**Minutes of The Yarcombe Parish Council, Annual Parish Meeting,**

**held on Monday 20th May 2019 at 8pm**

**In the Jubilee Hall, Yarcombe**

**In Attendance:**

Cllrs C Stone, L Pidgeon, A Long, D Barnes, D Little, C Ford, S Vining, C Vining, S-J Martin (Clerk & RFO)

Members of the Public present – 28

**1. Welcome by Incoming Chairman, Cllr Clive Stone**

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to our 2019 Annual Parish Meeting. Thank you for joining us, it is lovely to see so many of you here and I would like to introduce you to your new Parish Council who have been confirmed as the 9 people who put their names forward for the nine vacant places.

Yarcombe and Marsh can consider themselves fortunate in that at a time when so many parishes are struggling to find people to serve as Councillors, that we had someone fill each one of the vacancies,

We have Vice-Chairman, Steve Horner who will also be the Blackdown Hills representative and Longcroft Meadow Charity Trustee, Tony Long, Planning, David Barnes Highways and Marsh and Lesley Pidgeon who will also become a Trustee of the Charity.

We are delighted to see the new Parishioners, Caroline Ford and Sean Vining who will jointly work on the Parish Paths, David Little, Road Safety and Policing and we are particularly pleased to welcome our youngest member of the Council, Charlotte Vining, who will become the Jubilee Hall Representative and as at half an hour ago, myself as the new Chairman.

I would also like to say a big thank you to Sarah-Jane Martin for continuing to be our Responsible Financial Officer and Clerk. Also, thanks to our retiring Councillors, Nick Randle, Tony Wiggins, Maggie Tomkinson and Sue Parris.

**2. Apologies**

Received from Nick Randle, our retiring Chairman who is on holiday, Tony and Heather Newman, John Brookes, Matthew Tomkinson and Paula Stone.

**3. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2018**

The Chair asked if the Minutes of the last APM, which have been on the website for 12 months are a true record. This was confirmed and they were duly signed.

**4. Police Report**

We received our latest monthly report from PCSO Darren England as follows:

“I am now the only PCSO for our area which includes the town of Honiton and Rural. I was not expecting this until nearer March 2020. I will keep the reports coming at the beginning of each month and when I can, I will try and attend a few meetings”

**5. Retiring Chairman’s Report**

First of all, my apologies for my absence at the Annual parish meeting this year. As you meet Wendy and I will be in St Petersburg, half-way through a Baltic Cruise. My congratulations to the newly elected Councillors and to the new Chairman, whoever they may be.

**Yarcombe Parish Council** has been increasingly proactive in recent years. Longer term projects such as the Neighbourhood Plan and the Affordable Housing Scheme, spearheaded by the Community Land Trust have begun to show good results while the Campaign to preserve the Yarcombe Inn, remains ongoing. Meanwhile the Council has engaged in a number of initiatives aimed at preserving or improving our community’s wellbeing.

**Young People**

In April of 2018 we held a meeting for the people in the parish and about a dozen turned up to the meeting for discussion with hotdogs. The Young people asked for more play facilities and more sports facilities. They also suggested a community garden. While the council has looked at potential play parks in the past we have been in touch with local schools to see whether there was a potential partnership for additional sports outlets There are sports pitches at other villages locally and Stockland and Upottery have teams which our youngsters may be able to join. The Council also discussed the possibility of a Multi-Use games area (MUGA) surface (soft rubber) being funded behind the village hall and approaches were made to the village hall committee to assess this.

**Environment and Greenspaces**

The Council also focussed on adding to the maintenance of the Layby and the triangle of grass which is the closest thing we have to a village green. During the summer the Parish Council arranged a village tidy up day in this area, supplemented the grass cutting provided by the County Council and paid for some additional maintenance of the area. New planters have been placed near the bench and lookout to enhance this public open space. Particular thanks, go to George Pidgeon who on our behalf tidied up the bank below the A30 where a highways scheme had paid for trees to be planted and which had been left to go wild since the scheme was implemented. We are now seeking to have the wooden fence repaired to bring this area back up to the quality amenity space that it was intended to be. Our work on footpaths also continued during the year.

**Roads**

It is well known that the Roads in Devon, in common with the rest of the Country have fallen into a state of disrepair. Yarcombe Parish Council has campaigned with varying degrees of success over the years for improvements and repairs to roads in the Parish. However, in the past year we have seen the A30 resurfaced in a number of places through the village, the long running saga of Clift Hayne lane has been resolved with a very high-quality rebuilding and other areas such as the Lane between the village and Crislands have been resurfaced. There were significant drainage issues in the Rag Lane section of Stockland Road and these were also addressed following our intervention. We are pleased with progress that has been made but we recognise that there are still some significant problem areas remaining.

Members of the community have expressed concern about the speed of vehicles going through the village and particularly the well-known motorbike run which focusses on the quality of the turns as the A30 goes through the village. We have been looking at ways of funding, either solely or in partnership some automatic radar speed warning signs that detect and show where speed limits are being breached.

**Planning**

We have once again been proactive in responding on behalf of the community to planning applications within the parish and we are particularly well served by our experienced and dedicated planning chairman.

Following the adoption of our neighbourhood plan we had a meeting with East Devon District Council Officers following a large number of applications for large agricultural buildings. While we wish to support our farming community we are seeking to ensure that large developments do not have an impact on the AONB by using landscaping, planting and sensitive use of materials to ensure that such developments blend into the landscape as far as possible. EDDC indicated that they would support our efforts to seek conformance to our adopted plan.

**Armistice Day**

The Parish Council was pleased to be able to facilitate a particularly local focus relating to the end of the First World War. The Council took delivery of a plaque which was given to his family following the death of Tommy Batten in the Great War. We were pleased to mount this plaque and pass it for safe keeping to the Baptist chapel where the Batten Family had worshipped.

The Parish Council also supported the Thank You 100 celebration and Councillors participated in the organisation of the event.

**Community Land Trust**

After many years of work we were pleased to learn that the Yarcombe Community Land Trust had secured a site for affordable housing in Marsh. They have also secured funding for some initial site development work to take place prior to the formal design and construction phases. This progress is very much to the credit of those involved in the Trust.

**Police**

**T**he Parish Council has been concerned at the reduction in the level of interaction with the Police due to reduced police staffing. We have been in correspondence with the Police on a number of occasions on various topics including a letter to the Police Commissioner herself. During the year the Council also took delivery of some neighbourhood watch signs for the villages.

**Yarcombe Inn**

Due to the commercially sensitive nature of the Yarcombe Inn campaign it has not been possible to give much detailed information as the matter has progressed While nothing may have seemed to have been happening, behind the scenes the Parish Council has been working hard to move things forward.

We are conscious of the need to ensure that we do not burden the community with an asset which is worth less than the money committed and that business or businesses that are run from there are viable while the Community retains one of its last hand most important hospitality/ retail centres in the heart of the parish. We are also conscious of the need for good stewardship of the funds that have been raised.

At one point this year we thought that we were within reach of a solution, but unfortunately that initiative did not go through. The Parish Council took stock at its April meeting and the New Council will need to decide its next steps in the weeks and months ahead.

**John Salter Award**

The Parish Council was pleased to initiate this award in recognition of a person who exemplified the spirit of working on behalf of the community. The first winner of the award Miranda Gudenian was a very popular choice who herself exemplifies that spirit community which is so crucial to the success of communities like hers. As the list of those nominated shows we are fortunate to have so many people quietly working away on our behalf and I am sure that the spirit of John Salter will live on through this award

In conclusion I think it is clear that our Parish has been punching above its weight in a number of areas and I think the community can be confident that its Parish Council has their best interests at heart. I would like to personally thank Lesley Pidgeon, Maggie Tomkinson, Sue Parris, David Barnes, Tony Long, Tony Wiggins, Steve Horner and Clive Stone for all their support and wise council and Sarah Jane Martin who has been a dedicated and increasingly effective Parish Clerk.



Nick Randle OBE

Chairman 2017-2019, Sunday 28th April 2019

**6. Planning Report – Cllr Tony Long**

Briefly, we get planning notifications of an application online from EDDC which gives us 14-21 days to process the application.

It takes 2-3 days initially for the application to become live. I pass the application around to my fellow Councillors who will also view the application online.

Next, a site visit is arranged with the Councillors and notify the applicant, where possible.

By submitting an application, Parishioners are inviting the Parish Council to view their property externally and to submit our views on it and the effect the application will have.

Our vies are called “material considerations” and not just waffle we may come up with on a Saturday afternoon. It is EDDC who will make the final decision within their permitted remit and our Parish Plan.

We are trying to get agricultural buildings to blend in more sympathetically with their surroundings. It is taking a while and our Parish Plan is helping. EDDC are starting to take our views more seriously – we are getting somewhere with the aim for darker roofing, green side cladding, tree screening and light baffles etc.

Between April 2018 and 2019, we have had 26 applications of which 23 were full applications, 1 was agricultural, 1 was LBC and 1 outline. Of the 26 applications, 1 was temporarily withdrawn, 5 refused and 20 went on to be approved, some with conditions.

**7. Roads Report**

There was a very bad road in our area, Clifthayne Lane which was impassable for many years and last year it was repaired which changed it from the worst in Devon to the best road in Devon. Outside Contractors were brought in to repair the road. There are another 1 or 2 lanes that need attentions but overall, the roads are in a better state this year, than this time last year.

Potholes have to be 4 inches deep and the size of a diner plate before they will get repaired and we have emphasised surely it would be better to do them before they get this bad.

**8. Parish Paths Report – Maggie Tomkinson**

The work of keeping the footpaths clear and usable continues to be high on the agenda. Though there has been a bit of a hiatus in larger works on styles and gates etc the footpaths have been cleared and signs renewed. There will be more improvements to be made over the next year with repairing of styles and at least two new double gates to be installed.

The problem of litter on the paths continues to be a challenge. On walking some of the paths you can easily pick up at least one large bin liner full of rubbish. This is sad for the appearance of our parish, bad for the environment and in some cases could be dangerous for the livestock on the land. Sarah Jane has found some signs and it is my hope that the council will be able to purchase these to be put on the gates on some of the most walked paths. As well as this we hope to find signs to remind walkers to shut the gates behind them.

I would like to remind everyone that if you notice anything that needs to be improved on a footpath please do be in touch with the new councillor in charge of footpaths who I am sure will try to find a solution. Generally, the parish or the district council can fund any replacement of gates or improvements to footpaths, though bigger improvements can take some time to undertake.

Especially this year I would like to take this opportunity to mention by name all the path wardens who take time to walk and report on the paths every year:

David Barnes, David and Thelma Clark, David Clithero, Janice Evans, Tony & Helen Long, Helen Matthews, Heather Newman, George Pidgeon, Graham Wadey, John Woolham, Tony Wiggins, Carol Wyatt.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say what an honour and privilege it has been to serve on the Parish Council. I would especially like to thank my fellow councillors for their great support and for the time and commitment that they all give voluntarily to support this Parish.

**9. Yarcombe Community Land Trust Report**

Since the Parish’s last Annual Meeting, we have been successful in securing a possible site in Marsh for the development, subject to planning permission, of Six Affordable Homes in our Parish.

The need for these six new homes was established in July 2018 by a Parish Housing Needs Survey, carried out on our behalf by Devon Communities Together, which confirmed the findings of the previous survey carried out in 2012. We held a Community Meeting in September 2018 to discuss this possible scheme and received overwhelming support for it.

Subsequently we applied to Homes England for a sizeable grant to enable us to employ an Architect and the necessary Specialist Consultants, so that a Feasibility Study could be undertaken for the proposed site. Our Grant was approved in early December 2018 and the necessary legal agreement was eventually reached late in March 2019, with our initial stage payment being made before the end of the financial year.

We immediately moved on to appoint our Architect and the various specialists, including ecologists, arborists etc. The ecology survey can take up to 12 months to complete because of nature’s different seasons, fortunately, with the support of the Parish Council we were able to commence this survey in January and are hopeful that it can be concluded by October 2019.

In the meantime, the other specialists have commenced their work and with our Architect are beginning to develop a possible scheme. There, is however, much work still to be undertaken as and when the ecologists allow the necessary access.

Our first Project Meeting has recently been held with our Architect and a Housing Association, who may eventually operate the homes on our behalf.

To summarise, we are pleased after our long search, over several years, to now have a possible site, unfortunately the planning process nowadays is such that much investigation has to be undertaken & reports submitted with any application. It all takes time, but we are moving forward and are hopeful of a good outcome later in the year when another Community Meeting will be held to discuss the scheme in greater detail.

Finally, we would like to formally thank Yarcombe Parish Council for its continued support of the Community Land Trust’s work.

Philip Bearne MCIH

Chair, Yarcombe Parish Community Land Trust Ltd 17 May 2019

**10. Charity Report**

The Longcroft Meadow Parochial Charity receives rent from the Longcroft Meadow which has been distributed since the 16th century and continues to be. The funds have historically been distributed to the Intelligent Poor whereas now this is interpreted to those in higher education and some grants have been provided to older people within the Community. We work with the Church to over sea the charitable giving.

**11. Yarcombe Inn Summary – Cllr Clive Stone**

We are pleased to confirm that the Yarcombe Inn is under offer, as can be seen on Rightmove, where it says SOLD Subject to Contract on a GTH brochure. The local prospective purchasers, when contacted, asked for us not to speculate on the sale, due to their signing of a legal “Non-disclosure Agreement”.

This local couple and other parties have been seen at the pub on several occasions in the last few weeks. Due to this negotiation being private and commercially confidential, we do not wish to jeopardise the negotiations and therefore the PC do not wish to take questions or have an open debate on the subject this evening.

We do however look forward to learning that Contracts have been exchanged and we wish the purchasers every success with the Yarcombe Inn. Thank you

**12. District & County Councillor Reports**

No Report was received from our County Councillor and the following was received from our out-going District Councillor, Paul Diviani:

Dear All

As there is not a lot of substance to report other than repetition and the ghastly shenanigans afoot nationally, regionally and within the Conservative Party, I feel I should draw a line under my 20 years representing Yarty.

I have appreciated the many friendships I have made in that time and will always have your best interests in mind.

For the sake of clarity, I was deselected by the Conservative Executive as a result of a personal vendetta from standing in Yarty and had to find another ward away from Tiverton and Honiton with a disastrous personal result.

Wishing you all the best for the future and if I can help in any way (without interfering!) I am at the end of a call.

**13. Incoming Chair**

Little did I think when we arrived in Yarcombe nearly 5 years ago that I would be asked to be Chairman of your Parish Council. I am very pleased to be able to serve such a community spirited Parish and following in the footstep of Nick Randall and long serving Chairs, including Lesley Pidgeon and David Barnes

What you have heard so far are reports of what happened in the last year which are very positive and encouraging. What I would like to now is look forward to the time head. In Nick Randle’s first year as Chairman, he identified seven Council priorities and I would like to continue focussing on the same topic headings:

**Highways** – Please continue to report road safety, drainage and flooding issues as well as potholes, individually to the Highways website (<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>). The more people that log a pothole, the higher up the priority list it will go.

**Village Facilities** – Let’s hope the Yarcombe Inn will soon be re-opened and well supported

**Planning** – nearly every application site is visited.

**Environment** – Please let us know what you would like to see done to maintain and improve the Parish and our surroundings.

**Community Engagement** – An excellent turnout tonight!

**Governance and Resources** – Our Clerk, SJM does an excellent job in ensuring that we are compliant.

As Nick Randle has stated, we are punching well above our weight and we are proud and pleased we are here to serve you.

**14. Residents Forum and Open Discussion**

* Ken and Jane Jones thanked the Parish Council and the Clerk for getting their fence fixed by EDDC.
* Jon Stockwell enquired who the note in the Yarcombe Inn Summary was from. Cllr Stone responded that it was his statement and there is a non-disclosure agreement, we must be careful, and we would rather step back.

Cllr Horner enquired as to who had done the Legal Agreement. Cllr Stone responded it was Mr and Mrs Woods and the prospective purchasers.

* A Parishioner enquired about repairing the edges of roads and Cllr Barnes responded that if the local famer’s cut back their hedges more, the large tractors and lorries could stay more in the centre of the roads and not damage the edges.
* Clifford Sochon also asked if the parish Council could ask the Council to repair potholes properly and that a pothole should be cut out, sprayed with bitumen, asphalt inserted, rolled and sealed. Instead, sub-contractors shovel in asphalt and drive over it with their van. Please could we put some pressure on the Council? Additionally, he asked about the edges of the roads to which David Barnes stated it is difficult as vehicles have got a lot wider.
* Barbara Salter reported that at the first Terrier racing gate, there is a problem with the culvert which runs under the road and the edge of the road is giving way.
* Jon Stockwell mentioned the tree which has died on the grass area on the layby and f the Parish Council wish to replace it, he would be happy to do so. Cllr Stone thanked Jon and said the Parish Council had discussed it and would like to take it to the next meeting.
* Miranda Gudenian advised that for the 40th Anniversary of the Terrier Racing, Cathy Derryman produced a portfolio of the event and it was handed around the village and has unfortunately gone down a black hole. The Community would very much like to find it so could we all think who we last gave it to so we may be able to track it down

Cllr Stone asked if there were any more comments or questions to which there weren’t.

**15. Announcement of the Nominees of the John Salter Award with the presentation to the Winner**

Cllr Stone started the announcement with the history of the award, having been initiated last year which tells a story of Community Spirit in the name of John Salter and Barbara Salter is here tonight to present the award to John Carter.

Barbara said to John Carter “In memory of John, I give this to another John”. John responded that the best thing about the award was the kiss form Barbara!! John also said that “there are a great many people in the village who work their socks off so please do not forget them. John was a great gentleman, friend, worker and collaborator with me”

Cllr Stone mentioned the other award which John had won a few years ago which was Yarcombes unsung hero award about 5 years ago.

Later in the evening, John advised he would like to give the £100.00 Parish Council monies for the award to the Young Farmers who had helped push the Village Hall to another level.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.