

Completion took place on the purchase of the Land at St Saviours. This meant we were now in a position to proceed with the proposal to build a footbridge over the river

June

Although a fairly quiet month negotiations were ongoing on the proposed footbridge and the proposal for this council to take over the spare land at the Bowling Club, also the acquisition of the Convent building.

July

In July a new Cllr (Vanessa Hudson) was co-opted to represent West Hill Ward. Cllrs were busy in the campaign to save the Tipton St John Post Office from closure. The Council also resolved to approach EDDC to discuss the possibility of taking back The Old Town Hall which was a building that was given to this town and the Council believe it should be transferred back to the resident's ownership

August

This month we were proud to host the BBC programme "Any Questions" presented by Jonathon Dimbleby. This was a huge success with the hall at the Kings School full to capacity. It certainly put Ottery St Mary on the map and a letter was received from the BBC thanking us for arranging a most successful event.

September

September saw the council make the unanimous decision to attempt to purchase the Convent and this was after over 2 months consultations with various bodies.

October

This month it was agreed that should we be successful in the purchase of the convent building the Police would lease a section from us and open up a new station with a front office for the public.

A Pedestrian Crossing count took place by StageStruck to see if a permanent crossing would be justified.

November

After months of negotiating we at last exchanged contracts for the Convent building

The beginning of the month however, saw a lot of hard work following the disastrous floods in the Parish that took place on the 30th October. The housing estate at Thorne Park bore the brunt of this freak storm. A word of praise for the residents who worked together as a community to help each other. It was a pleasure to work with them and I would add that 6 months on there is still a lot of hard work ahead.

December

This month we were pleased to receive confirmation that we had been successful in obtaining a grant from DCC from the proceeds of the sale of Exeter Airport. This amount was £45,000 to be used to build a new road access at The Bowling Club

January

In January the council agreed in principle to take responsibility for a section of land at Colin Tooze. This was to try to kick start the SkateBoard/BMX Project.

February

This month saw Cllr Claire Wright join this council and I look forward to working with her in the coming months.

As we had made good progress with the Convent Building we opened it up to the public in order that they could have a look at the new council offices. This was a great success with almost 300 people attending.

March

This was the first full meeting of the council at these new offices. The move from the old office completed. I am sure that once we have the Police in situ and the remaining offices occupied the town will see the benefits of the council purchasing this property.

Mayor's initials.....

The Mayor concluded with the good news that land at the Bowling Club in Strawberry Lane had now been returned to the council and will be used for the benefit of the community.

6. REPORT ON THE PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP (P3) CO-ORDINATOR)

Councillor John Harding explained to the meeting that he had been in post as Co-ordinator since July 2008. He explained that the Parish Paths Partnership was government funded working with Land owners to improve local Rights of Way.

Currently there are 90 paths in and around Ottery St Mary Parish and he paid tribute to the 8 walkers who all advise of problems when walking these paths.

Councillor Harding said that the flooding had caused excessive problems and Footpath 46 still remained not fully opened. However he was positive that in the coming year the east side will be assessable to walk.

7. REPORT FROM TOURIST INFORMATION MANAGER

Mrs Phyllis Baxter, the TIC Manager gave a resume of what is promoted within the Tourist Information Office in Ottery St Mary. She highlighted The Tar Barrels, the Coleridge connection and Parish Church and the work within the media to promote all that the Ottery St Mary Parish has to offer.

Phyllis mentioned the many organisations in the town. A full copy of Phyllis Baxter's report is attached with these minutes.

8. REPORT REGARDING OTTERY IN BLOOM BY THE CHAIRMAN

Sarah Clarke the Chair of Ottery in Bloom asked for new members to join the Ottery In Bloom committee as membership was now very low with only three active members. Support is urgently needed especially as Ottery will be entering the South West competition in the coming year. She also hoped that there would be a Private Garden competition again in 2009.

Sarah Clarke paid tribute to Otter Nurseries, John Maybery and the Kings School Brownies, Guides and the Rotary Club do undertook the watering once a week who had given so much of their time and support.

9. REPORT FROM THE ALLOTMENT GARDEN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The new Chairman – Mr John Rogers introduced himself to the meeting and gave apologies from the outgoing Chairman who was unable to attend. Mr Rogers's interesting report is attached with these minutes.

Before the start of the Financial Report the Mayor, Councillor Dobson presented the Cheques that had been previously awarded to varying organisations in the Parish. These are listed below:

Ottery and District Men's Forum, Ottery and District Help Scheme, Tipton St John Community Hall Trust, Out and About, Vision OM, Coleridge Pre School Playgroup, Ottery and District Later Life Forum, Ottregians Over 60's Club, Alington Parish Church Council, Ottery In Bloom, Ottery St Mary Twinning Association, Ottery St Mary Heritage Society, Ottery St Mary Joint Guide & Scout Committee, Tipton St John Tennis Club

10. FINANCIAL REPORT 2008 -2009

The Treasurer, Councillor Lewis gave his financial report and said that in 2008/2009 income had exceeded projection.

Councillor Lewis said the Convent building had received funding from the Public Loans Board towards the £462.500. However, it was hoped this would be greatly reduced when Hill House was sold.

Mayor's initials.....

However, the Devon and Cornwall Police would be joining the Convent building in the summer. £100,000 had already been received as payment of rental in advance

Councillor Lewis pointed out approximately £55,000 had been spent on refurbishing the Convent building and he paid tribute to councillors who had undertaken works themselves in their own time to keep the costs as low as possible.

Taking back land at the Bowling Club had incurred some legal expenses but the Council was confident in the development of the site.

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Q.A question was raised about the narrow footpath at North Street and what was going to be done about it as this matter had been raised previously by the resident.

A. Councillor Dobson said that Devon County Council had been made aware of the ongoing problems responding that the council would persevere to obtain a safer pathway for pedestrians.

Q. A question was raised about the footpath link from Ottery to the Otter Nurseries and why this had not been implemented.

A. Councillor Giles responded that initially it was agreed by the applicants and all parties that this footpath link would be part of the Otter Nurseries application. However, it was discovered by the planners that in fact Otter Nurseries did not own the land that the footpath would have been built. In the interests of road safety this matter was still being pursued.

Q. The matter of a Bus Shelter in Butts Road was raised.

A. Councillor Dobson said that certainly this may be achievable. This would be looked at by the council.

Q. The question of the new improved waste collection was raised as a concern. It was felt there was no allowance for small houses. Also the green sacks were left on pavements and could be blown away.

A. Councillor David Cox who is the Portfolio Holder at East Devon District Council said that leaflets had been given out introducing the new service which explained what the public had to do. In roads where wheeled bins were too large green gull-proof sacks were being provided. Councillor Cox also said that there would be a Public Road Show in Devon and this will be in Ottery St Mary on Saturday 9th May between 10am - 4pm so members of the public can ask for advice and help.

Elli Pang thanked the Town Council for the support that had been given for the Skate and BMX Club to provide this asset for the young children of the parish.

Dr John Pilsworth of the Heritage Society thanked the Town Council for their support of the society.

12. MAYOR’S CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor, Councillor Dobson thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and also the councillors and staff who had supported him in the last year.

Councillor Dobson mentioned Quality Council status which had been delayed owing to the Power of Well Being legislation being withheld by the Government. He had now attended a Course as had both Clerks.

Councillor Dobson mentioned that two planning applications would be imminent for two leading supermarkets namely Tesco and Sainsburys.

Mayor’s initials.....

Councillor Dobson said how much the Council was looking forward to the opening of the Police Station and he concluded by inviting everyone for refreshments where they would have a chance to speak to any of the Councillors.

The meeting closed at 08.45pm

Mayor's Signature

Date -----

Mayor's initials.....