

Hemyock Parish Council

7th April 2011

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held in the Parish Hall under the chairmanship of Mrs.H.Stallard.

Present – Mrs.H.Stallard, Mr.I.McCulloch, Mrs.L.Clist, Pastor S.Reed, Mr.R.Brooke, Mr.L.Povah, Mr.R.Hart, Mr.J.Edwards, Mrs.S.Cartledge and Mr.P.Steed. Also present was Dr. Catherine Bass, Mr. Gavin Saunders and about 50 members of the public.

Neroche Project

Mrs.Stallard welcomed everyone to the meeting and then invited Gavin Saunders to give his presentation as he had another meeting to go on to this evening.

Mr. Saunders said he has been working on the Neroche Project and came to tell everyone about the book “Along the Wild Edge” that has been published and is free of charge to all residents in the Blackdown Hills. It is the culmination of two years work by Tanya James who did a lot of work getting all the local authors together and reflects a fascinating history of the hills; it was funded from Heritage Lottery money.

The Neroche project in its current form finishes this September but Mr. Saunders said that other things are still going on.

Mrs.Stallard thanked Mr. Saunders for coming along to our meeting.

Chairman's Report

Mrs.Stallard began by saying that it is the end of the Parish Council year and also the end of the four year term of office; parish elections will be on 5th May. However, as Hemyock did not have enough people putting up for an election it is uncontested and 2 more councillors will need to be co-opted on to the Parish Council.

It has been an interesting four years and quite a bit has been achieved; however, as councillors know it takes years to get anywhere with anything. The new sports facilities at Longmead took fourteen years and the new floodplain walkway took seven years but apart from these big projects lots of smaller problems have been identified and dealt with to a successful conclusion. Our biggest achievement this year is the completion of the floodplain walkway which was headed up by Mr.Povah; our thanks go to him for all his hard work on the project. We would still like to have a virtual pavement at the south end of the walkway to get pedestrians safely through the narrow piece of road before the car show room. Unfortunately, Devon County Council are not keen for this to go ahead as they say it gives people a false sense of security. However, Mr.Povah has found that there is one at “Meavy” near Tavistock, so we are going to look into this further.

The next priority is to complete the pavement to the north of the Spar shop.

Longmead is now more or less finished we still have some landscaping to do on the far side of the stream but we now have excellent facilities of tennis courts, MUGA, football pitches, Boules pitch and a trim trail as well as a marvellous eco-friendly sports pavilion.

Our thanks go to Mr.R.Brooke for overseeing the conversion of the old St. Ivel Social Club into the Blackdown Healthy Living Centre; there are all sorts of things going on there including computer

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classes, Cameo Club, pilates, Tai Chi, a history archive and much much more.

Mrs.Stallard went on to say that a huge amount has been done so far on converting the old St. Ivel garages into facilities for the youth of the village; but unfortunately some of the funding has been stopped. The Youth Centre is not far off being finished, the hall will not be totally completed but it will be usable. A grant has been obtained from Viridor for gym equipment which will go in a room at the far end when that is completed.

Things are going on at the Old School Court which we cannot get to the bottom of, but a close watch is being kept on any movements.

The Parish Council has just sent out a Housing Survey and a question was included about housing for the elderly and nursing care.

Devon County Council had been agitating to become a Unitary Authority, which, if it had gone through would have meant that villages were going to be tagged on to their local market towns, ours being Cullompton. We objected to this, as did Culmstock and Clayhidon. So several parishes got together and formed what is now a pilot project called the Blackdown Hills Parishes Network. To start with it was just parishes in Devon but now some of the parishes in Somerset have come on board as well. A draft plan has been put together for parishes to work together to achieve some things that would be difficult for one parish to do on their own.

Mrs.Stallard said that Hemyock is looking to becoming a “Quality Parish” and with further training we can also get “The Power of Well-being”. There are a lot of things that have previously been done by the District and County Councils which we are now going to have to do ourselves.

Mrs.Stallard said that as this was the end of the present four year term she would like to thank all the parish councillors for all their work towards completing our many projects. She also thanked Mr. Frank Rosamond, District Councillor, who works tirelessly at District level on our behalf and who is also up for election which is contested as three people have put up for the two places available. She also thanked Mr.Ray Radford – County Councillor who works hard at County level on our problems.

Mrs.Stallard said we shall shortly be having a new council and she hoped that several project groups would soon be up and running. The Hemyock Emergency Plan will need up-dating, we already have a footpaths group and she said an environment group would be good; Mrs.Stallard said that she and Mr.McCulloch had attended a “Snow Wardens” course and they can now train other people in the parish to help with pavement clearing, salting etc. Mrs.Stallard said that people did not need to be on the Parish Council to take part in these project groups.

Mrs.Stallard closed by saying that we shall also be having a new clerk as Mrs. Kingston had resigned her post after nearly twenty four years in the position. Fifty one people had applied for information packs and there had been fifteen applicants for the post. Short listing had taken place and interviews were going to take place next Wednesday. Although Mrs. Kingston had officially now finished she was still carrying out clerks duties until a new clerk was appointed, for which we are very grateful. Mrs.Stallard thanked Mrs. Kingston, both personally and on behalf of the Parish Council, for her long and outstanding service and we are all very sorry to lose her.

Blackdown Hills Parishes Network

Mrs.Stallard introduced Dr. Catherine Bass to the meeting who is putting together the plan for the parishes.

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Dr. Bass said that the Blackdown Hills Parishes Network had come about because of Devon wanting to be a Unitary Authority, which is now not going to happen, but it got the ball rolling. She said about half of the thirty nine parishes in the Blackdown Hills have a Parish Plan and she felt it was important that people understand what the Community Plan is going to do.

Dr. Bass had consulted with all the parishes and asked them to prioritise five issues that needed tackling; traffic and transport being the main issue to come out of it.

Dr. Bass said a Steering Group, which included Mrs.Stallard and Mr. Sworder from Dunkeswell, were working on things and the Community Plan will be out soon.

Mrs.Stallard thanked Dr. Bass for coming along to speak to us.

Mrs.Stallard asked if anyone had any questions about anything; Mr.B.Clist said that the end room of the St. Ivel garages belongs to the Parish Council; what was happening about that? Mrs.Stallard replied that once the entire place had been re-roofed and this room was opened up it was a lovely light and airy room so it was decided that this area may be used for the gym and the Parish Council would then have the far end of the building as a store. The Parish Council would retain ownership of their original part of the building.

Mr.B.Clist also asked about the old tennis courts; Mrs.Stallard said a planning application had gone in to use the site for eight flats; there had been a public meeting to ask for any other suggestions for ways to use the old courts and there was to be another meeting soon.

Mrs.Stallard explained that the old tennis courts comes under the Parish Hall's jurisdiction.

Mr.B.Clist said he thought the idea of using the site for flats was an excellent idea.

Mrs.Stallard said that the required archaeological dig had been carried out and nothing had been found.

Mrs.Stallard thanked everyone for coming along and pointed out that there was excellent displays around the hall to look at. There was also packs of reports from various village clubs, charity reports and Parish Council finance report which people were welcome to pick up to take home to read.

Mr.McCulloch proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs.Stallard for the endless hours of work she does for the Parish Council and pointed out that she does “get things done” - a big thank you from everyone.

The evening continued with an informal social time for parishioners to chat to councillors and everyone enjoyed the refreshments of cheese and wine.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm.

Signed.....

Date.....