

PUDDLETOWN AREA PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013-2014

It's hard to believe that a full year has passed since I became Chairman. It certainly hasn't been a year without event.

In June we welcomed 2 new councillors- Peter Walton, representing Burleston, and Wayne Lewin, representing Puddletown. Both councillors have made welcome new additions bringing new ideas and new perspectives to the council.

Unfortunately we are about to lose 5 councillors and, with them, considerable knowledge and expertise. Nigel Pitman from Tolpuddle due to the pressures of work and Jan Hopkin, also from Tolpuddle, due to ill health. Jan has been on the council for more than 7 years and has led the planning working group, she has served as deputy chairman and represented us on various other committees throughout her tenure. Her knowledge, focus, and clear sightedness will be sadly missed and we all wish her well for a very speedy recovery. Nigel joined the council in 2010 and soon after also became chairman to the Tolpuddle Parish meeting. We thank him for all his hard work and wish him every success in the future. We are also losing Mark Piper from Athelhampton. Although only joining us in 2011, Mark took to the role of Transport Officer with much enthusiasm and could often be seen collecting litter between Athelhampton and Puddletown, far beyond the call of duty.

We are also losing 2 past chairman; Chris Leonard and Stephen Buck. Both have done so much for the council during and after their long terms in office. There have been many changes during their time on the council, not least of which include a new by-pass, new pavilion, new school and a new doctor's surgery. Remarkable achievements for such a small Parish. Their considerable knowledge, expertise and wise council will be sorely missed and hard to replace. On behalf of the Parish I thank you both sincerely.

County Councillor David Crowhurst retired after giving us considerable support behind the scenes and Andy Canning took his place. We all look forward to working with Andy and thank him for the support he has given us to date.

One of the many notable positive issues arising during the year was the likelihood of The Parish Council being split into two representative bodies, Puddletown and Tolpuddle. I am pleased that, after a lively debate, the people of Tolpuddle agreed to continue to be represented by one area parish council. There will always, inevitably be differences between the two main parishes but far better to work together collectively towards a positive future.

Other achievements in the year include the hedge laying at the Puddletown Recreation ground in the Autumn. Thanks go to Cllr Bridget Legg in ensuring that the majority of the work could be covered by grant monies and the Recreation ground looks so much better for the work.

The bus service, once again, came under threat but this time we were unable to keep the full service although a great deal was maintained. The bus no longer goes to Poole every day but the Dorchester and Blandford services have both been saved, for the time being at least.

The Neighbourhood Plan issues still abound but there has been much progress. Whether this finally results in a full blown plan will only be known over the course of time. An information day held in April produce considerable interest and to date 20 questionnaires have been returned. The results

will be considered at the Puddletown AGM on 20th May. Thanks must go to Ann and Amanda for the considerable time and effort put in to get us to this stage in the process alone.

Despite much talking we are still awaiting Superfast Broadband. Although work has started elsewhere it has still not made it to the villages. Hopefully we should all be on line by 2015-2016.

In August it was agreed that a review of the existing recreation ground play area in Puddletown was needed. The potential for this area includes a new enlarged play area with the possibility of incorporating a skate/wheel park. This work initiated by Wayne has moved to a new phase and Rob Belbin and his team under the watchful eye of Vice Chairman Alan Shepherd now have this in hand and the council expect to consider proposals in the coming months.

Orchard Meadow, under the expert guidance of Cllr Martin Cooke, continues to thrive and indeed goes from strength to strength. This year Cllr Cooke was able to acquire over £12000 of grant monies to upgrade the basketball area and install a petanque area. Our thanks are extended to him and his team who keep the site so well maintained.

Cllr Drake has, as ever, been busy overseeing our rights of way and, as always, has done a wonderful job in keeping these areas open to us for our continued enjoyment. Thank you Phil for such a great job.

As ever, special thanks are extended to both Pat and Irene Stockley who look after the Recreation Ground and Pavilion and make all our visiting caravanners feel so welcome and at home. It is down to their efforts alone that the caravan area is doing so well year on year and the Recreation Ground is so well looked after. Thank you both.

One of the most consistent complaints that we receive is that of speeding traffic. In November 2013 two surveys were carried out; one in Tolpuddle and one in Puddletown. The results were surprising. In Tolpuddle, of the 827 vehicles recorded during the week, 95 exceeded 35mph and the average speed overall was 29.5 mph. However In Puddletown, during the same period 1072 vehicles were recorded, 418 were travelling between 35 and 55 mph and the average speed throughout the week was 34.1 mph. Despite their complaints it is still obvious that most offenders are local drivers.

Of the unresolved issues clearly the prospect of Industrial Wind Turbines being erected overlooking Burleston and Tolpuddle is giving the most cause for concern and, although the number of turbines is considerably less than originally proposed, there is no doubt that there will be much unhappiness around should this development ultimately succeed. It is up to the Parish Council to support it's parishes with the best means available.

This report is but a small precis of the work that continues in the parish. I have enjoyed my first year as Chairman and realise that in a small thriving environment there is still much to achieve. Thank you all for your support.

Finally my thanks and those of the full council must go to our Parish Clerk Amanda for keeping us all on the straight and narrow by keeping us up to date on all local issues and keeping our financial house in order. Another very good year. Thank you.

Stephen Baynard
Chairman: May 2014