

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
REPORT OF THE MEETING CHAIRMAN

3 APRIL 2012

The Parish Council met each month in 2011-12 with 2 new co-opted councillors filling the vacancies left after the elections in 2010. One further vacancy arises from the recent resignation of one councillor .Councillors continue to be actively involved in a voluntary capacity as local eyes and ears whilst supporting the financial management of the car park's and assisting with local minor maintenance .

The workload has been busy and varied considering and commenting on the relevant applications in the weekly lists of planning and tree work applications to Purbeck District Council, the Local Planning Authority. Approximately 50 applications came to the Parish Council and were commented on in 2011-12. It was pleasing to see the reopening of the Worth Tea Rooms .Major consultation items have emerged and been commented on such as the proposals for a Gypsy and Travellers sites across Purbeck and Dorset with all the parishes including Worth Matravers involved in potential sites. The Draft Mineral Strategy for the County, and the Navitus Bay Wind Farm off the Worth coastline currently the biggest such proposal in the world are also in progress as major planning applications.

This year's nominee for the Volunteer of the Year was Shiela Johnson who had maintained the main Withy bed and gardens in the centre of the Village for many years as well as contributing so much voluntary time and effort supporting the running of the Worth Village Hall. I was pleased to be present at the award of a scroll which took place at a ceremony on the 8 March at Purbeck District Council. A working party led by the Clerk aims to try fill this large gap in the maintenance and management of this the Worth Withy Bed.

Work continues with Dorset CC Highways to seek improvements especially to maintenance of the surface, road markings and the infrastructure of local signs in and around the Worth and Harmans Cross area. On-going efforts are taking place to seek an understanding whereby a contribution could be made by the Parish to increase the priority and hence the likelihood of local highway maintenance taking place. New oak footpath signs were erected to the rear of the Worth car park and these have been much admired. Hedge trimming took place on Haycrafts Lane and other local roads in the parish with a significant local access and environmental improvement. The notice board at Harmans Cross was replaced and work is continuing to provide Harmans Cross with some property location signs to help drivers and visitors find their local house destination.

Negotiations with the District Council continue on the future maintenance and cleaning of the Worth toilets and the PC has agreed to manage this a new cleansing contract once SITA the existing contractor ends their contract in 2013 .These toilets are in need of maintenance and modernisation and a scheme will be pursued in 2012.

The proposals for a new Orchard on Begbie field were delayed and will not now be implemented until Autumn 2012 with consultation and planning starting up again soon.

There have been on-going and unresolved issues with the District Council on Affordable Housing need and surveys carried out in Worth on behalf of the PC by PDC in 2012 and these still remain unresolved. The design of the now completed new affordable housing at Windy Ridge in Worth has been the subject of some concern and the parish council has resolved it does not want any further provision considered until a review of that scheme after 12 months of operation can take place.

Highway issues are on-going especially following the major cut backs in expenditure by the Highway Authority Dorset CC. Large amounts of routine maintenance and improvement are being deferred and intervention levels for repair giving cause for concern. Proposals for a new footway at Harmans Cross and minor maintenance of laybys across the parish have been deferred due to expenditure constraints at DCC into the distant future.

The highly successful new village hall at Harmans Cross has given the PC a great venue for public meetings and is a focus for increasing the variation of local and interesting pursuits available to residents of that village and the parish generally. Their new web site shows how these activities range from the monthly film club to tennis table and the U3A with many other activities from mother and toddler through to yoga for the slightly older resident. The full range of the years activities at the two very well-run facilities in the parish at Worth and Harmans Cross village halls are as set out in the respective Chairman's report.

We have continued to support through donations the work of the National Coastwatch service, both Village hall as and of course the maintenance and feeding of the Worth Pond resident ducks. Further donations have been made to the Parochial Church Council for the maintenance and repair of the Worth St Nicholas Church Organ and to the Citizens Advice Service for this work in this area of Purbeck.

I am pleased to say that once again due to a lot of hard work collecting and banking donations from the car parks that we are able to set a £NIL precept for 2012-13 being one of the 4 PC out of 24 in Purbeck to do so.

Our priorities for 2012 -13 will be to seek or facilitate real practical improvements in the environment and infrastructure of the parish. We will work with the local District Council and the County Council and with the two village hall committees and all potential partners in any simple non bureaucratic approach to achieve this end.

We welcomed Roger Khanna as the new Clerk and Financial Officer in June 2012. We have run the Parish Council successfully through a cooperative and shared approach from all councillors since the resignation of the full time Chairman in 2012. The heavy work and personal commitments of existing councillors mean that we will seek a similar approach in 2012-13.