

MARHAMCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Tuesday 27 April 2021

An online meeting of the Parish Council was held via ZOOM video conferencing on above date at 7pm.

Councillors present: Chair Cllr J Walter, Vice Chair Cllr T Perry, Cllr R Bray, Cllr S Butler, Cllr P Crum, Cllr T Edwards, Cllr F Hunt, Cllr L Kerr, Cllr S Proudfoot, Cllr I Waterhouse.

Apologies – None.

Also in attendance The Clerk, Mrs E Hawkins. Cornwall Cllr N Chopak.

12 members of the public were present.

Minutes

Copies of the previous year's minutes held on Tuesday 21 May 2019 had been circulated. It was resolved to approve the minutes. Proposed Cllr Perry. Seconded Cllr Butler. Unanimous. The Chair Cllr Walter signed them as a correct record.

Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

Guest Speaker: Mr Peter Green – Chairman Marhamchurch Village Shop.

This Report describes the activities of the shop in 2020 during which time the current committee were elected to build on the excellent foundations laid by the previous Chair and Secretary.

Fundraising has not been possible over the period in common with many village activities and events. However, our trading position has meant that this has not had a detrimental impact on the finances of the shop.

Trading Activities of the shop have been dominated by the environment created as a result of the Covid pandemic. Threats and opportunities may well describe the situation in March and I am pleased to report that we have coped extremely well with the former and benefitted from the latter to the credit of all concerned.

It was not the start envisaged by our part time manager, Philip Newberry, who started work in January. We are so pleased that he has brought with him many years of expertise in supermarket management in transforming our little shop into a thriving, well-stocked and attractive business. As we entered into lockdown at the end of March, many locals started using the shop more regularly in preference to queuing in the larger supermarkets. We were also able to accept telephone orders, often delivered by volunteers from the Marhamchurch Emergency Team and Phil did a great job in maintaining supplies of essentials.

The pandemic has clearly underlined the importance of our shop to the community and the importance of our more local suppliers and seasonality in the produce sold. We aim to maintain these distinctives into the future.

In June we were granted a licence to sell alcohol which has boosted sales and footfall in the shop. Over the summer season we recorded record sales which, together with the 'Covid grant' awarded by Cornwall Council, have enabled us to make improvements to the premises as well as employing a much needed part time stock administrator in Fiona Hodges.

Volunteers continue to be the mainstay of our trading operation and in March many were forced to shield from the virus and, although a few have been able to return, many continue to be unavailable to the shop. Since that time we have managed to recruit almost a whole new volunteer force and the effort that has been given to training the new recruits has been exemplary.

We now have a generally full shift pattern of regular volunteers who are enthusiastic and fun to work with despite the many operational changes and increased busyness over the period.

Our Committee, elected in June 2020, has set to work in the various areas of the shop for which they are responsible with great energy and initiative and the role of Chair has been more a conductor of the orchestra, rather than a chief instrumentalist (thankfully!).

It has been a time to move into the next phase in the development of the shop and we are so grateful for the hard work of each member of the committee.

The allocation of areas of responsibility within the committee has meant that we have created space at our meetings to discuss the wider vision for the shop within our community resulting in the attached document.

Future Plans are to maintain the increased footfall in the shop, post pandemic, and to continue to encourage wide-scale support from our village.

We are also planning to improve both the interior layout of the shop and the front area which will be paved under an awning and ideal for a sit down for coffee and cake!

Our aim is to be an integral and indispensable part of Marhamchurch village life, providing a hub of friendly service, activity and community for the benefit of all.

Chairman's Report

It has been an unusual year, yet so many positives have come from it.

We as a Parish Council are so grateful to the Village Shop - it has been the hub of the community, a place where parishioners have been able to talk to others and to be reassured, it's been a solace from isolation and from the beginning of the pandemic the offer to deliver shopping and help parishioners in so many ways has been hugely appreciated. So a huge and sincere THANK YOU to the shop and all their volunteers for their kindness, care and support. Also great thanks must go to Nicky at The Bullers, those at the Weir and Linda at the Beach House Shop who have offered Take-Aways and deliveries to our parishioners throughout this difficult time.

Not only have these local services risen to all the difficulties this year has brought, but our community has been fantastic..... within 24 hours of the first lockdown our emergency Plan was in action, the Parish was divided into 5 areas, with 2 couples in each area taking on the role of key contacts for help with shopping, collecting prescriptions and forwarding links to further help. A huge thank you must go to Geraldine & Peter Stemp, Sandra & Martyn Russell, Maureen & Jim Campbell, Geraldine & Andrew Gillies, Carolyn & Steven Scarff, Laurence & Julie Kerr, Miriam & Peter Green and Jennifer & Mark Ward who were the key contacts. Along with the many others who offered their help - they kept the community fed, happy and sane for the many trials that 3 lockdowns brought.

The village has certainly grown in beauty and friendship, our planters are about to spring into bloom and the primary schools gardening club with the guidance of Mrs Kirby have worked hard looking after the memorial planters and whilst we mention Marhamchurch School we were truly honoured to see the many remembrance poppy posters created by the pupils displayed in the shop window in November – thank you Marhamchurch School and Cllr Susie Butler who links in closely with them.

Our other village planters are cared for by Alison Stroudley, Teresa North-Lewis, Pat Underwood, Pat Mc Donald, Debbie Hyde and the Blewett family, a huge thank you goes to you all.

Mention must also go to Andy Walter and Peter Green for taking on the responsibility of keeping the church flag flying, to Neil Hobbs for repairing playpark equipment and to the Heywoods for helping with play park equipment welding and helping to sort a drainage problem in the cemetery,

To James Howard -Jones who completely restored the Village Hall noticeboard and Parish Council noticeboard and to Sandra (sorry I don't know your surname) who was looking for something to keep her busy and has taken on cleaning the village bus shelter and weeding around the church wall. A huge thank you goes to you all.

So this year's message (if you haven't gathered by now) is a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who has stepped up to supporting the Parish and I sincerely apologise if I have missed anyone.

So with our Parishioners working so hard, you might ask what have the Parish Council been up to?

We were unable to hold meetings in March and April last year due to the first lockdown but started the first of our first zoom meetings in May. Elly our clerk has been fantastic, not only in coaching us all through the initial trails of zoom meetings but for her continued hard work, patience, and advice throughout a difficult year with a young family at home for many months. Thank you, Elly, we could not be here without your amazing support!

Cllr Tom O'Sullivan resigned earlier in the year but we were pleased to be back to our full complement of 10 councillors in August when Sue Proudfoot joined us. Since May we have held monthly zoom meetings including two extraordinary meetings, one in September and the other in December.

We have dealt with 24 planning applications and appeals, and our decisions have generally been supported by the planning department. Cllrs Tony Perry and Tim Edwards have taken the role of viewing plans, visiting sites, looking into environmental and ecological factors, and giving feedback at meetings - has been very useful as not all the councillors have the time to visit sites due to their work commitments.

In November, the small Remembrance area was installed on the grass verge by Oak Cottage for crosses to be placed in and on Remembrance Sunday morning, Stan Willett from the British Legion, visited the memorial and played a recording of the Last Post, an impromptu moving tribute. During the morning wreaths were placed on the memorial - Cllr Paul Crum represented the parish council by placing a wreath on our behalf.

Cllrs Sue Proudfoot, Isobel Waterhouse and myself, have been walking our parish footpaths and from this we hope new signage will replace missing and damaged signs.

The Cemetery overseen by Cllr Tony Perry is looking lovely, a new area for cremations has been made and the drainage concerns have been addressed with the help from Cllr Rob Bray. Elly our Clerk has been very busy dealing with all the paperwork that links with the cemetery.

As councillors we regularly review policies (Cllr Laurence Kerr is a great proof reader) We have a close link with the Bude Area Network Panel which I or a fellow councillor attend. This is chaired by Cllr Nicky Chopak, our ward councillor for Cornwall Council. Cllr Nicky Chopak tries to attend all our meetings and is a valuable link with Cornwall Council giving us regular updates and taking our concerns to the relevant departments. We would like to thank Cllr Nicky Chopak for her hard work and support.

We applied and were successful in receiving Community Chest funding from Cllr Chopak's fund and we have bought new bins for the playpark and Revel field, flags for the church and litter pickers for a community project soon to be put in place at the village shop. We will also be buying paint for the play park fence once some damaged parts of it are repaired.

One of our big concerns is the speed of traffic through the village and the loan of a flashing speed sign on Helebridge Road and then Pinch Hill will hopefully give us some interesting data to look at next month. A Pedestrian on road, warning sign on Hobbacott Lane has been installed and we will continue to discuss ways to make our roads safer for walkers and cyclists. Through discussion Highways have improved the visibility from Helebridge on to the A39 and slow signs on the road have been painted, however we see this as the beginning of the project to make the A39 safer. The double yellow lines have been reinstated at Widemouth outside the Beach house shop and all the small signposts removed.

We also flagged up the poor visibility of white lines around the village and these have now been repainted.

The playpark overseen by Cllrs Fran Hunt and Susie Butler is regularly checked and mowed. Two new rockers, purchased with Community Infrastructure Levy money have replaced the damaged ones and new mulch is in place. Having bought new signage to follow Covid guidelines, the play park is now fully functional and very popular with the village school children. Cllrs Tony Perry and Rob Bray have helped maintain and repair equipment and Cllr Paul Crum has made a great job of starting to paint the fencing.

The Emergency Plan was put into action within 24 hours on the first lockdown and we were praised as an example of how a plan can work swiftly, effectively and efficiently. The Neighbourhood Plan team worked hard to get a

questionnaire out to all parishioners and Cllr Tim Edwards has worked hard to evidence the data. Unfortunately, lockdown halted meetings, with the ease of lockdown we hope to resume meetings and move ahead because we do believe this is so important for the future of the Parish. We are at present negotiating the purchase of an area of land previously used for allotments, with the aim to restore it to its former glory. We support the feasibility study which is being prepared to investigate the possibility of creating a safer cycleway/multi use trail between Holsworthy and Bude and we support Connect Budes railway initiative, in both cases we look forward to future discussions to develop alternative routes to create a more sustainable future for personal transport.

The Marhamchurch Parish Council website has recently been updated and is the place to find all updates, meeting minutes, contact for councillors etc. Please do look at it and should you wish to, contact us with your thoughts and concerns. Although the Marhamchurch Newsletter is not being delivered at the moment, please keep an eye for parish updates and posts on the social media site for the Marhamchurch Newsletter.

As councillors we all have our specialisms, yet we believe we work well together - we aim to listen, be approachable and do our best for the Parish. A huge thank you goes to all the councillors for all the voluntary time, care and effort that being a Parish Councillor involves and to Cllr Tony Perry for his valuable support as vice chairman. Thank you to those of you who have attended our meetings. We do value your input and although zoom meetings have kept us moving on, we would like to think that when it's safe to do so we can meet together again and welcome more parishioners to our meetings.

Citizen of the Year Awards.

The Chairman expressed heartfelt thanks to the recipients of the awards. As an award was missed last year, due to the pandemic, the Council agreed to award 2 this year.

One award was split between Mrs Hilary Foster & Mr Peter Hillenbrand for the years of commitment and dedication they spent working on the Village Shop.

The other was given to Mr Roger Blewett for all his years of dedication to Marhamchurch Village.

A huge and heartfelt thanks to all the recipients – we are so grateful to have such wonderful people supporting our village.

Informal Questions and Answers.

None.

Groups/Activities in the Parish

Reports from many local groups were on display on the parish council website, and available via email should anyone wish. Please contact the Clerk for more information.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm and was followed by the Annual General Parish Council Meeting.

Signed.....Chairman. Date.....