

## Puddletown Parish Meeting

### Annual report 2017-2018

This is my fifth report as Chairman of both the Puddletown Parish and Puddletown Area Parish Councils and I can truthfully report that this has been the most fulfilling year to date. This report specifically covers Puddletown matters and my longer report will cover overall Area Parish matters.

The most pleasing aspect of last year has been what I consider to be one of the most important aspects of community life in a rural community and that is the desire by many in the community to not only get involved in the community but to achieve great success and fulfilment in doing so.

My first example has to be the successful opening of the new and substantially improved play park facilities at the Puddletown Recreation ground. The hard work by too many to name came to fruition when the new play park was opened by Mrs Brymer in June 2017.

It goes without saying that none of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication by many in fundraising and the outstanding generosity of Viridor in making this project finally emerge from the ground.

It was a wonderful day when the park opened with people of all ages enjoying the new landscaped grounds, play equipment and seating. Since then the playpark has been well used both on a daily basis as well as bigger events such as the party in August and successful Easter Egg hunt in March of this year.

The play park project has involved and has been supported by a wide range of community groups within Puddletown and the surrounding areas. The First School and Preschool have also given support, predominantly in planting over 150 bulbs last Autumn which looked just magnificent in Spring this year.

Fundraising and other work still continues in order to maintain and further enhance the play area and unfortunately there have been a couple of occasions when damage and theft has occurred.

Going forward the play park project team are still working hard to get plans approved and funding for the future phase of development of the skate park and additional equipment still needed in the play park.

The next area I wanted to highlight is the potential development of a Community Cafe. The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan identified a number of requirements for the village as communicated by people within Puddletown. One of those identified was to have more facilities where people could meet and socialise

and where community events could be facilitated. Specifically, there was a demand to have a cafe in the village. On this basis the idea for a Community cafe was born. With the approval of the Parish Council a steering group was formed to guide and further progress this idea. This has been the first of I hope many practical outcomes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

To date a series of 'pop up' cafes have been held to test the concept. What is even more pleasing is the involvement of other community actions such as Community artists and stalls, as well as traditional cafe fare. These have been successful.

In addition, a partnership with the Community library has been discussed.

The next step in this venture will be to hold further cafes throughout June of this year to further test the concept before reporting back to the Parish Council and agreeing the next step.

As mentioned above the Neighbourhood Plan process has already identified a number of areas where greater community engagement has been successful. My report last year was a little sceptical of the desire to see a Neighbourhood Plan being delivered from inception to completion, but this year has seen massive progress, not without hurdles, to a position whereby a feasible Neighbourhood Plan could be delivered by 2020.

The first part of this year has seen the Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan focussed on collecting and collating the needs and requirements of the people of Puddletown. This was based on a 2016 questionnaire to all households and has continued with 3 public meetings, 4 public events as well as a Facebook page and a website. So far, excluding the questionnaire over 200 people have participated.

As part of this work a call was put out to land owners and house developers who were considering plans for house development in the parish of Puddletown. 5 land owners/developers came forward. Their first assessment of their desire for development totalled over 300 dwellings, far more than that desired by the majority of the people in Puddletown.

On the basis of the evidence collected the Working Group established by the Area Parish Council has developed a document that sets out a vision, principles, objectives and actions to guide the Neighbourhood Plan. This addresses a range of issues, from the rate of required housing development through to issues related to housing mix, environment, traffic, transport and security.

From the beginning of 2018 onwards, the focus has been on preparing a draft Neighbourhood Plan. Two supporting documents prepared by neutral consultants are in preparation to underpin the draft Neighbourhood Plan; a Housing Needs Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment. These documents will

provide an important basis for the Plan.

Once these have been completed the preparation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan can be completed, and the Plan starts the various bureaucratic steps it has to follow towards its completion. It is currently planned that the Neighbourhood Plan will go to referendum in 2020.

This is a long, but I hope you will agree, necessary and pertinent process if we are to control and protect the future development of Puddletown. The steering group work tirelessly towards a successful end target and should be thanked and commended for taking on this valuable project.

It is not my aim to go through all the issues that the Parish currently endures. Some issues such as speeding, and parking continue despite best efforts to resolve them. Currently, the subject of dogs being exercised in the public recreation area is causing some anger but I'm hopeful this can be resolved quickly to everyone's satisfaction.

Finally, I would like to thank all Parish Councillors and the numerous community volunteers for making Puddletown such a desirable place to live.

Stephen Baynard

Chairman

15<sup>th</sup> May 2018