

## **2025 Chairman's Report to Annual Parish Meeting**

### **13<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

The past year has been a busy one for the Parish Council, and in particular our Clerk.

Access to information as to the work of the Parish Council is readily available from a number of sources. We have recently commissioned a new website and this is still currently being updated and developed with a lot of work from our Clerk. This has also meant that our email address has changed and we go from a **.org** address to a **.gov** address to comply with Government advice/directive. We have the Facebook site and we are grateful to other sites in the village which pick up and share entries. We have the three noticeboards around the village and then there is the bi-monthly magazine which is delivered free of charge to every household in the village. The magazine is put together and delivered by a dedicated team of volunteers to whom the community pass on grateful thanks.

These communications keep those in the village who are interested up to date with the detail but I will just briefly touch on some of the main things that have happened as a reminder.

- There should be twelve Parish Councillors but at present we only have eleven. Thankfully two new members have recently joined us, one being a new resident of Foxmill Gardens [Meadow Park] which is good. Another is from the community at Verbeer Manor. We now have a wider representation.
- The Precept has been set and there will be no increase in the Parish Council portion of the Council Tax. Although costs have risen the additional houses at Foxmill Gardens have 'taken up the slack'. All details are in the magazine and on the website.
- The skate ramp has been built in the Jubilee Field and a see saw replaced in the fenced area. An additional see saw has been added to Chestnut Drive Play Area and the additional equipment at Orchard Way has to be seen to be appreciated.
- David, our handyman for the past number of years, retired in January and Dean has taken his place and is already experiencing the variety of jobs from adjusting gates to sorting out moles in the Cemetery.
- A new grounds maintenance contractor has been appointed to look after the cemetery and the small fenced play areas. Verges, Jubilee Field and Orchard Way will continue to be looked after by the current contractors.
- There have been some improvements at the Cemetery with more wildlife friendly hedging planted and three trees which will create an area for ashes to be scattered where there will be no marked dedicated plot. An area of the extension will be planted up as a wildflower meadow until needed for burials.
- Volunteers started cleaning up the footpath out to the garage but could not finish it and Devon County Council promise that they have it in their program of works to finish it. Not holding my breath but continuing to blow at them.
- Councillor Jason Scott looks after the VAS machine and produces monthly records which are available on the website. The Police are now exploring the figures to see if there is a pattern which would allow them to justify enforcement

action. It is concerning to note the amount of vehicles going through the village on any given day.

Many organisations continue to arrange events around the village and hopefully we will hear from them as to their efforts on behalf of our community. There has been a definite move to trying to look after those in the community who may be elderly and/or lonely with events being arranged. Thank you to all the volunteers who make this happen. I am sure that more support will be welcome.

One sad aspect in our community is that we seem to have developed a group of inconsiderate dog walkers in some areas with them not clearing up the mess left by their dogs. Also a few seem to think that the restriction to keep dogs on leads in play areas does not apply to them personally. The matter is being addressed by the District Council Enforcement Team and it could cost £100 if caught. We would rather have clean streets and trouble free play areas please with no need to catch anyone.

The Parish Council continues to liaise with MDDC on issues which will affect our residents and we were able to prevent them putting in place an order to stop people being able to have dogs off leads in the Victoria Recreation Area. We continue to pursue a number of planning matters but sadly we can only represent and invariably be ignored.

Our Christmas lights were extended a little further up Silver Street this year and once again we are grateful to those local businesses who made a financial contribution to their provision.

The referendum as to whether or not to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan was held at the end of February and the result was that 90% of those voting voted in favour of the plan and it will be formally adopted by MDDC in April if all goes well. The downside is that only about 10% of those who could vote did.

I finish by expressing my personal thanks for the time, effort and support given to me by my fellow councillors and particularly our 'support staff' of Debbie our Clerk and John our ever faithful man in the yellow jacket litter picking and keeping a safety eye on all the play equipment as he does his rounds. When he is not about his duties are covered by Graham.

Please look after and support our community. Making it work for us all is the responsibility of all not just the few. This applies even to the keyboard warriors on Facebook who may one day say something positive!