

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
REPORT OF THE MEETING CHAIRMAN

7 APRIL 2015

The Parish Council met each month in 2014 -15 with an uncontested election for Councillors in June 2014 for the five years to 2019. We welcomed one new co-opted councillor filling the vacancy left. Councillors continue to be actively involved in a voluntary capacity as locally informed eyes and ears whilst supporting the financial management of the car parks and assisting with local minor maintenance.

The workload has been busy and varied. We have considered the weekly lists of planning and tree work applications to the Local Planning Authorities, Purbeck District and Dorset County Council. 25 Planning applications and 18 Tree Work Applications came to the Parish Council and were commented on in 2014-15. Many major consultation items have emerged and been commented on such as additional site specific proposals for extracting Purbeck Stone within the new Mineral Strategy for the County. The Navitus Bay Wind Farm off the Worth coastline currently one of the biggest such proposals in the UK ran through Public Inquiry for over 6 months with a decision expected later on in the year.

Purbeck District Council and other bodies consulted the parish on a range of issues. These included future Local Government Ward Boundaries for Dorset and alternative reorganisations of Dorset Fire and Rescue Service. Later in the year a Multi Academy proposal including St Georges School in Langton was commented on and this is dealt with in more detail in the report of the School Governor.

Responses have been made to PDC on a range of issues including, Licensing Policy, Policies on Speaking at Planning Committees, the future boundary of WM and HX settlements Housing Policy and Housing Strategy and the Purbeck Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation. This included the future Worth Matravers Settlement Boundary and Harmans Cross Settlement Boundary. Other matters considered included the Management Strategy for Camping and Caravanning Sites, and Planning Enforcement.

Purbeck District Council has now passed on to the PC financial responsibility for the future maintenance and cleaning of the Worth toilets. This amounts at present to some £12000 per annum. A grant covering some of this expenditure is being phased out over the 2014-16 period. The new WM Toilet Cleansing contractor who was appointed on a 3 year contract extendable to 7 year continues to support the facility with very satisfactory performance.

The storms and wind generally did some damage to the Worth village notice board which had to be repaired and I regret that we were visited by vandals who demolished the pillars and coin boxes at both car parks causing extensive damage entailing many hundreds of pounds of repair costs. A strategy and policy for car parking will be developed in 2015-6.

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I am pleased to recognise the work of Cllr Woolford in HX. During the year as he continues to pursue DCC Highways for a range of improvements long sought by the PC. A new road surface was provided through Harmans Cross and this has been welcome and the damaged bus stops poles and street furniture have been repaired. We are hopeful that the 30 mph restriction currently being advertised will take place in the next financial year. The campaign for a continuous footway through Harmans Cross continues.

In Worth Matravers the road from Langton did benefit from the reinstatement of the edge of carriageway white line marking and I am currently trialling a roadside marker system across the road past Compact farm .The finger post signs I constructed again after the loss of the previous signs have been erected further back from the road at the junction at Swanworth. Our requests to DCC for amendments to the yellow line restrictions to cover the whole year rather than the summer months are still awaiting a response as we still appear to be sixth in their priority list.

I am pleased to note the work by the WM Rights of Way officer which she has separately reported on. A number of repair items remain for action before the summer months was supported financially by the PC. This has made a significant improvement especially during the heavy storms to pedestrian access up to Worth Matravers

The village halls at Worth and at Harmans Cross continue to give the PC a great venue for public and Council meetings. Their individual web sites show both offer a full range of community activities. Regrettably the dreadful weather for the HX Field day virtually wiped out that event and the Gymkhana on that day with consequent severe financial implications which the H X Management Committee have coped with well.

We have continued to support through donations the work of, both village halls as and of course the maintenance and feeding of the Worth Pond resident ducks. Further donations have been made to the Citizens Advice Service for their work in this area of Purbeck and to help fund the Purbeck Film Festival.

DCC cut £800,000 from bus subsidies in the county. The PC made formal representations to DCC to support the 40 service and I am pleased that the Bus Company have continued to run the 40 evening service from Poole to Swanage throughout the summer without the previous DCC subsidy.

Once again due to a lot of hard work from parish councillors collecting and banking donations from the car parks that we are able to set a £NIL precept for 2014-15 being one of the very few parishes or town councils out of 24 in Purbeck to do so.

I am pleased that with the support of the Clerk I have been able to fulfil the role of Chairman ably assisted by Cllr Bugler as my Vice Chairman.