

Hemyock Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting
19th April 2012 7pm

Present

Mrs H Stallard (Chairman), Mr I McCulloch (Vice-Chairman), Mr R Brooke, Mr R Calcraft, Mr S Clist, Mr S Major, Mr L Povah, Mr R Hart, Mr J Edwards, Mr F Rosamond (District Councillor), Mr Ray Radford (County Councillor), Mrs D Evans (Parish Clerk), Steve Watson, John Scott, Catherine Bass and around 40 members of the public.

Apologies

Mrs L Clist

Welcome

Mrs Heather Stallard welcomed everyone and pointed out that there were excellent displays around the hall to look at. There were also packs of reports from various village clubs and charities which people were welcome to pick up to take home to read.

Below are transcripts of some of the speakers' presentations:

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Chairman's Report

This past year has seen the start of a new 4 year cycle of the Parish Council. This time last year we said good-bye to Sally Cartledge, Paul Steed and Pastor Steven Reed. Then we welcomed onto the Council Roy Calcraft and Simon Clist. Later Stephen Major was co-opted to make up our numbers.

Personally I have found this year both frustrating and disappointing. So much work has gone on behind the scenes and yet there is so little tangible to show for it.

A Housing Survey took place last Summer and John Scott from the Community Council of Devon, who did all the monitoring, is here to give us his report later on, and Dr Catherine Bass will give bring us up to date on the Blackdown Parishes Network.

Indigenous and long term residents of Hemyock will have realized that larger projects take an awfully long time to come to fruition - an average I would say of either 7 years or 14 years. Longmead took 12 - 14 years, the Floodbridge 7 years, the pavement above Spar 7 years and below Spar still not achieved.

The Youth Centre, on which so much work has already been done, is still not finished due to lack of funds, but this is still being very actively pursued under the direction of a most frustrated David Major. This project has been in the pipeline for more than 14 years, so its completion must surely be ready to appear over the horizon!

We are still pursuing the possibility of a 'virtual footway' painted on the road between the village end of the floodbridge, through the pinch point by the Pinders' house and up to the entrance to the business park, but County Council Highways are not at all keen.

We are nowhere nearer an allotment site, but, interestingly, two private gardens have been

offered to us this Spring and despite 27 names on the 'allotment waiting list' very little interest has been shown.

A request from local businesses for a passing place for lorries on Pencross Hill to help alleviate the problem of lorries/coaches and artics jamming at the bottom of the hill has made some progress. Official plans are being drawn up by the C.C. Highways. We shall have to provide the funding to actually carry out the work. Some businesses have intimated they are willing to contribute and our County Councillor has also promised something.

Two road accident blackspots have been highlighted recently on approach roads into Hemyock and a third has come up this week. We are tackling Highways to try and get better signage at the very least on these roads.

We have just been offered some help via a "Beef & Butterflies" AONB project for further management on two of our commons. If there is anyone out there interested in volunteering with some maintenance work, please sign up.

There is now an urgent need for some new Litter Pickers to keep a small stretch of road near where they live litter free. After many years of being very clean and tidy there has recently been a definite decline in standards in some areas due to lack of helpers. Again please sign up.

Recently encouragement and support has been given to an independent Community Land Trust initiative for Hemyock and Clayhidon. You will hear all about it later on this evening.

This time last year we were looking for a new Parish Council Clerk, Anne Kingston was retiring after 25 years service. David Barton was appointed and was just getting into the swing of things when he became ill and has had to take a temporary break while undergoing treatment. In the meantime Donna Evans has stepped into the breach and very cheerfully, efficiently and quickly got to grips with all the bureaucracy involved with Council affairs. We are most grateful to her.

The difficulties in the administration side of things has means we have not been able to move forward with our hope of achieving Quality Parish Status or the Power of Empowerment; but we hope as things progress we can move on again.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE??????

We have to achieve our Youth Centre. We have to achieve the rest of the 'Spar' pavement. A Pencross Hill lay-by looks possible.

The buzz words at the moment are Localism and Neighbourhood Planning.

There seems to be very little in the way of specific information on what Localism does or will mean of what, if any, extra powers it will give us at Parish level.

Neighbourhood Planning - again very much in its embryonic state, but we will be looking at this carefully later in the summer. It will involve you all as Parishioners coming together over month's time to think carefully about and make some decisions on what Hemyock might need over the next 20 years or so: e.g. industrial estate, wind farm, airport, nursing home,

housing, skyscrapers, reservoirs, etc. etc. - whatever you think we will need and where it should go.

This could be our opportunity to shape our future, although it seems we will still have to conform to some of the District Council policies.

It will be a complex undertaking but if when we all look into it you think it is really worth while, between us, I am sure we can achieve it. But it will probably take at least 20 years!

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Community Land Trust – Steve Watson

Steve Watson gave an informative talk on Community Land Trusts and a copy of his presentation can be found on the website under the file ‘CLT Presentation APM’

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Housing Survey Report – John Scott

John Scott talked through the results of the survey and a copy of his presentation can be found on the website under file ‘Housing Needs Survey Results APM’

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Upper Culm Community Land Trust – Heather Stallard

I am not speaking now in capacity of Chairman of Hemyock Parish Council.

During last summer I was made aware of the fact that Wessex Community Assets had been funded by Carnegie UK and Devon, Dorset and Somerset County Councils to help establish rural community land trusts. I had been to two or three events over the years and attended workshops on CLTs and had always felt they could be of real interest here.

Steve Watson, who you have just heard, came and spoke to a meeting here to an audience that included members of Hemyock and Clayhidon Parish Councils and a lot of other interested people. Some of you here tonight were probably at that meeting. I think everyone there was really interested and an initial steering group was formed.

Two or three meetings later it was decided we would form a CLT and the Steering group became the initial Board of Directors. The Upper Culm CLT was registered as Community Benefit Company with the FSA on 31st March 2012. Our Company Secretary is Mr Neil Punnett. This is a completely independent company but I am very happy to say that both Hemyock and Clayhidon have given the Company their full endorsement.

Membership, at £5 per head, is open to all adults living or working in the area. There will be a full general meeting in the near future. All paid-up members will be eligible to have one vote at AGMs and to elect the Board of Directors, etc.

The Government has designated special funding for rural CLTs putting together affordable housing schemes. In view of the Housing Report you have just heard the Upper Culm CLT

decided that a small affordable housing scheme should become our first priority.

This special funding will enable the building of really high-spec houses, super insulated, and using modern technologies resulting in very low running costs. We have an initial bid registered but have to put forward a fairly finished scheme quite soon. The funding I gather is over-subscribed and it will be, I guess, to some point first come first served. So we need you to come and look at drawings etc yourselves, to put your ideas into the pot. Hastoe will be running a full consultation on Tuesday 1st May, from 2.30pm – 6.30pm in the Forbes Lounge.

Please come and have your say so that an agreed plan can be forwarded in time so we can have some really high quality affordable houses we can be proud of, to meet the demand of those in our local community shown up by the housing survey.

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Blackdown Hills Parish Network – Catherine Bass

Catherine Bass updated everyone on this project.

The Blackdowns Hills Community Plan was researched and analysed between August 2010 and July 2011, and launched at a public meeting on September 2011. It was commissioned by the Blackdowns Hills Parish Network (BHPN) with funds contributed by Devon County Council (DCC) administered through the Blackdowns AONB office. The BHPN met in March and agreed a formal constitution which appointed a co-ordinator to support the network and implementation of the Community Plan. Funding for this role is derived from the remaining DCC Community Plan budget, from Locality grants agreed by the three Devon County Councillors with parishes in the AONB area and contributions from Devon and Somerset parishes.

The first priority is to set up a Blackdowns Online parish website, which will go live as soon as possible following approval by the BHNP Steering Group and network. Cosmic Ethical is supporting some training activity for contributors to the website. In addition support will be given to developing two action groups for Transport (particularly community transport issues where there is little public transport provision) and Planning help local councillors to work with their local authorities within the new National Planning Framework.

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Mr McCulloch took the opportunity to thank Mrs Stallard for the tireless work she does on behalf of the Parish Council.

The evening ended with an informal chat between parishioners and councillors over some cheese and wine.