Woodbury Annual Parish Meeting

Report of the Chairman

Hello,

I was proud to be elected Chairman of the Parish Council again this year.

The Parish Council has met on 10 occasions with one more meeting due this year and has also met on seven occasions just to deal with planning applications.

We were pleased that District Councillor Mike Howe came to one of our meetings. Mike is Chairman of EDDC's Development management Committee and he was going to many Parish Councils to see how they considered planning applications.

Representatives of Rent Plus came to talk about their scheme for managing the 'affordable houses at Meadow Haze. They can offer tenancies at below market Rent to enable tenants to save up a deposit to eventually buy their home.

Tony Bennet of Wild Woodbury comes to most of our meetings. He asked the Parish Council to support the Last Straw campaign which is aimed at stopping the use of plastic straws as part of the international campaign to reduce plastic waste which is polluting our oceans. The Parish Council as pleased to support this initiative and wishes Tony the best of luck in convincing users in the parish to change to paper stars and to reduce plastic waste.

The Council offers financial assistance to local Groups with money from the precept and the Coombe farm Solar Fund. This means that we have about £9,000 to give away each year to help keep Groups lively across the whole of the parish.

We managed to keep our precept the same for this year. Most other public bodies seem to try to increase their precepts to the maximum they can without generating a local referendum. The Parish Council aims to keep its costs down and has provided for some projects during the coming year. Our biggest cost is meeting our commitment to leaving the Devon County pension fund. This was set up for a previous Clerk but overall, the Parish Council considered it to be far too expensive for a small council. Future Clerks will be covered by the Auto enrolment scheme if they qualify for this.

One of our projects is refurbishing The Arch in Woodbury. We have included £5,000 in the budget for next year for this. We have asked residents and businesses for their views and we have had some interesting responses. The Clerk will now

prepare a scheme for the Council to consider. It is our aim that this will be completed as part of the Parish Council's way of commemorating the end of World War One. We would like an artist, and that could be a computer artist, to volunteer to draw up the ideas for consideration.

We have provided a new bench on Woodbury Village Green, with the Royal British Legion, in memory of Reg Brown who was very active in the Parish Council and the Legion. It is nice the see Legion Members caring for the bench.

During the year, Roger Mayo resigned as a Parish Councillor although he does still help on practical matters. This means that the parish Council now has two vacancies. One is for Woodbury and the other is for the Exton area.

The Parish Council has welcomed two new County Councillors, Richard Scott and Jeff trail. They are both making an immediate impact in the area.

Finally, the Woodbury Neighbourhood Plan is moving again. We have carried out a local consultation to make sure that the ideas in the Plan still reflect local opinion. Unfortunately this will be followed by two further rounds of consultation but we hope to get this right before the more formal consultations start.

There is a copy of the Plan and a response form on the table and these have been on the website for some weeks. Please help yourself but the Clerk would like the response form back by Tuesday so that the Working party can go through all the responses at their meeting next week. They will be putting forward an updated neighbourhood plan to the meeting on 30th April 2018. This will be a Parish Council meeting and is open to the public so please come along and hear about the next version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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