

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF OKEFORD FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PAVILION, CASTLE LANE ON TUESDAY, 3rd May 2022 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllr N Plummer (Chairman) and Cllrs R Rowe (Vice-Chairman), S Corben, R Corben, D Gartside and C Jay

In attendance: Mrs Sophie Pearce, Parish Clerk.

Also present: 23 members of the public.

1. Apologies: Dorset County Councillor P Batstone (called to another meeting) Cllr F Light – no apology received.

2. Matters Arising: None

3. Chairman's Report: The Chairman gave his annual report as follows:

This year we have been fortunate to welcome two new Councillors to the team in Cllr Jay and Cllr Light and I welcome their commitment. During this year we also lost our long-standing Clerk of over 10 years when she moved north to be closer to her family. Fortunately, we were able to find a suitable and able replacement who has settled well into the role and continues to learn the processes and procedures of the council and I would like to thank Sophie for her support.

We had an outdoor table tennis table installed at Bowey Field for all to use and will tonight pull names of parishioners who entered a free draw for the issue of free bats and balls to use. I do hope we will see this used more through the summer months.

The refurbishment of the ancient cross base and its plaque was recently completed. This will ensure that the base will remain for future generations and thankfully the wording on the plaque is now legible again. The plaque was placed at the cross in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II so it is fitting that this work was done in her Platinum Jubilee year.

Plans for the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations are being finalised and I hope all parishioners will take part and enjoy the events over the weekend as there is something for everyone. During the weekend there will be four new Blue Plaques unveiled on buildings around the centre of the village to mark some events or people who lived in these significant buildings. I must thank all involved for working together on the plans for the Platinum Jubilee weekend as without these volunteers it just wouldn't happen.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been difficult to move forward this year as the Dorset Local Plan, which it would need to reflect to be of any use, has been fluid and is still not yet finalised. Having engaged with a subject expert consultant for guidance on our options on this subject we are now developing a Planning Statement, so developers have a point of reference for any large potential developments, although most locations of interest have now been taken. The Planning Statement will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and we will review the Dorset Local Plan once finalised to see if there would be any further benefit of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Okeford Fitzpaine.

We have received some complaints about the play area at Bowey playing field and I am pleased that the PC agreed at our last meeting that our play areas need updating. I believe this year we should prioritise this project. It was great to be invited to a group meeting of several parents in the parish who would like to ensure the play areas are updated and remain fit for purpose. They seem very keen and proactive and it would be great to work with them to develop a plan for the future taking into account the number of new homes planned as well as our current population. I look forward to working with them to find a suitable solution.

Finally:

Reducing the speed of vehicles through Okeford Fitzpaine remains a key point and I was pleased to hear that recently Dorset Council will now be setting up a working party to swiftly look at how this can be made easier to adopt. Cllr Gartside I know has been a constant advocate on this and continues to put a great deal of effort and time to see this through, and I thank her for her commitment.

4. Open Session/Public Matters:

Mr Burt asked for clarity as to what this meeting was. He said there was confusion in the summons and no Agenda had been published on the website. He also wished to raise the point that the Public do not get an opportunity to discuss the Agenda items properly. Standing orders are not adhered to and a complaint will be made.

Jeremy Hunt from the Play and Recreation Working Party: Leaflets have been produced with a plan of action and call upon Councillors to meet at Bowey to discuss further. The Mud Pie Café are asking children for their input as to what play equipment they would like and there will be fund raising initiatives.

The Chairman thanked all present and closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

The AGM followed immediately.