

Annual Parish Meeting: Chairman's Report for 2022/23

Everything seems to be a bit more back to normal over the last twelve months as we have held all of our usual monthly meetings in the Village Hall. However, we can't be complacent as people in the Village have continued to be affected by the coronavirus during the year.

I can report that the Parish Council have held ten meetings over the last year and I would like to thank my fellow councillors for all their cheerful and valuable input and Roz Griffin, our Parish Clerk, for all her hard work and excellent agendas and minutes. Barbara O'Keefe has joined the team after Mike stood down and we have also welcomed Ian Stewart in the new Year. I should like to take the opportunity to thank both Mike O'Keefe and Ruth Walker for their valuable contributions during the time they have been on the Council and they will be much missed. Andy Milne, our District Councillor has now moved away, but we continue to have the much appreciated support from Frances Nicholson and Steven Pugsley with their links to Exmoor National Park and Somerset Council. It will be interesting to see how things develop now following the merger of the four District and County Councils into the new unitary Somerset Council.

We have only had nine planning applications for consideration over the last twelve months, which have been mainly of a fairly minor nature, but to highlight some of the other issues that we have been involved in:

- 1) The Village clean up held at the end of November. Many thanks for everyone who turned out and gave up their Saturday morning to help spruce up the Village.
- 2) The defibrillator, which is regularly checked and monitored by Roz Griffin and backed up by the First Responders.
- 3) The Exmoor Lengthsman who carries out general maintenance around the Parish.
- 4) Kate McKenzie has pulled together a comprehensive plan to explain the aims of the Parish Council for the year.
- 5) Ruth Walker worked very hard and represented the Parish with the Porlock Vale Coastal Community Team and has been instrumental in organising the Repair Cafe.
- 6) The Local Community Network (LCN) pilot for Highways that should lead to a better connection with individual parishes. Andrew Bray is closely involved in the meetings, which should influence the way it evolves and how it could benefit individual parishes.
- 7) Platinum Jubilee celebrations held at the beginning of June. Ruth Walker and many others in the Village spent considerable time organising and running the event, which was a huge success and blessed by excellent weather. A very rewarding event bringing the Village together after a difficult time with the virus. Following the Queen's death the Parish Council has organised a memorial beech tree planted on the playing field.
- 8) The time capsule has now been placed in the playing fields, organised by Jane Barbieri.
- 9) The Parish Council supports the Village Website that provides the latest information on what is happening around the Village and County with things such as forthcoming road closures. We much appreciate Marion and Bill's hard work with running the Website.
- 10) The annual precept, which we try to keep as low as possible and this year's increase has been kept to £200 or 3.7% to allow some expenditure, if required, towards the King's coronation.

Finally I should like to welcome Mark and Sara who have taken over the Villagers' Stores from 1st May and to thank Andy Giles for all his work over the years and particularly for his input during the Covid lockdowns and keeping the shop open during those difficult times. Please remember if you have any issues that you would like to raise you can always contact our Parish Clerk.

James Wilmoth
Chairman Wootton Courtenay Parish council