking at the aims and objectives and giving us your views. There are post-its and pencils available – just stick your message on any of the posters. Alternatively, you can e-mail me at the address shown on the second poster. Members of the steering group will also be on hand to answer any questions. If you want to see them again, the posters will also be displayed in the Church on Sunday, courtesy of the vicar and in the School next Monday and Tuesday, courtesy of the Headteacher.

Thank you for listening, and please get your thinking caps on.

*****Break for Refreshments*****

**190516.07 EARL OF DEVON – CHARLES COURTENAY
Vision for Powderham**

Powderham Castle has been a family home since 1391 and a business since 1325. The Castle is where they are living – it is the Courtenay family home. It has also been a visitor attraction since 1952 attracting 35,000 visitors per year. It is also an Education Centre with the Victorian Learning programme. It is also a wedding business and they hope to grow this.

The Castle is used for business conferences. It is also known for its music in the castle (organ) with 6 concerts per year. Accommodation is also available. Powderham also champions West Country and Devon art and has a significant art collection and archive.

The landscape around the castle is registered including the deer park, walled garden, petting zoo and woodland garden. A variety of concerts and outdoor events are held in the castle ground including Let's Rock. The Estate also owns the sawmills and craft workshops, where it houses a national champion blacksmith as well as a country store and riding school.

Powderham Estate extends to 3,000 acres. It is mainly arable with residential and commercial properties, woodland business and a shooting business.

The Earl of Devon explained that he is currently learning about how to run these businesses and getting to know the village.

Who lives on the Estate? His family, the Courtenays, but also multi-generations of long-standing families such as the Williams, the Yandles and the Hitchcocks. The Estate has been successfully managed because of the strong associations with those families.

The Estate employs around 40 people. Powderham is currently owned by his father's Executors. The Earl of Devon spoke about the financial difficulties that his grandfather and father faced in the 1970s and 1980s. However, they embraced tourism, introduced concerts and eventually turned things around.

He looks forward to a great future and wishes to be sensitive to Kenton, the countryside and the surroundings. He wants to preserve what there is and is keen to work closely with the community.

The American garden is now open later in the season. Apprenticeships are being created including a forest school for the school.

His focus for the future will be planning for the 22nd century and he wants to develop a plan for the next 100 years. He realises that with the significant development in Dawlish, Teignmouth and Exminster, the value of green land will go up and he is keen to maintain that green space. Other and future plans development of the Powderham archives as an educational centre, ambitious plans for the woodland garden and belvedere and further development of the American garden. The riding school also has potential for further growth. The Stables house has been done up for accommodation and it is hoped to develop this further as health and well being space. They will continue to hold concerts and the experience gained from the Big Weekend will help with the organisation of future concert. The diary is full for next year's concerts. It is his intention to continue to communicate with the community about his plans.

190516.08 OPEN FORUM AND QUESTIONS

There were no further questions.

190516.09 CLOSE

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.56pm.

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Cllr Chris Britton
Chairman