Woodbury Parish Council - Chairman's Report 2019/20

We have operated for most of the year as a full complement of thirteen Cllrs and have met once every two weeks. There are items that we consider in our normal course of business such as Planning. As a Parish Council, we are a designated consultee which means we provide a parish point of view to East Devon District Council. Sometimes we are overruled by Planning Policy but most of the time the final decision reflects the Parish Council's point of view.

Our Meetings also involve both County Councillors and District Councillors attending at least once a month. This is a useful forum for discussing the impact that County and District policy will have on the Parish. Our parish councillors also attend meetings with outside bodies such as the Exmouth Police Local Action Group and the Exe Estuary Management.

Beyond this, we look to undertake projects which will benefit the Parish. Examples for the year have been:

- The installation of a new bus shelter in the Arch. We are grateful to Cty Cllrs Richard Scott and Jeff Trail, Mark Phillips (Transport) and Richard Elliott (Highways) for making this happen.

- The Parish Council oversaw and funded the refurbishment of the existing bus shelter in the Arch. Both these bus shelters provide an important function for our Parishioners and are of a style that suit the conservation area.

- We have installed a new slide in the Sages Lea play area in Woodbury Salterton, repaired the zip wire and put new safety surfaces into the Exton play area. My thanks to the Exton volunteers who prepared the play area surfaces prior to installation.

- We were pleased to have been able to provide funding to improve the Scout Hut on behalf of the Scouts, Guides, Maytree Pre-school and WCPF. We feel these funds have been efficiently and thoughtfully spent and hope these organisations continue to thrive.

We have some other challenges ahead of us, areas we know are important to our Parishioners, including:

- Completion of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Informed and efficient investment of our allocation of S106 funds.
- Traffic and speeding. Parking. Blocked drains. Weeds etc.

We will need to work with the various responsible authorities to achieve these.

I will mention a concern I have generally within the Parish and it is the use of social media to make criticisms often without thought about those on the receiving end. It is easy to do this on the end of a keyboard and then press send. I would urge our parishioners who have any complaints or observations to ask how they might help resolve a particular problem instead. It is an approach we at WPC try our best to attain.

Finally, this is a time to thank all 'friends', but namely two:

- Friends of Gulliford Cemetery, who alongside the Gulliford Joint Committee, have secured funding and overseen the complete refurbishment of the cemetery. Personally, I think it is an astonishing effort and secured a parish heritage asset for future generations. It was an area of worry for WPC and we are very grateful for your achievement.

- Secondly, the end of our financial year marked the beginning of something more challenging, the outbreak of Coronavirus. Friends of Woodbury Surgery stepped up to the plate to help and protect our more vulnerable parishioners. We are pleased to be involved with them and admire the work they have done.

We, as a Parish Council, will also have to adapt to our changing circumstances but we feel we are up to the challenge and will continue to try and best serve all our Parishioners.

Cllr Mrs Cheryl McGauley, Chairman, Woodbury Parish Council.