

Chairman's Annual Report 2014

Welcome & introductions: This year we welcome Martin Hill from Highways and Tara Hansford, who will give us the latest news of footpaths and trailways, and Colin will lead us through the main developments happening under the direction of the CLT. We welcome back our County Councillor Rebecca Knox and District Councillor Jill Haynes, who will be giving us their reports. I would like to thank Rebecca and Jill, not only for their reports but for their support and advice during the year. They are both exceptionally busy people, attending hundreds of meetings through the year, and we are grateful that they take the trouble to fit our PC meetings into their busy schedules.

And before I forget a special thanks to my wife, Jane, for preparing and serving the refreshments.

The activities of the PC over the past 12 months began with our May AGM. At that meeting it was agreed that Cllr Davies was to represent TPPC at the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils. Cllr Judy Miller was elected Vice Chair and was to be our representative on the Village Hall Committee. Cllr Janet Knowles agreed to stay as our Rights of Way Officer. The parish emergency contacts were to be Mr David Walbridge, and Mr Paul Comer, and we are grateful to these gentlemen for their care and concern over the past year, and David will be giving his short report later for the last time. David has decided it is time to give up the post, and we should all be grateful for the work he has done, with Paul, over the past XX?? years: clearing drains, helping within properties, filling and distributing sand bags, attending flood warden seminars. So, David, on behalf of the village, thank you. Being a Flood Warden can be quite a demanding job, and it is always best if the wardens can work in pairs, thankfully Paul is willing to carry on if someone replaces David.

Meanwhile, referring back to the AGM: we usually award certain grants to village groups, but this was deferred until the November finance meeting: the grants were then confirmed as: Village Hall £150, Churchyard £300, Recreation Field Association £125, and two new ones being £125 to our Post Office Shop, and £100 to Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Planning: This time last year I was reporting that The Old Swan was about to go on the market. And as you know the company who purchased it Gibgor Ltd have had a team of workers in there since last November, and gradually the old pub is being given new life as a 5 bedroom dwelling.

The other Planning applications we received were from Rampisham for a Solar Park and since then there has been an amended plan, but this situation is on-going. Basically the PC has not made any objections but we have suggested that they include appropriate screening and make good the hedges. Of course, the main Planning focus for the village is that for the new Post Office and Affordable Housing, and I will now ask Cllr Baker to update us on developments.

The PC supported the erection of cattle housing at Kingcombe and an erection of a timber field shelter at Woolcombe Farm and internal changes at The Kingcombe Centre.

Highways - once again the council has been busy trying to get the Highways Dept to improve our roads. I would like to thank Cllr Peter Davies and his dog Daisy for their continual monitoring of ditches, drains and pot holes, and reporting these defects to highways. I think you will agree that our village roads are in a reasonable state of repair – I dare not say good as Martin Hill is here, then we would probably get no work done in the future!

Peter is in the process of overseeing repairs to fingerposts that he removed from Kingcombe and he has applied to Dorset AONB-Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for funding to cover the repairs. The broken posts are currently with Robin Masters.

Our main topic of debate has been the position and construction of the new bus shelter. I reported last year that having had four site meetings with three different personnel from Highways, and 2 land searches carried out. The second land search finally gave us good news that we could build one by The Old Swan, on the pavement of Kingcombe Road. As the pub had been sold, we felt it our polite duty to contact the new owners and inform them of our intentions. Mr Gordon and Mr Gibbs attended our September meeting to discuss our proposals. They were concerned that the siting of the bus shelter next to their property would adversely affect the resale value. After consideration they very generously granted to the PC a piece of land on Lower Road, cutting into the bank and they even offered to build the retaining wall. We are very grateful to Mr Gibbs and Mr Gordon for their most generous offer, and for the labour hours they granted to the village in the construction of the retaining walls and the initial floor.

This good news was picked up by a resident –probably from the published minutes – but this person came forward to offer £1000 towards the cost of the construction. Naturally, we accepted the offer with open hands as the funding for the build was going to have to be raised by the PC. We were delighted as this meant we could fund the whole project within the year and without the need for fund raising events. We then put out for tenders, and accepted the quote from Mr Richard Sherwood who built the structure during March and April. I am sure you will agree he has made a fine job of the bus shelter. I must add that Cllr Davies gave his time freely to construct specification drawings for the design of the structure and he also liaised with Richard throughout the time it was being built.

Although last Winter was mild, we financed the acquisition of a grit bin which was installed just outside the water works on Toller Lane. We have another grit bin provided by Magna Housing to go on School Lane, but it is private land so we need to ask permission?)

Another subject that comes under the umbrella of Highways is our unsightly Railway Bridge. When Oliver Letwin came here in January 2013 for the planting of the tree to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee and to formerly name Toller Brook, I asked him then if he would be kind enough to contact the Railways Property Board in the hope of getting the bridge painted. This has developed into a course full of hurdles to jump! The RPB agreed to give us the paint, but would not fund sandblasting the bridge. Our Clerk, Michele Harding, discovered that there was a scheme run by WDDC that offered grants for community projects. We duly applied but sadly our application failed mainly due to them wanting quotes for sandblasting and wanting information on the metals that the bridge was made of. We submitted the application again last November with the additional information. We heard very recently that our application has been successful, and that we have been granted a sum to cover the cost of sandblasting, albeit on a quote that is now over a year old! We have another hurdle to jump, however, before the monies are released we have to submit a 'works plan'. But, to be honest, we do not know what one of these is! So more emails and more administration! Looking ahead, however, we hope to publish plans for a community painting day in the near future.

Another possible talk for the coming year might be to revise the Parish Plan. There was a PP Committee and a 2012 publication of their findings, but it would be good for the PC to know residents views on what the village needs are for the future. There are some funds remaining from the original grant, and this has been set aside to pay for a revision.

I would like to emphasise again the value of the TP Website and to thank Cllr Peter Davies for running the website www.tollerporcorum.org And you will be pleased to know that you can catch up on all the PC minutes, but the information it holds is of interest to the historian as well as resident. If you have any event that you would like publicising contact Peter.

Before finishing, I would like to thank once again Rebecca Knox and Jill Haynes for their support: updating us on various issues and following up items and queries on our behalf; all the Parish Councillors who give freely of their time, and to our hard working Clerk, Michele Harding.

Thank you to everyone for coming tonight, and if you are at all interested in becoming a flood warden to replace David or you would like to become involved in helping our community to move forward by helping with a revision to the Parish Plan please make yourself known to us. You may also be interested in becoming a Parish Councillor and may want to consider standing for election next year. And should anyone have any concerns or issues through the forthcoming year please don't hesitate to approach one of us or attend one of our meetings which are, of course, open to members of the public and you can share your concerns or ideas during the public forum sections.

David Ennals. May2014.