



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Bratton Fleming Village Hall on Wednesday 16 May 2018 at 7.45pm.

Present: Cllrs F Benbow, Mrs N Catmore, Mrs P Kellaway and M Prowse.

In attendance: 8 parishioners, Parish Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs B East, M Huxtable, Mrs L Miller and T Shapland

2. Approval of Minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Parish Council Chairman's Report

2017 - 2018 has been a period of both elation and deflation. The positives included:

The acquisition of the community building and the relocation of the village stores, thus realising the highest priority of the Neighbourhood Plan initial survey. I would like to thank Cllr Prowse for all his hard work on this matter and without whom the project would not have happened.

The second positive has been the continuation of the Composting Group and the grants they have made possible, which continue to provide a life blood to the community. I would like to thank Terry Shapland and all the volunteers.

We now have an air ambulance landing site within the village thanks to the efforts of Cllrs East and Mrs Catmore.

The negatives all stem from areas that are beyond our control and stem from a lack of funding at the national and local levels which are impacting on our schools, the composting group and our roads.

Red tape and grant claim refusals are having an adverse effect on the Neighbourhood Plan and have forced unnecessary delays.

I would like to express my thanks to my fellow councillors, our ward and county councillors as well as all those who have contributed to the meetings throughout the year.

5. Presentation of Parish Council Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2018

Financial balance sheets were circulated to councillors and those present.

The Clerk reported that the council's finances continued to be very healthy, with a closing balance of £34000. The year had been unusual, due to costs relating to the new Community Building, and the Air Ambulance landing site light. Both of these projects had been financed through grants from the solar park, and other sources.

6. District Councillor's Report

This report is just a brief note of the highlights of events at North Devon Council that have impacted on the community of Bratton Fleming over the last 12 months, and a few more local issues.

The Local Plan Inquiry re-convened in January and I sat in to hear much of the debate. The main areas of debate are around the Govt's insistence of each local planning authority having a 5-year housing land supply – and this was being challenged by some housebuilders. There is no issue over the Bratton Fleming allocation nor the chapter generally but these challenges just delay the adoption of the whole Plan. Fortunately, up to now, the Council has been able to resist housing applications in poorly related locations in Bratton. The Inspector had recommended some minor changes that have now been advertised and the consultation period concluded. The Local Plan should now be formally adopted in June.

Ward Boundary Changes proposed by the Boundary Commission have been challenged by the North Devon Council. I chaired a working group to help find consensus and a revised scheme was agreed by full Council in January and these were submitted to the Boundary Commission. These revised boundaries put forward by North Devon still show Bratton Fleming Ward likely to stay as is with the addition of Kentisbury and Trentishoe, this solution is common to all proposals to date, making a ward of 8 parishes including Goodleigh. The final recommendation from the Commission shows the addition of Kentisbury alone.

Village Toilets – I reported in February about a proposal to remove the NDC grant aid to Parishes and Village Halls who open and maintain village toilets for public use was being put forward to the Executive in a proposals paper. Fortunately, members thought again and decided not to proceed. The £600 grant to our Village Hall is now safe for this coming year.

Fly-tipping around the Parish has been an increasing problem throughout the year - both domestic rubbish and some building waste materials. There have recently been 3 successful prosecutions of those responsible – one unfortunately from the village.

Council Tax and Parish Grants – Council Tax levels at all levels have increased for the first time in a number of years – this is really a result of a reduction in Central Government funding. At the Budget meeting earlier this year I was successful in challenging the reduction (it had been proposed that the Parish Grants would be reduced by 50% in 2018/19 and then disappear the following year altogether). My proposal was carried to reinstate the Parish Grants at 100%. This will mean that Bratton Fleming will not lose the £2 per elector grant so the £1800 grant from NDC is safe for this year – and makes up almost 14% of the Parish Council's income.

Village Projects remain a priority for me and am pleased that the Community Councillor Grant Scheme is safe for another year. Although just £1000 per year across my 6 parishes it can help make some schemes get off the ground. I was happy to help with some of this funding towards new signs for the shop 'car park' and a new sign being made for the Millennium Green. In the recent past this fund has also helped with topping up the play park, equipment for the Youth Club and the Scouts.

Millennium Green – the Trustees have agreed a number of repairs highlighted in the ROSPA annual report and Terry Barrow has made some temporary repairs and has made a start on long term upgrades. There is a ring-fenced sum of 5k funding for additional play equipment to improve the play area. The problem of dog fouling has been raised on a number of occasions during the year – a problem that is common to all open space in the village including the Recreation Field, Community Woodland and the Sports Club. The Trustees are reluctant to penalise all users and hope that a concerted campaign of education can help solve the issue. The Parish Council intend to lead on this and the involvement of the Dog Warden will be sought again.

The White Hart planning application is still under consideration by the planning officers but a decision is now imminent. I am sure the Planning Authority will take into account the views of the Parish Council and the numerous letters sent in from local people. The delay was due to the reluctance of the applicant to provide additional information on noise/odour and any potential attenuation together with a *proper* Chartered Surveyor's report on viability etc., the former has now been submitted. Devon County Council have objected on highway terms to these proposals. The earlier appeal is still outstanding – but we should hear any day.

The Village Shop has been a priority for me and has taken up a good deal of my time. It was a pleasure to lead the scheme and I would like to thank all those (paid and unpaid) who helped make the project flow! Now the car park has been surfaced it really sets the shop off.

Funding of the Community Building (Shop) was made possible by the 50K community funding package I was able to negotiate from the Cape Solar Park and the extra 5k from the 4 Cross Way Solar Farm. The capital used by the Parish Council in this vital community initiative will be replaced over the years by the rental income from the new shop.

Finally, just to say I have enjoyed working with colleagues on the Parish Council over the last 12 months and look forward to the final year of the Council as we head towards the Elections in 2019.

7. County Councillor’s Report

No report received.

8. Reports from Village Organisations

1. Composting Group

The balance sheet for the past year was circulated to those present.

An FOI request had been submitted to DCC asking how their revised costings for green waste disposal had been calculated. A response was awaited

It was agreed that the Parish Council would support the Composting Group as much as possible to ensure its long term future.

2. Other matters raised.

None.

There being no further reports the Chairman thanked everyone for attended and closed the meeting at 8:05pm.

Signed

Chairman

Date