

**Minutes of the Stokenham Annual Parish
meeting held on Tuesday 28th May 2019
in the Stokenham Parish Hall at 7.00p.m.
with Cllr Piers Spence presiding**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and approximately 27 people were in attendance.

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Cllr R. Pain
Sgt D. Green and WPC J. Gerrard
Mary Sanders Chillington Methodist Church
Vicar and Cheryl Watkins Stokenham with Sherford and Beesands Church

Cllr J. Ansell
Ash Hawkes – Karate Club

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st May 2018 were APPROVED as a true record with all present agreeing before they were duly signed by the Chairman.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman Cllr Spence provided a report for the year as attached as he noted it was extraordinary how little changed from year to year.

Having attended another meeting Cllr Brazil arrived during the Chairman's report at the point relating to Woodland Trust.

The Chairman concluded by thanking all fellow councillors for their hard work and support over the year and welcomed new councillors Gail Addison and Rich Pain advising there still remained one vacancy on the council. He thanked the Clerk for her support.

3. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr. Brazil gave thanks to the Chairman and Parish Council for all they did for the parish.

He advised that Devon County had set a 2.9% council tax increase plus 1% for adult social care. In these times of austerity Devon County struggled due to their huge responsibility for adult social care and education especially special education services. Dealing with the roads network was hard as Devon actually have more roads mileage than Belgium. Stokenham Parish Council was always a pleasure to deal with because they were pro active on drainage clearance and he gave a special mention to Cllr Rogers for his work on this. When problems occurred at Beesands and elsewhere around the parish if it was left to County or other agencies it would take much longer. Rather than just sitting and complaining Stokenham Parish Council just got on with it.

Regarding the A379 he was delighted it was re opened and the County and contractors had done well, but thanks must also go to Dr Sarah Wollaston MP who obtained Government funding. District had lost the toilets in the middle car park because the septic tank used was washed away so they could not deal with waste and therefore there was no choice. At Torcross District was going to impose a pay on entry charge for the public toilets but parish council agreed that a small increase should be added to car parking charges to ensure free entrance as District demanded money be raised somewhere towards this service.

At District Council there were changes that would start to affect parishioners. The Council tax was up £5 which was the maximum increase allowed. District had outsourced rubbish collection, cleaning and maintenance of toilets to a company called FCC. This happened 1st April 2019 but by next April there would be a new regime introduced for rubbish collection, but he did not know the details as yet. It would probably consist of a weekly collection of food

waste but this would not be mixed in with garden waste. Clear and blue bags for recycling would go and instead there would be a container for all recyclables which would be collected fortnightly along with landfill waste. The container would be put out and a lorry with operatives would sort things into separate sections at the kerbside. In West Devon FCC had already been doing so they thought it worked.

Following the District Council elections he was back in post for another 4 years but would of course remained a County Councillor also. There had been change at District Council and although it was the same administration party they were only in power by one councillor. This gave slightly more power for individuals so it would be interesting to see what happened and he hoped the District became more responsive to communities. Hopefully going forward it would mean that the members advised and officers carried such out rather than the other way round being decided by officers and nodded through. He felt that probably there would be a few interesting battles in Stokenham Parish such as the proposed holiday chalets in Beesands. However he hoped this was a much more fluid council.

As a County Councillors he held the portfolios for children and audit whilst at District he was on audit and was now the Chairman of Planning as well as the Salcombe Harbour Board.

Dist Cllr Brazil left the meeting.

4. VERBAL REPORTS

A representative of Coleridge Bus explained that they had no problem with funds but it was becoming a problem finding people to drive and they could only operate the service with drivers. Stokenham and Chillington were central to the bus but there was less willingness nowadays for people to put a foot forward to offer to drive. They would need to get a licence but that was not onerous. Once they had 17 drivers but due to peoples age this had dwindled to 6. Many people were dependent on the bus and they would suffer considerably if there were no drivers. He made a plea as they were desperate for drivers and Coleridge Bus would pay the cost for lessons and passing the test.

Martin Nuttall-Smith advised of the newly installed SCOF office at the parish hall. After 25 years at the surgery the surgery decided they needed the office. The replace the surgery offered had a cubic metre of server within it which pumped out noise and heat and when this matter was raised the reply from the business manager was “you can have the window left open and wear noise cancelling headsets”. The new parish hall office had been created out of the broom cupboard all newly fitted out and would be ready in a couple of weeks.

5. PERMISSIVE PATH

Christine Nuttall-Smith outlined how the route from Stokenham to Torcross was created from the support and involvement of the various landowners who, by agreeing to be involved, made this safe walking route possible. It had taken the catalyst of Jim and Maureen Trout, who had no car and walked everywhere, when they were going down to Torcross and were nearly wiped out by a car. Jim was so upset he said he would never walk to Torcross again. Christine talked to her husband and then the parish clerk. A safe walking route had to go through eight owners land and so a visit to Devon County Council was arranged. Devon County Council officers agreed this was a good idea and offered to draw plans up and have this costed. At that time it would have cost £80,000 which was beyond local funding. Christine explained that her husband felt it could be done within 10% of that budget. Christine and the parish clerk visited all the owners along with the Caravan Club who agreed for a footpath to go through their grounds and this was the first public footpath in the whole of the UK to be allowed across a Caravan Club site. Everybody else had concerns about the footpath crossing their land but all agreed to be a part of this project. Following agreement local people got together with Mike Pearn and Dave Randell doing the works at cost.

The original footpath installed was more rustic but it did the job and got people from Torcross to Stokenham. Footpath signs were provided to join the path from Chillington safely off the main road round through Stokenham and down to Torcross. Shortly afterwards a counter was installed on the path and the usage was found to be higher than anywhere in the County for a Permissive Path. It continued to be well used and had been updated with a better surface. The community effort involved in the creation of this path was second to none and everything just fell into place.

The Chairman thanked Christine for this and noted that he had come along halfway through this project and was amazed how everyone had adopted this path and felt it was a jewel in the crown of footpaths in Stokenham. He offered thanks, on behalf of all parishioners, to all those who had been involved in its creation and all landowners for their personal contribution. Cllr Rogers was also thanked for all his work on the path since, upgrading the surface and dealing with drains.

7. OPEN FORUM

A question was raised as to why the potholes around Torcross bend appeared to have been forgotten and not included in the patching work. Cllr Brazil advised they had not been forgotten and would be picked up shortly. Another lady was concerned about walking from the Kingsbridge end of Chillington down to the doctors as there were sections with no footway. Those present understood this concern but advised that unless there was space to install a pathway nothing could be done.

It was questioned what would happen if a section of the Stokenham to Torcross permissive path was included within a planning development. Parish Council had reviewed this and were in the process of obtaining costings to re route the path up via the church if this occurred.

Meeting closed: 7.30p.m.

A cake celebrating the Permissive Path was cut and all present were invited to remain and further discuss ideas and issues over wine and nibbles.