

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11TH APRIL 2018 AT 7.00PM IN THE INSTITUTE, YONDER STREET, OTTERY ST MARY

Present:

Mayor	Councillor Dobson
Councillors	Holmes, Giles, Edwards, Carter, Faithful (Town Ward) Bartlett, Gori (North Ward) Harding (Tipton Ward)

together with the Clerk, PCSO Jon Sims, Cllr Claire Wright, a member of the Press and approx. 40 members of the public

Apologies: Councillor Pang, representatives from Hospiscare and Phyllis Baxter

Mac Dick led the meeting in prayer

1. WELCOME BY THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR GLYN DOBSON

Cllr Dobson welcomed everyone to the meeting and each councillor introduced themselves

2. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 19TH APRIL 2017

The Minutes were approved and they were signed by the Mayor.

3. REPORT FROM DEVON & CORNWALL POLICE

Jonathan Sims introduced himself as the new PCSO who would be covering Ottery. He provided background information about himself and explained his role in the town. He stated that he wished to make himself `accessible`/visible in the town and would target anti-social behaviour. He is aware of the vandalism and steps were being taken to address the issues.

Jonathan provided the following crime figures:

Crimes Recorded - 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2018 - Ottery St Mary Town

Offence	Recorded Crime 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2018	Recorded Crime 01/04/2016 to 31/03/2017	Recorded Crime % Difference
Violence with Injury	31	21	47.6%
Violence without Injury	56	38	47.4%
Rape	3	0	-
Other Sexual Offences	8	6	33.3%
Burglary Dwelling	3	4	-25.0%
Burglary Non-Dwelling	11	3	266.7%
Vehicle Offences	10	13	-23.1%
Shoplifting	14	4	250.0%
Other Theft	28	22	27.3%
Criminal Damage	53	25	112.0%
Public Order Offences	25	11	127.3%
Possession of Weapons	2	0	-
Trafficking of Drugs	1	4	-75.0%
Possession of Drugs	2	2	0.0%
Other Offences	4	4	0.0%
Total	251	157	59.9%

Non Notifiable Offences	9	18	-50.0%
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Mayor's initials:

Incidents Recorded - 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2018 - Ottery St Mary Town

Incident Closing Category	Incidents - 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2018	Incidents - 01/04/2016 to 31/03/2017	Incidents % Difference
Anti Social Behaviour	124	96	29.2%
Crime Not Recorded	5	4	25.0%
Crime Recorded	67	59	13.6%
Public Safety	201	230	-12.6%
Transport	86	85	1.2%
Total	483	474	1.9%

4. "CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2017" PRESENTATION

The Mayor praised the large number of volunteers who worked tirelessly in the Parish. Steve Percy, Richard Coley and John Maybery had been nominated for the Citizen of the Year award. The person nominated with the largest number of public votes was Richard Coley. The Mayor presented Richard with the Citizen of the Year shield and a certificate. The Mayor thanked the nominees and all volunteers of the town. He mentioned that next year it was intended to introduce a business category award

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR CLAIRE WRIGHT

County Councillor Claire Wright gave the following report:

I was delighted to be re-elected to Devon County Council last May and return as Ottery's county councillor once again.

NHS

During my tenure on Devon County Council (from 2013) in addition to my daily casework, I have focused largely on two areas. These are the NHS and Environmental issues.

This report seeks to record the work I have done as a member of Devon County Council's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee.

As a member of Devon County Council's Health and Adult Scrutiny Committee since first elected, I have sought to hold the NHS to account in relation to the many cuts that continue to be made because budgets are expected to be in the red by around £500m by 2020. Devon is one of three most financially challenged health areas in the country.

In around 2010, the Coalition government reduced the annual growth funding rate from around six per cent a year to around one per cent. This along with a whole host of other pressures, including a growing older population with complex health needs, has contributed to the financial difficulties.

I have asked many questions, proposed countless resolutions at the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, asked for investigations, further information, organised public demonstrations, written letters, supported petitions and sat on working groups, in an effort to fight community hospital bed closures at Ottery St Mary, Honiton, Axminster, Seaton, Crediton, Whipton and Okehampton.

Sadly, I was unsuccessful and am now focusing my efforts on retaining the hospital buildings by not allowing them to be sold off by NHS Property Services, which took acquired 12 local community hospital buildings last year.

Half of community beds in northern Devon are now shut, and maternity units at Honiton, and Okehampton Hospitals remain temporarily closed, with a threat of permanent closure.

The Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital has struggled more than any other hospital in Devon with delayed discharges and community hospital bed closures surely cannot have not helped matters. There is now a new

Mayor's initials:

discharge system in place and it is resulting in more people being sent home earlier. I have asked for more information about this.

Dr Mike Slot – A GP from Sidmouth - attended the January Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee meeting and expressed concern about the care at home system which has replaced the lost community hospital beds. He said that there wasn't enough carers available to look after people in their own homes.

As a result of his speech I proposed a spotlight review, which is set to take place at the end of May, following a survey of local GPs.

My work to retain NHS services is not always been easy. My proposals have often been voted down by Conservatives who sit on the committee. It can also be incredibly difficult to extract information from NHS officers and I am frequently met with a blank wall.

Even asking for the winter pressures data (how local hospitals are coping with the winter) earlier this year was refused and I resorted to a Freedom of Information request. This was also blocked on the basis that the data was "not validated."

Instead, I have been referred to incomprehensible vast spreadsheets of national data. Not acceptable in my view for a health scrutiny councillor.

There is no news yet on the plans of NHS Property Services, a private company set up under the 2012 Health and Social Care Act, which owns 12 local community hospitals. It is charging rents of over £3m a year for 12 community hospitals in Eastern Devon. But so far NHS England is paying.

I can only assume that at some point NHS England will no longer be prepared to pay the rather extortionate rents (which is surely robbing Peter to pay Paul) and that is when the NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group may be tempted to declare them surplus to requirements, in order that they can be sold off.

In November last year, the county council solicitor, Jan Shadbolt, reminded the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee of its responsibilities at my request, after the Conservatives voted down my proposal to refer the Seaton, Okehampton, Whipton and Honiton hospital bed closures to the Secretary of State for Health, last July.

Mrs Shadbolt reminded the committee of the Mid Staffordshire Public Inquiry following tragic deaths at Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust. The local health scrutiny committee there was held to account by Sir Robert Francis QC, who oversaw the subsequent inquiry.

It was the first time non-executive members of a local authority were held to account over the failure of local health services. Councillors were deemed to have failed in their duty to act in the public interest.

Health scrutiny powers were strengthened, as a result.

The county solicitor told the committee that the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee has a "very powerful role to play within the community" and that it is "unique in scrutiny committees" on that basis.

She said that the primary reason for the committee's existence is to take up, and act on, issues of public concern.

The latest threat to our NHS is a scheme from Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The system, which is being brought into Devon at the moment, was previously known as an Accountable Care System.

We are told that it is just another step in the direction of joining health and social care... yet it has prompted a major legal challenge nationally, which Sir Stephen Hawking was involved with before he died.

One of the main problems with the ICS is funding. We are told by the NHS that East Devon is over funded so may see deeper cuts under the new funding arrangements of the new Integrated Care System. There are also fears of more privatisation and the possibility that the NHS could become no longer free at the point of use because social care is means tested and bringing both services together may threaten this.

Myself and other councillors, mainly my Independent colleague, Martin Shaw, pushed for this item to be properly scrutinised. It was brought before the Health and Adult Care Committee last month and I proposed a series of recommendations which sought to clarify and provide a range of assurances before any implementation could take place.

My proposal was supported by the majority of the committee but unfortunately was overturned by Devon County Council's cabinet on 11 April.

Mayor's initials:

I keep my blog updated with news on the NHS and other areas I am working so please do feel free to take a look at www.claire-wright.org

6. REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2017-18 BY THE MAYOR **Mayor Cllr Glyn Dobson gave the following report**

MAY 2017

As there were no elections this year, we commenced the meeting with the election of officers and I was delighted once again to be elected Mayor for the eleventh time. With Cllr Ian Holmes being elected as Deputy Mayor, Cllr Paul Bartlett being elected as Cllr responsible for Finance and with West Hill forming its own Council, we now have eleven Cllrs instead of fifteen. Cllr Lyn Harding resigned from the Tipton Ward owing to ill health.

JUNE 2017

The new library was up and running and proving to be a great success, however there was a problem with the amount of space allocated to the Information Centre. After negotiations with Libraries Unlimited, a new position was allocated and this has now proved to be successful. The vacancy at Tipton St John had been advertised for one month without success and it was agreed to now co-opt a Cllr and this would be advertised.

JULY 2017

July started with the Council still being one Cllr short for the Tipton Ward and it was agreed to continue to advertise the vacancy. In order to keep the public areas of grass more presentable, it was agreed that the Town Council would take over the responsibility for cutting those areas during the summer. This would be a first for the Town Council as it has always been the responsibility of Devon County Council.

There had been an electoral review of District Cllrs which resulted in an increase in the Town ward from two to three District Cllrs and there would be one for West Hill and Aylesbeare. It was agreed that a small plot of land which the Council owned at St Saviour's be sold as it was surplus to requirements.

AUGUST 2017

Negotiations were taking place with the Heritage Society for them to use the former Library premises to open a Museum in Ottery. It was also agreed that the Tar Barrel Committee could use a room in the old library for its operational quarters on November 5th.

SEPTEMBER 2017

For the September meeting we travelled to Tipton St John, which we usually do one month of the year and held our meeting in the Village Hall.

This was the first meeting since Maria Clapp had resigned as PCSO and there was no representative from the police. Cllrs were of the opinion this was a retrograde step as they would not be aware of any action in the town by the Police and there would be no report of crimes committed.

For safety reasons, the footbridge at the Land of Canaan had been removed and several members of the public had voiced their concerns.

As Cllr Lyn Harding's health had improved, it was resolved to co-opt her back on to the Council to represent Tipton Ward.

OCTOBER 2017

It was agreed in October to again finance the Christmas lights in Ottery and a contribution of £1100 was made by the Chamber of Commerce which was previously dissolved and this was the residue of its funds.

The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to East Devon District Council for its observation, we would then need to check this again before making the final submission.

The recently formed Regeneration Group was making good progress and it was intended to publish some of its recommendations in the Ottery Gazette.

NOVEMBER 2017

Mayor's initials:

November saw a very successful Tar Barrel event which was monitored from the old Town Hall where the Committee set up its headquarters.

The redundant telephone boxes at Tipton St John and Higher Spring Gardens have been put to community use in other towns and villages and we are waiting for ideas for the use of these.

DECEMBER 2017

There were many discussions in December regarding the Old Town Hall and the request from the Heritage Society to use it as a Museum. They had been looking for suitable premises for many years and this seemed the ideal opportunity to fulfil their ambitions and it was decided to discuss this further.

There was much discussion about the vandalism at Canaan Way and it was agreed to investigate whether CCTV could be operated at this site. Amendments had been made to the Neighbourhood Plan and it was now to be sent to the Inspector.

We again held a Christmas lunch for senior citizens this year in the London Hotel, this was paid for by a generous donation from a resident.

JANUARY 2018

After a letter of complaint to the Police regarding the lack of policing in the town, a response was received from Inspector Weeks, who confirmed she was not actually looking for a replacement for Maria Clapp and she was not aware of any problems in the Land of Canaan and her view was there was little crime in the town.

After much discussion, it was agreed to try to get residents to report crime and vandalism in the proper manner and again request a Police presence at Council meetings.

It was also resolved in December to grant a two year lease to the Heritage Society for a Museum at the Old Town Hall. This would allow the Society the time to progress its plans and then enter into a longer lease after the two years.

FEBRUARY 2018

February saw the confirmation that EDDC would be starting a green waste collection which would be a fortnightly service at a cost of £48.

The Council was informed the police did not think CCTV was necessary at the Land of Canaan and as a result of this EDDC would also not support the idea.

February saw the first act of vandalism in the new toilets, police were informed and a reference number obtained. It was agreed to only open the toilets when the library was open until further notice.

MARCH 2018

March saw the police base a new PSCO in Ottery, Johnathan Sims and it is hoped he would work closely with the Council in an effort to reduce the amount of vandalism in the town.

The town agreed to enter into a contract with a company to cut the grass areas in the town, this was previously the responsibility of Devon County Council but owing to the amount of complaints by residents it was decided the Council would employ contractors direct. In addition to this, we would also have all the pavements in the town treated with weed killer.

APRIL 2018

In April, it was confirmed that the Council would donate its Parishes Together monies to help fund a project run by the Help Scheme to support mental health in young people who live in the area.

Our Town Clerk obtained the full CILCA qualification this month, so well done Chris. This also means she becomes a Principal Office and can wear a blue badge. The Council will now apply for the Power of Competency and a Quality certificate.

Further damage took place in the new toilets, a window being smashed and this again was reported to the Police.

Mayor's initials:

7. REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Ian Homes gave the following report:

The Planning committee consists of 10 members of the Town Council of which I am Chairman and Councillor Edwards is Vice Chairman.

The amount of Planning applications we see has dramatically reduced over the last year, in 2016 we had 24 meetings and 187 applications, in 2017 we had 23 meetings and 177 applications and this last year we have had only 14 meetings with 111 applications. Some of this maybe due to the absence of developments in West Hill now that they are an independent Parish.

Some of those 111 applications are variations in designs of applications already approved by East Devon planners in previous years.

We have also seen a rise in applications to convert redundant farm buildings into residential accommodation under new government regulations some of these were approved but others were considered as unacceptable.

There have been no major applications submitted over the last 3 years but there have been plans submitted for Town Centre developments. Permission has been given for 13 flats to be built in the car park of the London Inn, 10 houses and flats to the rear of Mill Street and we have this week seen an application for 5 flats in Mill Street. The disadvantage with these developments as far as the Town Council is concerned is that no provision has been made for allocated parking and therefore this will put an added burden on already overstretched Town Centre Parking facilities. I have just learnt this afternoon that the London Inn is reverting to a 1994 application for 7 flats with garages as this had already been started.

The existing developments are well underway and the current situation is as follows.

Redrow Otter Grange

All houses completed with 1 for sale and work now underway to complete the roads.

Bovis Kings Reach

73 out of 165 houses now occupied and the footings for the care home are under construction.

David Wilson Homes

Nearly completed with 1 plot remaining.

Factory site.

The Otter Holt site has sold 14 out of 33 houses and 2 are occupied with Autumn completion.

The Otter View site of 8 houses have started and footings are being laid.

The despatch building and flats in the Mill should be completed this Autumn

McCarthy and Stone homes will be offered for sale Winter 2018.

Salston Manor

The development of 29 flats is progressing but it is a daunting task restoring the building to its former glory due to the building being empty for so many years and the ravages of time and weather taking their toll.

8. REPORT BY JOSEFINA GORI

Cllr Gori gave the following report:

I wish to thank everyone for the support I received for all the events I have organised, namely bringing the Tour of Britain event to the town and the First King & Queen of the Mountain, and the Land of Canaan cycling event. Without the Council, the volunteers and the residents, it would have been impossible to report on those events, and to be able to tell everybody how Ottery St Mary had become so popular amongst those in the cycling world, due to the enthusiasm of the public, the facilities provided and the organisation of the events. I have been very lucky in whatever ideas I have had, to have had the support of the Mayor (as long as it wouldn't cost him any money!) and the Council. I have prided myself on having organised events and projects that have had no cost implications to the Council or the town.

The date for the next King & Queen of the Mountain is Sunday 15th of September.

The connection between those events and the Active Life & Active Mind project was important as whilst organising the events, I realised that the town had a tremendous potential to offer activities that would help people to keep fit, mentally and physically. All that was needed was somebody to co-ordinate it, which is what Phyllis Baxter and myself have been doing.

The Regeneration Working Group is a working group created to implement the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Group is working on 14 specific projects and is seeking answers from DCC, DCC Highways and EDDC regarding the recommendations presented to them at a meeting which took place on

Mayor's initials:

the 17th of July last year. I am desperately seeking volunteers with skills that they could put to good use, by them becoming involved with the various different working groups. Please let me know if you are interested

9. REPORT REGARDING OTTERY IN BLOOM (OIB)

Keith Spittlehouse gave the following report:

Ottery in Bloom is currently run by small committee together with additional helpers in summer. You will all have seen the planters around the town which are maintained by OIB with the support of sponsors and waterers without whom we would find it difficult to continue.

As well as brightening up the Town with colourful displays of shrubs, bulbs and annuals what have we done in the past year ?

We have used funds to tidy up the areas on each side of the Library. With the support of the former Ottery Garden Club and assistance from Mens Shed we have installed a raised bed and planted it with shrubs and bulbs. For the summer we will add colourful annuals. The other side will be made into a sensory bed. We have transferred the single planter stand in West Hill to the new West Hill Parish Council who will continue to plant it.

We are looking at co-operating with developers of the new estates in Ottery to add to our displays and would welcome new residents support in maintaining them.

We welcome the new grass cutting contract recently awarded by the Town Council which will tidy up the areas around many of our displays.

Despite the poor start to the growing season we are hopeful that the summer bedding plants which are being brought on by our members will be ready for planting in early June.

Now for the thank you's

Without the support of many local individuals and organisations Ottery in Bloom would not exist. I am not going to mention them individually for fear of missing someone out. Some help us with funds, others with assistance in planting. Essential is the help with regular summer watering from a number of organisations in the town as well as many individuals. Thank you also to the many townsfolk who tell us how much they appreciate the colourful displays. Last but not least thank you to the Ottery in Bloom team who work tirelessly behind the scenes planning, growing plants, planting, maintaining and watering for their efforts towards keeping Ottery beautiful.

For continuity there is an urgent need for others to offer assistance with planting or with watering. Please let me know.

10. REPORT FROM THE ALLOTMENT GARDEN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman Carl Richmond gave the following report:

Good evening everyone. I've been asked to say a few words about allotment things.

I'll start off on a sad note. The death of Clive Essame upset us all. He was a very keen plotholder, a member of the Committee for a while and produced an allotment magazine. He has been missed.

The presentation of the allotments to Ottery Town Council by Redrow has finally been completed so we now own the land. This is a quite a rare event these days -there are lots of places (like Honiton) that can't find any land available.

I must say that the allotments are looking very good now we have all settled in. A lot of people are working hard and generating an enthusiastic atmosphere. In fact I don't think I've ever seen the allotments looking so good - I'm sure they are the best in Devon.

The Bob Johnson Cup for the best allotment was won by Tony Carter and Pat Maud who are setting a good example for us all.

There was an incursion by a badger last year, it tunnelled right under the rabbit -proof fence, went straight for someone's sweet corn, and demolished it. We stuffed paving stones into the hole when we filled it in and this seems to be a deterrent. So far anyway.

There are still a few allotments vacant if anyone feels like growing your own fruit and veg and I've just heard that the council is getting a shed to keep communal things in,

I would like to thank everyone who has assisted in running the allotments-especially Christine and Sue in the Office.

Mayor's initials:

11. FINANCIAL REPORT 2017-2018 INCLUDING PRESENTATION OF GRANTS

Cllr Paul Bartlett gave the following report:

It has been a busy and exciting year. The finances of the council have remained healthy throughout the year once again. And will enable us to work on useful projects for the parish throughout the rest of the year. The final figures for 2017/18 are still being prepared but we are not expecting any surprises whatsoever.

The finances of the council were healthy at the start of the year and certainly so at the end of this year ending on the 31st of March. The income for the year was around £220K, but expenditure was up to £182K.

However, we have damp proofed the old library, and other rooms, which are part of the building. This is in preparation for the Heritage Society.

The new Toilets have been the subject to some vandalism. I wonder if the people who do the damage realise that in-directly their parents, through the local council tax pay for the repairs.

The precept this year was raised to allow for extra essentials that have been gradually been filtered down by the council tiers above us. If you look closely at the local tax that is included in what you pay EDDC then you will see that it is -1.7% this year.

Once again because of our healthy and robust position we are pleased to be able to award a number of Grants to various organisations in the Parish.

The Finance Committee take these applications very seriously and discuss them at great length. We have only a limited amount of money we can allocate and inevitably there will be some disappointed by the outcome for which we are sorry – but please, don't give up, keep trying.

Our Mayor will now present the grants to representatives of the following organisations

Tale Valley Trust
 Men's Shed Ottery
 Tipton Times
 Ottery in Bloom
 Ottery St Mary over 60s Club
 Coleridge Memorial Trust
 Vision OM
 Ottery help Scheme
 Ottery St Mary Food & Families Festival
 Ottery St Mary Carnival & Tar Barrel Committee
 Ottery Community Theatre
 Tipton St John Community Hall Trust
 Sidmouth & Ottery Hockey Club
 OSMVSU Carnival Club
 Pixie Day (Ottery St Mary Joint Guide & Scout Committee)
 Ottery Station
 Ottery St Mary Twinning Association

12. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Q Has all the Sainsburys S106 been spent?

A Yes – on upgrading the advertising cabinets, the Otter shopping sign on the petrol station and a new bench outside of the library. There was a small amount of money left for planting new trees but as this was not utilised it could not now be claimed as the deadline date has passed

Q Does the Council have a view on car parking around the town?

A Car parking is inadequate and the Regeneration Group was looking at the problem. Cllr Giles advised that the lack of parking provision was historic. He referred to the planning consent for the Manse re 10 properties with 3 parking spaces and the proposed conversion of 8 Mill Street with 5 dwellings and no parking provision which would exacerbate the lack of parking problems

Mayor's initials:

Q The Sainburys car park is constantly full up which may deter shoppers from shopping in the town and bringing in much needed income

A This was agreed but unless land could be sourced there was little which could be done

Q Could the loading bay outside the former Cost Cutters be used for on-street parking?

A Disabled parking was planned for the former loading bay

Q There is so much litter in the town what can be done as it was giving a bad impression of the town?

A Volunteers are involved in litter picking plus EDDC carried out litter picking as part of its StreetScene service. Plastic Free Ottery was a group being set up to encourage the town to use less plastic and packing in general. Cllr Giles advised that the weight of plastic in the sea was greater than the quantity of fish

Q Are there any plans to develop the land between Thorne Farm Way and the Industrial Estate?

A There were no plans as far as the Council was aware. The land was in private ownership

Q Can the Council provide a walkway between Hind Street and Sainsburys?

A The Council had approached Sainsburys several times about this to no avail. It was understood that if a path was provided, a car parking space would be lost. It was suggested that the parishioner speak to Sainsburys direct as the walkway would be across Sainsburys land

Q Can the tourism website be updated/improved as it did not provide full information about the town and all the various businesses, activities and forthcoming events?

A The website was being worked on

13. OTHER MATTERS

A parishioner wished to express his thanks to Adrian (Curious Otter Book Shop) for all his hard work and effort in bringing the Gazette back to life which was a much loved local publication

14. MAYOR’S CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He advised after 11 years of being the Town’s mayor he would be stepping down but would still remain as a town councillor. He thanked everyone for all their support over the years. He invited everyone to join councillors for tea and coffee at the close of the meeting.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Mayor’s signature: Date:

Mayor’s initials: