

Linkinhorne Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 11 April 2011 at 7.00pm
Linkinhorne Parish Hall, Upton Cross

Minutes

Apologies: Rev Marilyn Elliott, Cllr Gilbert, Zena Jones, Rev Margaret Oxenham

Present: Roger Cullingham (PRoW), Cllr Daniel, Cllr Dilworth, Paul Doney, Chris Hale (Upton Cross PTFA), Roger Halliday (Duchy of Cornwall/self), PC Hatt, Paul Hayman (RMVH/self), Cllr Hearn, Louise Hopes (Link/self), Cllr Hopes (Chairman), Cllr Hordley, Catherine Horrell, Cllr Horrell, Michael Horrell, Terry Leech (WestCountry Housing), Cllr Masson, Cllr Martin, Cllr Moyse, Sam Pearce (skateboard group), Debbie Sharp, Peter Sharp, Cllr Terrett, Mike Todd (history group), Cornwall Cllr Turner (St Ive Ward), Cllr Wooster (Vice-Chairman)
Julia Todd (clerk)

Minutes of the Meeting of Monday 12 April 2010 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, and signed by the Chairman.

Chairman's Report

My predecessor described the previous year as one of comings and goings. This year seems largely to have been one of consolidation as we learn to live with our new unitary Cornwall Council and its struggles to adapt the varied practices of the former District Councils to a single cohesive model. It has meant an enormous outpouring of communications, mostly electronic, and at times an apparently endless battle to discover just which of these had any relevance to us.

News of the financial cut backs to local government can have escaped no one. While it is to be hoped that these may reduce the output of electronic rubbish there is no doubt that they will increasingly impact on the services that we have come to expect from our County Council. Recent issues over such as libraries and maintenance of roadside salt bins are just a start. I am sure that more and more we will be faced with having to manage our own services or lose them altogether. As a small rural parish we feel ill equipped to undertake much of such work on our own but we will have to be alert to the issue and be prepared to face whatever comes. In the meantime and ever conscious of personal household budgets we were pleased to be able this year to hold the amount of the precept that we claim from you through the Council Tax to the same figure as last year.

On a more cheerful note it has been a pleasure to see how the allotments (new only last year) have flourished and to delight in the real spirit of community that has developed among their holders. Indeed I understand that steps are in hand to create two further plots on the site to meet on going demand. It was also a great pleasure to see that the efforts of two of your councillors in putting together and submitting an entry on behalf of the Upton Cross area in

the Cornwall Sustainable Village of the Year Competition met with success in its being a shortlisted finalist and, though ultimately missing out on one of the cash prizes, being highly commended with many encouraging comments.

We are indebted to Westcountry Housing Association for their generous sponsorship of Cinderella, a truly splendid Christmas pantomime written, produced and performed by a dedicated band of parishioners and a virtual sell out. The Housing Association also indicated that it would be prepared to consider assisting in the provision of a skateboarding and BMX biking facility within the Parish to cater for the needs of, primarily, our younger parishioners. Many of you will be aware of a petition for this earlier in the year and of the various subsequent meetings and discussions. I understand that with financial help gratefully accepted from a fund accessible to our Cornwall Councillor and his support generally a group of young people are planning shortly to visit a number of such facilities elsewhere in the county to try to formulate realistic proposals and to seek grant funding for such a venture. Your Parish Council has remained supportive and indicated that it might be able to provide a suitable site but has also made it clear that it is unlikely to be able to make any substantial financial contribution. Those involved must also realize that even this support is likely to be heavily affected by the behaviour of them and their peers. The spreading of litter and rubbish and wilful damage and arson to existing play equipment on Jubilee Field is not helpful to their cause.

There are, however, many other positive and encouraging signs of a concerned and active community within the Parish. A group of litter pickers has been formed and their efforts are readily apparent. The refurbished and renamed CrossLink Centre as well as the Parish Hall are hosting a variety of new courses and activities. There is now scarcely room on the back page of the Link to publicize them all – already from belly dancing to upholstery, who knows what may follow! We are also grateful to the Cheesewring Cricket Club who, not without a modicum of self-interest, have kindly undertaken repairs to the public toilets in Upton Cross to enable them reopen before the start of their season.

On a personal level it was a pleasure and a privilege to welcome HRH Prince Charles on his visit to Upton Cross last July to look at the Marke Valley View development. He showed real interest in all aspects of our community and it was interesting to note the speed at which work moved on repairing the awful fire damage there when his impending visit was announced. His royal progress through the school playground was a delight with a word for anyone who wanted to speak and a willingness to accept gracefully gifts of half eaten chocolate bars and the like!

It was with regret that in November I received, each for his own reasons, resignations as Parish Councillors from Mike Todd and Dave Roberts. Our thanks are due to both for all their work during their respective periods in office, Mike, in particular, having been a past Chairman and served as a Councillor for over 15 years. Evidence of his practical skills and unstinting labours remain evident throughout the Parish. I have been delighted to welcome in their place as co-opted members Sean Moyse and Paul Terrett.

No report would be complete, however, without a genuine expression of thanks to all who have served as councillors throughout the year and who have so freely and willingly given of their time and advice. Equally, I welcome the opportunity of extending publicly my thanks to our able and long suffering Clerk, Julia Todd. It is not, perhaps, until one experiences the whole picture of local government from the vantage point of Chairman that one realizes quite how much is expected of those in her position and how quietly and tactfully she copes with both it and us. I know that she works way beyond the hours for which she is actually paid. We all have cause to be deeply grateful to her.

Cornwall Councillor's Report

Cllr Turner referred to his monthly newsletter which appears in the Link, as a means of keeping parishioners informed of developments in Cornwall Council. He noted that the unitary council had been in existence for two years this June, commenting that it has taken a long time to settle down, and there is still more work to be done to get it running smoothly. The projected savings of around £16 million have been made. One of the problems faced by east Cornwall was that its dynamic is not understood by the powers at Truro who have concentrated economic efforts in the deprived areas of Camborne and Redruth. However, he assured the meeting that the SE Ward Councillors were doing their best to be heard.

Over the past year, Highways' matters, namely potholes, and salting problems became overwhelming for the department which had tried its best to target the most used routes and to keep open at least one route into each of the villages.

Parking charges have now increased from 20p to 40p for the first hour which raises revenue in part for car park maintenance. CCllr Turner noted that the increase was less than the proposed rise which was reduced following objections regarding the threat to the economic viability of the area.

CCllr Turner expressed his desire to support local schemes with his limited budget such as he did for the allotments last year.

He commented upon the danger to livestock on roads which were unfenced as a number of animals had been killed, particularly at Fore Down in St Ive parish. He expressed his desire to find ways such as installing better signage and/or fencing, to avoid serious injury or death by accident.

Finally he warned of the cuts to services, reduced staffing was being achieved by combining departments which would undoubtedly make processes much longer but he stated that he will continue to liaise on behalf of the public.

CCllr Turner was thanked by the Chairman, and agreed to take questions from the meeting.

Q: are there any openings for Parish Councils to get involved in the Enterprise process?

A: the process was still in the early stages, but he would ask the question.

Q: has any petition to provide dog waste bins in the parish been received?

A: no

Q: regarding animals on open land straying on to the roads and causing a hazard, what about imposing (as has been proposed in the past) a 40mph speed limit on all unfenced land?

A: CC would not support it as it has argued that it would require separate re-setting of limits.

Cllr Wooster informed the meeting that fencing requires the intervention of the Secretary of State once all other options have been exhausted, and PC Hatt added that there was no evidence that speed was a factor in the animals being killed.

CCllr Turner reported on the highways' work that would take place at Darleyford to repair the culvert, beginning in June and lasting for eight weeks.

'Open Session'

The Chairman informed the meeting that this was an opportunity for parishioners to comment upon the provision of facilities in the parish, to express their views regarding expenditure particularly in the light of cutbacks, and he gave examples of areas that parishioners may wish to discuss.

The representative of the RMVH expressed grateful thanks for the donation from the Parish Council.

The Chairman stated that one topic likely to occupy the Parish Council in the near future was the provision of road salt/grit bins, that the discussions that had taken place so far indicated PC would have to pay for them. Mr Halliday mentioned that, on Dartmoor, fewer animals had been killed where roads remained unsalted; salted roads attract animals who like to lick it.

Mike Todd reported on the recent inaugural meeting of a history group, stating that additional members were welcome; one of the objectives of the group was to form an archive to collate existing material, and to supplement it. The group is being supported by the CHAHP.

Apart from one at Minions car park Cllr Martin remarked on the absence of dog waste bins in the parish villages. CCllr commented that the problem of dealing with dog waste was under discussion at Cornwall Council; he will keep us informed of any developments. Cllr Masson commented that if dog licences or equivalent were in existence the revenue could fund, or part-fund, a disposal service.

Cllr Wooster expressed thanks to CHAHP and commoners for their efforts with resolving problems regarding dogs, especially unsupervised dogs, and hoped that improved signage would soon be available.

At the close of the meeting the Chairman informed those present of a public meeting taking place on Wednesday at 7pm regarding plans for a solar installation at Yonder Netherton, and encouraged everyone to come to find out more about it.

The meeting closed at 19h50

Councillor Malcolm Hopes
Chairman
Linkinhorne Parish Council
April 2011