Minutes of The Yarcombe Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 8pm, held remotely via Zoom

Firstly, Cllr Stone welcomed everyone to the meeting

**1. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2020**

Cllr Stone asked if everyone was happy for the Minutes from last year’s meeting to be signed. There were no comments or objections, and these will be signed by Cllr Stone outside of the meeting.

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

Between 1st May 2020 and 1st May 2021, we have had 35 planning applications:

31 Full

2 Listed Building Consent

1 Change of Use

1 Agricultural

Of these 35 applications:

14 we are awaiting a decision on from EDDC

21 have gone on to have permissions granted from EDDC

There is a current flurry of large agricultural buildings covering yard areas and slurry and silage areas, to help prevent foul water run-off. We are working with the local authorities, over some period of time, to encourage these large agricultural buildings to be a bit more sympathetic to their surroundings and not just “we’ve always done it like this”.

This is being done by encouraging darker roofs, toning down the concrete side panels, possible landscaping, and light baffling. It is an ongoing challenge.

With regards to farm and residential applications - material considerations, the surrounding areas and impact of the village, environment, and possible neighbourhood issues, are points and observations we relay to EDDC and our District Councillors with the view to them intertwining conditions of permissions when they are able to, as they have criteria set by central government.

We do spend a considerable amount of time between us to make a considered relevant response to the application. We also have been having to hold skeleton site meetings and/or virtual meetings / discussions due to the current situation.

Tony Long, Yarcombe Parish Councillor (Planning)

Cllr Stone thanked Cllr Long for his report and said that with Tony’s tact and diplomacy, we get attend to them all very well.

**3. Roads Report - Cllr D Barnes**

Cllr Barnes reported that on the whole, the roads are not too bad. There was a lot of money spent between the A303, past the mill and up to Birch Oak Farm. There are still a few potholes, but the roads are getting better, but more could be done. Cllr Barnes also noted the works the Highways Agency had done on the A30.

Cllr Stone thanked Cllr Barnes and agreed that it would be good to see continued improvements.

As an Addendum by the Clerk, concerning potholes, only those potholes deeper than 40mm and wider than 300mm and which have vertical edges will be repaired. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/>

**4. Parish Paths Report**

Cllr Vining reported that all issues concerning the footpaths had been dealt with as they came in and with Cllr Ford getting the Handyman (Phil Holness) involved in footpaths works, they are all maintained. Most issues that needed attending to have been addressed.

Cllr Little advised he has walked them all at least three times this past year and they are all in good order and some signs have been painted.

As at this time last year, we can all report problems with a “Public Right of Way” through the following link: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

**5. Yarcombe Community Land Trust – Cllr S Horner**

Cllr Horner reported that progress was slow and steady. The Planning Officer is minded to grant permission for the 6 houses which is a step in the right direction. However, there are Section 106 conditions within the legal agreement stating what can and can’t be done and this will take approximately 6 months to resolve.

The Lawyers have negotiated with the Landowner and confirmed the Option to Purchase the Land is in good order, but it is all horribly hard work.

Cllr Stone thanked Cllr Horner for all his work and acknowledged it has been and continues to be a drawn-out process.

**6. Charity Report**

Members of the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council have been unable to meet during our last Financial Year due to Covid restrictions.

An advert was placed in the Yarcombe Voices asking if anyone would like to apply for a Student Grant in 2020 but no-one came forward.

The Charity balance stands at £2,179 with no distributions having been made during the year.

We hope that we shall be able to meet again during 2021 when safe to do so.

**7. Chair – Cllr C Stone**

**Councillor Clive Stone, Chairman’s Report**

Once again, I would like to have been able to say, ‘Welcome and thank you to everybody for attending the Annual Parish Meeting’’. However, as we are still allowed to conduct business via remote meetings, we have taken the opportunity to hold this meeting remotely for the safety of all concerned and this is my report to you all for the last 12 months.

Another memorable year for Yarcombe and Marsh

As well as thanking all the Councillors for their efforts, contributions, and teamwork over the last year, I would also like to thank on behalf of the Parish Council and the community, all the volunteers, organisations, local businesses, and our key workers who have continued to respond to the circumstances, restrictions and ongoing changes brought about by Coronavirus.

It is a wonderful tribute to you all that you step forward and help your community. Thanks also to all those who were already volunteering and who have done so for many years. All your actions, sacrifices and thoughtfulness are very much appreciated by us all and help make our community what it is and now that the situation is improving, a return to a more normal way of life is now in sight.

My thanks and appreciation to Steve Horner my Vice-Chairman and for all his work and guidance, not only on behalf of the Parish Council, but also for his invaluable work for the Community Land Trust and not forgetting Philip Bearne for his experience and knowledge that has been so helpful in our aim of securing Affordable Homes in the parish. To Tony long for his knowledge and skill in dealing with planning applications, to David Barnes for looking after our highway matters, to Sean Vining in his role of the footpath coordinator assisted by Caroline Ford, to David Little for the upkeep of the defibrillator as well as the church clock and to Leslie Pidgeon for all her work over many years and Charlotte Vining for her as role as the Jubilee Hall representative and involvement with the children’s playpark.

My particular thanks also to our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Sarah-Jane Martin, for all her work and support during the year and for ensuring the Parish Council is continuing with its responsibilities during the periods of lockdown and restrictions. She has now setup our new Parish Council website, which ensures that we are GDPR compliant. All Councillors will also soon have dedicated e mail addresses.

Thanks also to Iain Chubb our County Councillor and our District Councillors Colin Brown and David Key for their support

Also, a thank you to all of them for their teamwork which has greatly helped not only myself as Chairman, but also the whole working of the Parish Council and all on behalf of the community of Yarcombe and Marsh.

The Yarcombe Inn was closed due to the coronavirus lockdown and is now under new ownership and awaiting new tenants. In September, the Asset of Community Value (ACV) was reinstated on the Yarcombe Inn for a further five years. The Flintlock Inn has been popular for takeaway meals and has now reopened for business. Our parish church has just had its first service and the Baptist Chapel services recommence on 16 May. We look forward to village events being resumed and using our newly redecorated and refurbished Jubilee Hall.

As always village news has been collected, distributed, and supplemented by Miranda and communicated through Yarcombe Voices. Many thanks from all of us to Miranda and her team for this helpful, informative, and reassuring work, especially e voices bulletins, of which we have now received eighty in just over a year.

The Parish Council have continued with their priorities, including:

Highways - There has been major resurfacing work on the A30 at both ends of the village and Birch Oak Lane, repairs to Crawley Bridge, a welcome increase in pothole repairs and roadside drainage maintenance. This has been due to the reporting of issues, our communications with our Neighbourhood Highways Officer and the availability of their resources to undertake the work. Please keep reporting issues on the Devon County Council ‘Report a Problem’ app, <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>. It does produce action and results.

Doing what Matters is a Devon County Council initiative and is currently being taken forward with Yarcombe parish being one of a number of pilot parishes. Further maintenance and improvement works are planned, and we are looking forward to being more closely involved and we are anticipating the Dragon Patcher visiting several locations to improve our roads.

Yarcombe has recently seen the introduction of a speed awareness monitor which has been instigated by Councillor Chubb. This device is shared between several parishes and will be moved around and hopefully reduce the occurrence of speeding through the village.

Affordable homes - A planning application has been submitted, a tremendous achievement after nearly three years of detail work relating to our chosen site with our appointed team of consultants and now awaiting formal outcome from EDDC.

Village facilities and Environment - the defibrillator is in full working order and the upkeep and appearance of the village has been improved by the continuing work of Phil Holness. The Yarcombe Inn Benefit Society has now been renamed as the Yarcombe Community Benefit Society, initially to use for the playpark facilities currently under consideration and we look forward to this being progressed. This Society also has the facility to be used for future community projects.

Parish Precept – Having worked hard to contain any increase for this next year, we were delighted to receive from Councillor Chubb’s Locality Budget, the funds for our new website which meant that our precept requested from EDDC was the same figure as last year. Due apparently to an adjustment relating to the number of Band D properties the published figures show a 0.5% increase.

Looking forward now to the coming year with encouraging health data, it is again very appropriate to thank all the volunteers, especially those helping in the lockdown, for their continuing work in the community and hope that when these restrictions are fully lifted, their work will be reduced but gratefully remembered for many years to come. We can then build upon all this good work once the restrictions in public places have been removed and when we all feel safe and comfortable, I sincerely hope that Yarcombe and Marsh can hold a special celebration event.

I have a few thoughts on how we might commemorate this event and if you have any ideas, I would be pleased to hear from you.

From later this week Parish Councils are no longer permitted to hold remote meetings. Our Standing Orders have always reflected the minimum legal requirement, that we hold three meetings per year in addition to the Annual Parish Meeting. Yarcombe Parish Council have normally held ten meetings a year but have now accepted a proposal that this year we will hold the minimum of three meetings and that these will be held later in the year when hopefully the threat of another wave of Covid 19 has been dismissed and we all feel safe and comfortable with holding indoor public meetings again.

Please be assured that the administrative workings and functions of the Parish Council will continue as normal, and you are all encouraged to raise matters as usual with our Parish Clerk.

In the meantime, stay safe and well and we look forward to the time when we all feel confident that we can safely hold Parish Council meetings in public once again.

Thank you

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

Cllr Stone advised we are delighted to announce the nominees who are :

Helen Parris and Debbie Carter for painting the Jubilee Hall

Judith David and John Middleton for assisting the Community during the Covid pandemic and co-ordinating the support teams

Mary Smith for doing so much in a quiet way from putting together the Yarcombe Voices and parishes Paper, organising cooks for the community lunches, locking the church, and keeping the Pastoral care Team together – the unsung hero of Yarcombe for decades

These nominations had been discussed in our April meeting and now Cllr Stone asked for a proposal to who the winner is. Cllr Horner proposed Mary Smith and Cllr Ford seconded plus all the other Councillors agreed. Cllr Barnes added Mary has done a lot for the village throughout her life and Cllr Ford added it is lovely Barbara Salter had nominated her too

Cllr Stone added the Parish Council were pleased to initiate this award in “recognition of a person who exemplified the spirit of working on behalf of the community”

and long may this continue and that this year, it might have been appropriate to give the award to everyone for their contributions, efforts and community spirit which all helped in keeping us safe in adapting to our imposed situation

So, from the Parish Council a very special thank you to all the very worthy nominees

We look forward to presenting Mary Smith with the Award at the next opportunity.

Cllr Stone thanked everyone, very much indeed.