

## Chairman's Annual Report 2016

Welcome & introductions: This year's meeting has a full agenda. We welcome Mr Paul Coles (BT SW Regional Partnerships Director) who will be clarifying issues around telephone and broadband use; Kate Fisher (Asst Community Responder officer of the SW Ambulance Service) who will introduce us to defibrillators; and then we welcome back our District Councillor Jill Haynes, PCSO Sarah Pilcher who will give us a short address on telephone and internet fraud and finally but not least the George Sartin and Tara Hansford double act, who will give us the latest news on cycle path, footpaths and trailways. Thank you also to our village representatives whose groups receive small donations from the Parish Council, they, too, will give us short reports on their work this year. Councillor Rebecca Knox has sent her apologies along with a short report.

And before I forget a special thanks to my wife, Jane, for preparing and serving the refreshments. Before we proceed, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Mrs Katharine Sheehan our new Clerk who took over from Mrs Michelle Harding as from our September meeting. The vacancy of Clerk was advertised widely and we interviewed 3 applicants in August. Without embarrassing her, Katharine came to us with excellent qualifications including a BA and a Postgraduate diploma in law, supported by outstanding confidential references, and a cv that highlighted she had held administrative posts that would have given her the necessary experience to make an effective Clerk. I am delighted to say Katharine has adapted and grown into the job easily, showing initiative, and a very high level of efficiency. Katharine, thank you for all your enthusiasm and work thus far!

The activities of the PC over the past 12 months began with our May AGM. At that meeting it was agreed that Cllr Baker 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 Paul Comer, and Mr James Billen. We are grateful to these gentlemen for their care and concern over the past year; no doubt you will have seen their signs out round the village when the weather was bad. Paul reports that:

“Although the roads have been flooded several times last winter no houses have had water in. Two cars were written off having driven into flood water - one on the road out of Toller towards main road and one at Powerstock Common. Signs were received from DCC to put out when floods were expected. The signs and cones were put out when Powerstock Common flooded.” However, Paul reports sadly that, the 2 cones and one of the signs were stolen and the other sign was put into the road and driven over. This is very dispiriting for our flood wardens. Paul added that, “Signs were also put out on the road out of Toller but even when I was putting them out people totally ignored them and drove into the floods”. The wardens have therefore given up putting out signs any more. A fresh supply of sandbags was obtained and put in the store behind the village hall. You will appreciate that Paul’s and James’ work has not met with a very responsible response from some people driving through or boundaries. I hope Paul and James will be prepared to continue as our flood wardens, if you have a chance when you meet them please encourage them and give them some positive comments.

At our November meeting we confirmed the awarded grants to: Churchyard £320, Recreation Field Association £165, Village Association for the benefit of the Post Office £165.

Planning: Cllr Alex Carstairs has continued to work extremely effectively as our Planning Co-ordinator. Planning issues can be detailed, and sometimes controversial, so as a Parish Council we are grateful to Alex to lead us through the various applications. Planning documents are sent by email to the Clerk, who forwards them onto all councillors. Cllr Carstairs collates feedback. If there are contentious issues, Cllr Carstairs requests an extension to the deadline so that issues can be resolved at the next Parish Council meeting. When planning documents fall within the compass of normal Parish Council meetings, Cllr Carstairs would consider the applications on his own and then make recommendations to the council at the next meeting. This year we have commented on 11 applications, if you wish to see the applications these are easily accessed through the [dorsetforyou.com](http://dorsetforyou.com) website planning section where you do a localised search by entering your postcode. Alec would like me to reiterate that any member of the public can either write a letter or comment on line, both of which will appear on the website against any applications commented on.

Cllr Janet Knowles has chased up various repairs to stiles and steps on footpaths, and continues to liaise with Jill Exton the Rights of Way Officer. One pathway/bridleway under review at the moment is Badger Lane. Unfortunately, this is not marked on the definitive map, but Jill Exton states it is a Bridleway. DDC are undergoing a consultation about its use, and there is a form which you can complete to help resolve the outcome, so if you have ever used Badger Lane for walking or riding or using it for access for any reason the Parish Council urges you to complete the form – please take a copy with you tonight.

Highways is always a regular agenda item! Cllr Jeremy Stavenhagen has worked tirelessly to get the quality of our local roads improved. He has organised site meetings, a meeting at the council offices, pinned down highway personnel by persistent emails and holding people to account. The patching of our roads, pot hole filling, verging and now the top dressing of local roads is largely down to his persistent efforts. I would like to ask him to give his short report now.

For my own part, I had a site meeting about having SLOW sign painted on the road just before the bridge on Lower Road together with the cutting back of vegetation to improve the site lines at the corner. Rather amusingly, a highways employee thought the vegetation at the railway bridge was proving dangerous so he cut that back as well. This exposed the precipice to the left of the road, which is on private land and Highways stated that they were not responsible for the fencing. The ownership of this piece of land is a subject of conjecture, but urgent action was required in terms of safety so the Parish Council arranged for fencing to be installed.

Last year a group of ladies, 2 of which were Councillors thought it would be a good idea to start a village newsletter, and within a few weeks the Toller Times was launched, and this has now become a regular publication 10 times a year, the Parish Council decided to fund its print run and we hope that residents find it a helpful community resource.

I would like to emphasise again the value of the TP Website and to thank our former councillor Peter Davies for running the website [www.tollerporcorum.org](http://www.tollerporcorum.org) And you will be pleased to know that you can catch up on all the PC minutes (and even the Chairman's reports!), but the information it holds is of interest to the historian as well as resident.

Superfast broadband entered into discussions from time to time last year, and over the past 12 months much has happened in this respect. We have heard from Mr Paul Coles tonight his views of the problems we as a community have experienced. His words were encouraging, but your Parish Council has worked hard to resolve the issues especially in the early part of this year when so many of us were adversely affected by poor, intermittent or no service at all. As a consequence of such frustrations we, as a Parish Council, made contact with Mr Clive Selley (BT Chief Executive), which brought about the visit of Mr Coles tonight.

I received a letter from Toller and Hooke WI requesting that the Parish Council apply for funding for a defibrillator through the British Heart Foundation. The funding has now been withdrawn, but we have held an open mind as whether a defibrillator would be of practical use to the village and that is the reason we have delayed any decision, and to help in that respect it has been very worthwhile to listen to Kate Fisher together with her demonstrations. This up to date knowledge will help us to make a decision in due course.

Cllr Jill Haynes has mentioned the decline of rural bus services. I have been in touch with Dorset Community Transport, and am delighted to say that the now defunct 213 service is running again via a 16 seat mini-bus. Today was its inaugural run and I am delighted to say that Mr & Mrs Knowles made use of it today. If you wish to use this service next week, please give me your name tonight. This service is called 'Plus Bus' and departs Toller at 0957, departing Dorchester for the return journey at 1320 hours. The cost is £5 per person.

Before finishing, I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors who make for lively but friendly debate at meetings. They give freely of their time for the good of our community and to our hard working Clerk, Katharine Sheehan.

Thank you to everyone for coming tonight, 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. May 2016.