

THROWLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING IN THE VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 9th APRIL 2018 AT 7.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Cllrs Jackie Crawford, Julian Wisniewski, David Jordan, Ann Warwick Oliver DCC Cllr. James McInnes, Ian Brooker (DNPA), Dawn Hatton on behalf of the Archive
2 members of the community
Clerk in attendance: Julie Macey

- (1) Welcome: Cllr Jackie Crawford thanked everyone for attending
- (2) Apologies: Cllrs. Paul Ridgers and David Hayes
- (3) The minutes of the last meeting: The minutes for the APM held on 10th April, 2017 were presented and signed by the Chair as a true record.
- (4) Matters arising: None other than those raised under the various headings.
- (5) Reports (as available)
 - (a) Chagford Church of England Primary School. No report available.
 - (b) Devon County Council. Cllr. James McInnes confirmed that County net budget 2018/19 £477 million. Council tax to rise 4.99% with 2% going to adult care. Devon is underfunded by £161 per person against its urban counterparts. This year has seen £13 million extra into adult social care, an increase of 6.1% and £6.5 m into child social care, an increase of 5.5%. This reflects pressure on the two services. Highways contractor now Skanska Construction. We have had the worst winter for many years. This has caused considerable problems with roads with many potholes and road surface just giving up in some areas. An extra £6.5 m has been put to highways budget for drainage and ditching. Some £7.5 m is also coming from govt. for repairs to potholes. Local government funding is changing and Devon is part of national pilot. Funding will come from business rates and the local government grant will disappear. This is yr. one and we hope to extend a further year. As cabinet member for Children's Services and Schools, he continues to campaign for fair funding for Devon's schools. Currently Devon is £269 a child below the national average. There is considerable pressure with education funding and schools have to make some difficult choices. The acute pressure is with special educational needs at the moment. Devon's schools are doing well. 89% being good or outstanding rated by Ofsted. Placements are high with 95% of children getting their parents first preference. Devon still has its libraries, children's centres and youth hubs which have disappeared in many parts of the country. Cllr. McInnes continues to be a member of DNPA and chair of the DM committee. The Local Plan is currently under review and parish councils urged to get involved. With regard to locality budget, Cllr. McInnes always happy look at applications for small amount of seed money.
 - (c) West Devon Borough Council: Cllr. Paul Ridgers confirmed in his written report that the council has predicted a budget shortfall of £800,000 by 2019/20 with further shortfalls in the following years. WD already have merged services with South Hams. Officers recommended creating one council to save £0.5m from admin savings and only a handful of job losses. The plan was to use reserves to tide WD over until 2020/21. In the debate 18 voted against and 13 for. To balance budget this year, council tax has been increased by 2.99% and savings need to be made. These have included £35,000 by ceasing to process cash and cheque payments at the offices and instead taking to post office or local PayPoint. £82,000 by closing Okehampton service centre. Residents will still have access to services at Ockment centre and mobile locality officers available in accordance with timetable. One proposal for future use of building in Okehampton is to convert into three flats for use as emergency accommodation for homeless individuals and families which would be more cost effective to tax payer. WD has experienced delays in planning and enforcement which are being addressed with more staff resource. Recycling rates are still the best in Devon and some of the best in the UK at 56%. The waste contract is currently under review with South Hams.

- (d) **Dartmoor National Park Authority:** Ian Brooker confirmed that the Moor Otters project had been a great success and has raised a net income of £60,000. The funds are being used to further the Junior ranger programme including a youth ranger scheme, erosion repairs to Moorland paths and to control non-native invasive plants such as Skunk Cabbage and Himalayan Balsam. Other income generation will include extension of car parking charges involving places like Haytor, Postbridge and Meldon Reservoir with £1 Per car for up to 3 hrs and £2 per car over this. Diversion of Footpath 9 has been completed and the stile replaced with a self-closing gate at landowner's expense. Ian thanked Bob Haworth who has continued to give many hours of his time to keep path network open and useable in the parish and to help manage use of the common. Bob Haworth and other volunteers continue to help with the work on the common removing invasive gorse and improve grazing and other volunteers are encouraged to take part and are always welcome. Skunk Cabbage was found on the common near Pykes Meadow but thanks to the timely intervention of Steve Pocock who offered his services free of charge, the plants were successfully sprayed last year and source of plant also dealt with. It has also been good to support the village pond clearance in the autumn and to share the friendly banter that takes place as well as the customary food.
- (e) **Police: Extract taken from Eastern Links Committee Meeting: Insp. Mark Rowland.** Volume of recorded crime still increasing over last 12 months particularly violent crime. This is partly due to changes in recording data. February onwards should see the figures evening out. The most recent months show a reduction. Violent crime figures are on the increase, this section includes social media bullying which accounts for a high volume. PCSO resource is reducing nationally including West Devon. Okehampton now only has 1.5. It was noted an issue with vandalism in North Tawton before Christmas was dealt with effectively by PCSO. Drug related crimes are modest over the area although it is becoming an increasing problem in the larger towns such as Okehampton and Tavistock. Facebook and Twitter pages are very informative for all the community. More details of crime statistics can be found on Devon and Cornwall police website.
- (g) **The Archive:** Most stated aims for the "Moor than Meets the Eye" Parishscapes project for which grant of £10,000 received have been completed. The overall aim of which has been to make the contents of the archive more accessible to the community. A website has been established www.throwleigharchive.org. A two part presentation has been created – The Story of a Traditional Dartmoor Village. The first part was presented in March 2017 and the second part Colonel Heath's Hut In March 2018 which gave the history of Throwleigh Village hall in the early post war years. Most of the information came from the archive and a historical film. All performances were sold out. Significant income has been generated for the benefit of the community. A large cast and supporting crew of over 40 people aged 9 to 89 volunteered time every Sunday afternoon. The grant received enabled the relocation of the archive to the committee room in the village hall. Considerable works has been carried out largely by volunteers from the village. Storage facilities and amenities have been improved and a dehumidifier added. Work is to continue on indexing and cataloguing the archive before it can be accessed by the public. Dave Hatton expended a great deal of time, expertise and energy and skills not only on the Parishscapes project but also as treasurer and committee member of the archive for 14 years. He will be sadly missed. Lydia Nolan has been appointed as the new treasurer and welcomed Tich Scott on the committee. The archive would welcome other helpers who are interested in preserving the heritage of the parish that we are so lucky to be part of.
- (h) **Friends of Throwleigh Church.** This is a charitable organisation founded in 2010. Its aims are to raise funds towards the maintenance and preservation of the church. We had a successful year increasing funds by £3,735 to current level of £11,951. The increase being split 50/50 between donations and fund raising events, mainly concerts. Two folk concerts were held with lower attendance than previous years. However coffee morning in Chagford was very successful. Two choral concerts also took place and a major contributor was Michael Paget with his twice yearly Renaissance Music concert. More events are scheduled for the coming year which will be advertised in local newspapers, parish magazine etc. Expenditure was kept to a minimum with £250 being spent on a new dehumidifier.
- (i) **Parish Council:** Cllr. Crawford confirmed that the parish council had seen some changes in the year with Jon Bell resigning from the council as he moved away from the area. He was Replaced by David Hayes who was co-opted onto the council. Sadly in January we also lost Dave Hatton, a great shock to the whole community. His post has not yet been filled. As usual the council continues with various planning applications with visits to sites when

required. Roads are always an issue with the council lengthsman now only being planned for 1 day a year. Fortunately with TAP funding we have been able to employ a contractor to do gutter and minor maintenance a few more times each year. The council has again been successful in obtaining some more funding for next year although this is likely to be the last time we will be able to get such funding. The defibrillator was set up and running in the phone box in the centre of the village last year which was followed by training for all parishioners who wished to attend. The phone box at Barrowhead has now also been purchased by the parish council and fund raising has already started to help cover the cost of another defibrillator. A replacement noticeboard was very kindly made by Jon Getz with materials covered by TAP funding monies. The previous one had become too broken. Superfast broadband has remained elusive for members of the community who are on the outskirts of the village. Sadly and frustratingly little has changed in the last year with no news as to if and when it will become available. Cllr. Crawford thanked Cllr. McInnes for the funds made available to cover the cost of reinstating signposts in the parish in the last year which was greatly appreciated. With regard to the Providence charity, this was now up and running and an application for funds for one young man had been received. Cllr. Crawford thanked the parish clerk for her hard work during the year and the councillors who also support other meetings, forums.

(6) Any other business:

Defibrillator: It was reported that £104.86 had been raised to date at parish event. Cllr. Wisniewski confirmed that he was researching applying for lottery funding. Cllr. McInnes confirmed that he was prepared to look at a small contribution towards this (say £250) and agreed for clerk to make contact in this respect. Further training was being organised which would be funded by the kind donation from Stephen Alford.

Superfast Broadband: Kim Warwick Oliver explained the current situation and handed round maps showing those properties with speeds under 10 Mbps and the very confusing situation as to whom in terms of provider would be taking this forward if at all. He confirmed that West Devon was now at the very bottom of the table throughout the whole country as to broadband speeds and the difficulties this was creating for local businesses and parishioners. He explained the background to a report 'Broadband & Mobile Connectivity Task Group (final report) for the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee and the section on "gainshare" – monies of between £4.8 - £6.8 m made available by BT following take up of Broadband to be used in areas in the County which were either deprived or with low speeds using fibre to the home. He asked for the parish council's and Devon County Councillor's support in putting Throwleigh's case forward to be included in the gainshare expenditure. This was granted unanimously. The consultation period for responses will end on 26th April.