

**Minutes of East Down Parish Annual Meeting  
on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at East Down Village Hall 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs Mr. R. Tarr (Parish Council Chairman), Mr R. Fry, Mrs E. Kempf, Mr. K. Phillips, Mr. M. Smith and Mr. M. Wright, County Councillor Ms A. Davis (arrived later in the meeting), District Councillor Mr J. Tucker, Mr. M. Mant, Mrs A. Mant, and Mrs M. Done (Clerk)

Cllr Mr Richard Tarr welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Apologies:** Mr. Peter Bunch, Mr & Mrs J. Stout

**2. Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 had been accepted and signed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes.** None

**4. Chairman's Report.**

I will start my report by thanking all councillors for their work in this past year on behalf of the parish. It has been rather a steep learning curve for my first year as chairman of the Council, but I give special thanks to our parish clerk Margaret Done who has gently pointed me in the right direction and stopped me doing anything too foolish! Margaret is the person who writes letters and emails to the various bodies ensuring that the council's views are accurately represented – not always the easiest task.

This year we welcomed two new Councillors, Martin Wright and Malcolm Smith, replacing Michael Mant and Sandra Price. This leaves us with one vacancy for another Councillor.

Unfortunately no vice chairman was appointed last May and this position remains vacant. While this is not an onerous position, it does give the Council security of succession as we appoint a Chairman for a two year tenure, and my period as Chairman runs out next May.

I am also grateful for the support given to me by our District Councillor Joe Tucker and our County Councillor Andrea Davies.

East Down suffers from being rural and in consequence the general broadband coverage is poor with speeds offered being well below the national average. In consequence many parishioners have taken advantage of a new Broadband service being offered by Wild West Net and this has enabled free wifi to be installed at the Village Hall. Further details are on the Parish website at [www.eastdownparish.co.uk](http://www.eastdownparish.co.uk).

Last summer, with the assistance of the Town and Parish Fund we were able to buy a table tennis table for our thriving village hall. This facility is being used every week and I believe that they now have two table tennis tables.

Early this year we received funding from Devon Public Rights of Way to purchase a Council Strimmer and some secateurs for general path clearance. These have been purchased and will no doubt receive use this summer.

We have been able to utilise further Town and Parish fund monies to buy a second Council Strimmer. This has been purchased and will also no doubt prove most useful.

I believe that the Parish website continues to be a useful resource and I would just like to remind people that the latest minutes can normally be found thereon.

We have had some challenging and controversial planning applications during the year which have given rise to a number of healthy discussions from within the Council and from the general public. We believe that the Council has fairly represented the views of the parishioners when making recommendations to the Planners although some of the applications which were refused (in accordance with the wishes of the local population) are still going through the appeals procedure with the Planning Directorate. I would like to thank Martin for his untiring work on behalf of the parish in understanding and advising on the various applications for large wind turbines.

Overall it has been a most interesting first year and I hope that the next year will run as well.

A vote of thanks was recorded for the Chairman.

**5. Financial Report.** Parish Council bank balances 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 totalled £4528.64 and included P3 money of £1085.31 (with a VAT reclaim of £45.93 still to be transferred). The Public Works Loan Board balance owed is £878.37.

## 6. **Parish Paths Report** – Mr. Richard Tarr.

Unfortunately our Parish Paths co-ordinator James Stout resigned at the last AGM and this position has been temporarily filled by the Chairman. I would like to thank James for his sterling work for many years keeping our paths in good order, assisted by the County Paths Warden Simon Houghton.

Following our annual path survey carried out early this year, a number of matters have been highlighted for improvement and we have obtained funds to carry out some of these improvements, including:

6. a new gate on footpath 2 – this work has been allocated and we are awaiting results.
7. Some step and stile work on footpath 1 – we are in discussion with the P3 warden Simon Houghton as to the best way to approach this
8. A new gate on footpath 15 to replace a difficult to negotiate stile. Again we are awaiting the outcome of discussions with the Warden.

We have also received a grant of £235 to cover the ongoing general maintenance of the paths such as strimming and cutting.

We are expecting some more stick-on footpath signs and waymarks to be delivered.

Special thanks go to Malcolm Smith whose photographic submissions for the annual survey were most useful and showed clearly that a picture is indeed worth a thousand words.

I would like to see a new paths warden appointed and would like to ask for volunteers.

## 7. **Any Other Business.**

- **Pine Charity.** Bank Balance £78.06.
- **Gully clearing** – Mr Mant reported on the recent gully clearing in Churchill. The works were not undertaken on the correct gullies and the deposits removed had been left nearby and would most likely be pushed back into the gullies by large vehicles or by the rain. Councillor Tucker volunteered to check this out with the relevant department.
- **Village Hall Signs** – no positive progress to date. Highways reported that there are no official signs for this concern. It was suggested that a Slow sign be painted on the road at the entrances to the Village Hall car park. Councillor Ms Davis said there is no money available for signage but agreed to make further enquiries. It was noted that since Highways have been contacted regarding this grave concern should any accident occur the responsibility would not be to the members of the Parish Council or the trustees of the Village Hall.
- **Future hopes for East Down Parish.** Following discussion it was suggested that a regular email of relevant information to residents would be helpful. This would require agreement of email addresses by residents for this purpose and it was proposed to enlist the help of Sandra Price via the Village Hall newsletter and the monthly Coffee Morning. Clerk to contact Sandra. The information which was thought to be of benefit and/or interest could include items such as grants available for home insulation, community oil scheme and notification of planned road closures.
- **Himalayan Balsam** – A request to the National Trust for a visit from the Warden or gardener to advise on the best way to eradicate Himalayan Balsam plants from the hedgerows. The Probation Service to be invited to quote for this work.

County Councillor Ms A. Davis distributed her May report and then left the meeting. County and District Councillors' reports are covered in Parish Council May meeting minutes.

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

District Councillor Tucker then left.