

# BRANSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held in the Branscombe Village Hall on  
**THURSDAY 21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2015 at 7.00 p.m.**

---

PRESENT: Cllrs. White, Bass, Pike, Hall, Lambert, Cox, Cllr. Knight (DCC), Cllr. Pook (EDDC) and Mr Johnson (retiring Chairman).

APOLOGIES: Cllrs Willmington.

NO. OF PUBLIC: 15 and PC Speariett

CLERK IN ATTENDANCE: Chetna Jones

Chairman welcomed everyone.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2014, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and confirmed that they were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

## POLICE REPORT

PC Speariett confirmed this was his last meeting as he will be retiring in June 2015. He informed the public of the crime levels for the last year and urged that all suspicious activities be reported by calling 999. PC Speariett thanked members of the Parish and had enjoyed working with the whole of the community.

*PC Speariett left the meeting.*

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman reported over the course of the last year the Parish Council has met around 16 times with some additional meetings to deal with the various road works in place through the winter.

During that time we have reviewed and commented on 34 planning proposals.

It has been a year of substantial challenges and changes for the village:

The severe storms of 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014 caused serious damage to the foreshore and the beach chalets. This problem was then compounded by Natural England who refused to allow any repair work (as had been done annually for the last 50 years) and who seem content to allow the chalets, Sea Shanty and car park to be washed away. Unfortunately a common sense approach to resolving these issues by the relevant agencies seems to be impossible to date in the face of an insistence on sticking to an outdated strategy which never envisaged storms of this severity.

In May 2014 EDDC indicated that they could no longer continue to provide the public toilets on the beach. The resulting uproar led to over 7,500 people signing petitions against this closure and the result was that EDDC finally agreed in August to fund the toilets until April 2015 and meanwhile negotiate a handover to Anthony Sellick who had agreed to continue maintaining them. To date I am not aware that this handover has been completed.

Following on from the severe flooding which had occurred around the Fountain

Head and adjoining properties in previous years, Devon County Council and the Environment Agency put together a £140,000 scheme to reduce this flooding risk by some major drainage work. This commenced in Nov 2014 and was completed by Easter 2015 after a number of problems delayed the project.

At the same time SWW spent over £150,000 on replacing the water main from Higherlands Farm to the Fountain Head as part of their mains rehabilitation strategy. The completion of this work was also delayed by several months due to unforeseen problems.

The 2 major road works in the same area did cause major problems and disruption for residents, local businesses and visitors, but as most people accepted they were necessary and hopefully will prove their value in the future.

The final major change I would like to highlight was the closure of the Post Office and shop in December 2014. An unfortunate event which leaves the community considerably poorer.

Finally thanks esp. to Councillor Jim Knight and Cllr Geoff Pook for their ongoing work and commitment on behalf of Branscombe, to the local police force and especially PC Steve Speariett for their ongoing efforts, to all the local parish councillors and of course especially to the Clerk, Chetna Jones for all of her time and effort in ensuring that the parish council runs as smoothly as possible.

Concerns were raised about the closure of the Post Office and whether there were any plans to open another in the village. Members of the public were informed that there was a possibility of one in the village hall but this was yet to be finalised.

FINANCE REPORT: Clerk reported as follows:

**BRANSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Statement of Income and Expenditure for year ending 31 March 2015**

	13/14	14/15	
		£p	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Balance carried forward	12515	15765.57	
Precept	7000	6712	
Donations/Sponsorship	155	1000.5	
Bank Interest	5.7	5.53	
Council Tax Grant	334	288	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£20,009.70</b>		<b>£23,771.60</b>

income includes donation from Community Council for Devon for War Memorial in commeration for WW1 and allotment association (£45)

**EXPENDITURE**

Council Running Costs	1172	1163.55	
Staffing Costs	3072	3047.64	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£4,244.00</b>		<b>£4,211.19</b>

Running costs include Insurance, subscriptions, maintenance of war memorial

and gardens and computer costs, There was no audit costs.  
Staffing costs include salary for 6 hours per week, PAYE, National Insurance and Payroll services

**Net Income/Expenditure** **£15,765.70** **£19,560.41**

Funds will be needed for website to meet new transparency and accountability legislation  
Funds will also be needed due to ensure roads remain safe and accessible following the cutbacks imposed by Devon County Council

### CLLR KNIGHTS REPORT

Cllr Knight confirmed that pot-hole repairs were on going and that the flooding scheme had cost £190,000, over £50,000 more than originally estimated.

Devon County Council will need to save £110 million due to reduction in funds from central government. This has led to many day centers closing, review of library and public transport services, highways and education needs. Cllr Knight confirmed that the local school was doing well and that funding was available through locality budget for up to £1,000.

Cllr Knight also confirmed that roadside parking at Bennets Close and Parkfield Terrace was Highways property and did not belong to individual home owners. It was not possible to put a disabled parking space at Bennets Close.

A member of the public asked if echelon parking was possible at Bennets Close and Cllr Knight requested that he write to him via the Parish Clerk in order for him to look into it.

### CLLR POOK'S REPORT

There have been three main themes running through EDDC in the last year, managing service provision with ever decreasing budget from central government, the move or not of the council HQ from Sidmouth and the new Local Plan together with the 5 year land supply. During the year I have continued to serve on a number of committees including Development Management (planning), Audit and Governance, Budget Scrutiny, Fees and Charges, Refuse and Recycling and LED management. I have also represented EDDC on the AONB.

Last year the decision was to move to Sky Park following an initial attractive offer for the EDDC business centre site in Honiton. This subsequently fell through making the earlier option of selling the Knowle and developing a combined site in Honiton more attractive. During the year DCC decided to give up their tenancy of the Exmouth Town Hall offices owned by EDDC which provided another option, a two site office, a significant satellite office in Exmouth and a main office in Honiton alongside the existing EDDC Business Centre. This option combined with the sale of the developable portion of the Knowle was agreed at full council on 25th March. On this basis EDDC will be moving to new offices in Honiton in 2017. The plan will require some short term funding until the Knowle is sold. The overall project is to targeted break even against Knowle sale receipts with an upper budget of £2.2m. The new offices will enable cost savings over the existing buildings with an overall benefit over 20years in the region of £6.8m

Council budgets have been tight with government grants reducing and general costs increasing. The council has however managed to maintain the general level of service without increasing the council tax through a mix of cost reduction, increased income and access to a number of additional government grants and funding related to the development of Cranbrook.

2013/14 2014/15 Change from prev yr 2015/16 Change from prev yr

£000 £000 £000

General Government Funding - 5,560 - 4,766 -14% - 3,983 -16%

Where does the money come from?

Total spend £28.0m (+ £30m on benefits funded from subsidy £19m HRA funded from rents)

Government Grants £4.7m (17%)

Council Tax £6.7m (24%)

Fees charges res £16.6m (59%)

Where does the money go?

Waste and recycling 22%

Leisure and Countryside 17%

Property, Economy and Building Control 7%

Planning and Strategic Development 11%

Environmental Heath, Licensing & Private Sector Housing 6%

StreetScene 14%

Central services/Other 9%

Council Tax and Benefits Admin 6%

Car parks 5%

Democratic representation 3%

The council policy is to continue to pursue the transfer of assets to towns and villages where the transfer will not put an increased financial burden on the town or village and will enable some cost saving to the district. The overall aim of this is not just cost saving but the transfer of responsibility and control to the community that uses the assets. This could be very exciting for Beer as the major asset is the beach and control of this could enable the community to direct how it is used and managed for the benefit of the community.

The local plan is now hopefully in its final stage, in July last year the inspector returned the plan requesting more information, in conjunction with adjoining districts, regarding market housing requirements. A report was produced in March this year (SMHA) which identified a demand for East Devon over the next 18 years of 17100 or approximately 950 per annum. The majority of the additional housing will go to the West End and Cranbrook together with the main towns of Exmouth, Axminster, Honiton, Seaton and Ottery St Mary. Villages and other rural areas are no longer be required to have a “quota” and will be able to expand as required and supported by the community to maintain their vibrancy and sustainability. The plan has been returned to the inspector and will be subject to further consultation before final examination.

One big issue that has been resolved is the proof of a 5 year land supply as required by central government. Until recently the council was unable to prove it had a 5YLS +20% as required and was in some instances not able to resist developer’s applications to develop new sites even though they did not have community support. With the 5YLS now in place the council will be more able to resist unwanted development or development not providing affordable homes. Whilst this has not been an issue for Beer it has severely affected other communities.

Neighbourhood plans are an integral element of the local plan especially in directing the development of small towns, villages and rural communities. There are 18 parishes in East Devon producing a NPs.

Branscombe issues; the graveyard relocation is now finalised from the councils input and should be available for use in the near future.

The reinforcement of beach chalet protection is ongoing and the intention is to tie the specific permission into a general permission to reinforce the defence to maintain the green and carpark for social and economic reasons.

The transfer of the toilet on the beach to private ownership with covenants to ensure it is maintained for public use is progressing and should be completed in the next few months.

A member of the public asked if the grassed area at the top of Parkfield Terrace could be converted to accommodate car parking. Cllr Pook confirmed that this area was owned by East Devon District Council and that they would review this matter but the cost of doing this would only be justified if it were for the benefit of the housing association rather than private home owners. The members of public suggested that parking for Buckland Close could be lower which would help alleviate the problem higher up in Parkfield Terrace. It was also suggested that 3 additional spaces could be made available once work on the wall was completed.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTS

Reports were given by the following:

PROJECT  
PRE-SCHOOL & PTFA  
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  
WOMEN’S ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  
BRANSCOMBE PLAYERS  
SENIORS to be renamed 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday afternoon club  
CRICKET CLUB

Reports were also provided electronically by:  
VILLAGE HALL  
BRANSCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Chairman thanked the representatives for their most interesting reports which reflected Branscombe Parish as being a vibrant community.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Refreshments followed.

Signed.....

Date .....