

## Parish Council Reports for 2019 (in reverse order)

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT .... DECEMBER 2019

The meeting on 5th December was attended by nine councillors, the Parish Clerk, the Mid Devon District Councillor (Graeme Barnell) and a member of the public.

The main business of the meeting was to agree a budget for 2020-21. We were successful in maintaining our support for many local organisations, while having little impact on the precept (the amount of money required to be raised by council tax).

### **Updates on the Post Office, the Community Shop and the Community Land Trust**

The New Year has brought us the good news we were all waiting for. By the time you read this, we will have a replacement Post Box in the centre of the village and a Post Office operating two days each week from the parish hall. The Post Office will be open from 12.30pm to 14.30pm on Thursdays, and 9am to 11am on Tuesdays. Many thanks to Roger Wilkins and the parish hall committee for their hard work in bringing this about.

The Community Shop project has a keen steering group working to move the project forward. However they are now at a stage where much admin needs to be done and progress may seem slow for a while. The group met again in December and it continues to receive support from two parish councillors.

Further meetings of the Community Land Trust (CLT) steering group were held in November and one planned for January. The November meeting planned the next steps in forming a CLT. At this meeting it was agreed that a real need for affordable housing was identified in the Parish Council housing survey carried out in 2016. However there may be a need for a second, more up-to-date, survey. One obvious site for housing is the old school. Devon County Council have asked for expressions of interest from those who wish to develop this site. These

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT ....

## NOVEMBER 2019

The meeting, on 7th November, was attended by nine councillors, the parish clerk, Mid Devon district councillor Graeme Barnell, Devon county councillor Margaret Squires and a member of the public. Before the start of the meeting, the council took time to remember Margaret Waters, who died recently. Margaret was a central contributor to village life and James was a parish councillor for many years. Margaret will be greatly missed and our sympathy goes to James and his family during this difficult time.

### **News about the village shop and Post Office**

\* BT have installed a secure line to the village hall. This will enable the part-time Post Office to operate. We look forward to it being set up, probably early in the new year.

\* The parish clerk has been chasing up progress on the new Post Box in the village centre. We are assured that it will be installed soon and is on the 'engineer's list'.

\* The steering group for the community shop have completed their survey. This is a summary of their findings.

\* A total of 161 responses to the survey were received. The overwhelming response to the survey was positive. About 90% of respondents said that a community shop was either important or very important.

\* About 88% of people said they would use a shop at least once a week. The most popular items that people would buy were newspapers and bakery items. 86% of people would also like the full Post Office service restored

\* Very encouragingly, 70% of respondents said they would be prepared to volunteer in the shop and 47% would be prepared to buy a small stake in a community shop.

This survey forms a sound basis for the development of a community shop. The steering group will now meet to lay down a constitution and over the next few months will be visiting other community shops, before forming a plan for our shop.

### **Community Land Trust (CLT)**

Our application to have the old school site listed as a community asset has been turned down. The parish council decided to ask for a review of this decision, with the support of the MDCC councillor. Some of the

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

## ....OCTOBER 2019

The meeting on 4th October was attended by seven councillors, the parish clerk, Mid Devon district councillor Graeme Barnell and three members of the public.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy that local authorities can charge on new developments in their area. The money should be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods need. To this end, the Newton St Cyres Recreation Ground committee were awarded a grant from Mid Devon County Council (MDCC) that contributed to the cost of the redevelopment of the children's play area.

It was noted that our parish had no list of outstanding projects registered with MDDC that were suitable for this type of support. The parish councillors decided that a list should be registered with MDDC and that the highest priorities would be projects centred on road safety and the A377. These are particularly relevant as housing development in the Crediton area and beyond has resulted in increased traffic on this road and an increased need for safe crossing points, for example. The district councillor offered to check with MDDC on the suitability of the list before it was submitted.

### **The Post Office, the Community Shop and Community Land Trusts**

\* The new Post Box has yet to be installed, but it was reported that the survey for a suitable site was complete and a location nearer to the Belluno restaurant was identified as suitable. This means that the Post Box should be installed soon.

\* Some progress has been made towards the installation of a secure phone at the Parish Hall. It's hoped this will enable the part-time Post Office to be set up soon.

\* The Community Shop Steering Group has sent out the questionnaire and the deadline for replies was the 21st October. Should the results of the survey be positive, a Newton St Cyres Community Trust/Charity will be formed to monitor progress.

\* A public meeting was to be held 17th October to see if there was support for setting up a Community Land Trust to encompass Newton St Cyres. The aim would be to provide some affordable rental housing within the village. It may be possible to run this project

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT ....

## SEPTEMBER 2019

The meeting on 5th September was attended by eight Councillors, the Parish Clerk, Devon county councillor Margaret Squires, Mid Devon district councillor Graeme Barnell and two members of the public. At the start of the meeting, Alison Ward from Wessex Community Land Trust (WCLT), and Stewart Wass and Andrew Wiles of the Brampford Speke Upton Pyne and Cowley Community Land Trust (BSUPCCLT) made short presentations to the council (see below for details).

### **Community Led Housing Projects**

The Parish Council is aware of the need for more low-cost rental property in the village. We are very fortunate that BSUPCCLT, who have already completed a successful housing project in Upton Pyne, have offered us the opportunity to join with them and form a new community land trust with the intention of building affordable homes for rent in Newton St Cyres.

In her presentation, Alison Ward explained how the WCLT would support us step-by-step through the entire process. Although WCLT is a not-for-profit organisation, it charges a fee for its services on successful completion of a project. This, however, is recouped from the developer (usually a Housing Association and not the Community Land Trust or the Parish Council). The Community Land Trust makes key decisions about the number and style of the houses, as well as choosing a housing association, the architect and, eventually, the tenants. They also own the freehold for the completed properties. However, the Housing Association takes on the financial risk, the development and the day-to-day management of the completed properties.

One key limiting factor is the availability of suitable land. The council decided to explore the scheme further. The next step is to call a public meeting to see if there are sufficient interested local people willing to form a steering group. The group will then work with BSUPCCLT to investigate the potential for new affordable homes in Newton St Cyres. If you are interested in this project, please feel free to attend the public meeting in the village hall at 7pm on Thursday 17th October. It was also decided that the Parish Council would apply to have the old school site listed as an 'Asset of Community Value'. Should we be successful in this, it would give us priority as a buyer when the site comes up for sale.

**There is no Parish Council Meeting in August unless urgent issues arise**

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

## ....JULY 2019

The meeting on 4th July was attended by eight Councillors, the Parish Clerk and the Mid Devon District Councillor, Graham Barnell. A public session about the future of the village shop, held at the start, was attended by 22 members of the public and two members of the group that run the Cheriton Fitzpaine Community Shop.

### **Community Shops and the Post Office**

\* The village shop has now closed and is likely to be converted into a private dwelling. The post box located in the shop wall has been taken out of service, though the Post Office has informed us that it will be installing a new post box near the bus stop, very shortly.

\* The Parish Council is in the process of liaising with Stoke Canon Post Office, who are prepared to operate a Post Office service for Newton St Cyres. This will probably be for about two hours on two days a week. A suitable location has yet to be finalised, but we would hope to involve the Parish Hall.

\* The visitors from Cheriton Fitzpaine outlined the process they went through to establish a Community Shop. They strongly recommended that we join the Plunkett Foundation if we wished to undertake a similar project. This guided them through the entire process from writing a business plan through to raising money. Cheriton Fitzpaine were very positive about their shop and said that it had given a heart back to the village. They also offered us their support.

\* The Parish Council will be forming a steering group to investigate the possibility of a community shop. Ten members of the public have already volunteered to attend the first meeting. However more volunteers will be most welcome.

### **Road and traffic related issues**

Many of the issues raised at the last meeting remain unresolved and these will continue to be chased up by the Parish Council. However, the

# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

## ....JUNE 2019

This was the first parish council meeting after the recent elections. Seven councillors were elected, unopposed. At the start of the meeting a further two people were co-opted onto the council, thus ensuring there continues to be a full council complement. The council voted to adopt the Power of Competency, which it was eligible to do as more than 2/3rds of the council were elected and the clerk is appropriately qualified. The parish also has a new district councillor, Cllr Graeme Barnell.

During the meeting Cllr Jim Enright was unanimously elected Chairman of the council. Other officers and representatives, as well the council responsibilities were distributed amongst the members of the council. Full lists of councillors, their offices and responsibilities can be found on the Newton St Cyres Parish Council website. (<https://parish.middevon.gov.uk/newtonstcyres>) The council's policies and procedures were reviewed. Most of these are also posted on the website. Some need to be reviewed in light of the new composition of the council.

### Items arising from areas of Responsibility

#### Footpaths

The footpath support paper which allocated a footpath for each councillor to walk twice a year should be reviewed and Cllr Steve Parker will update this for the next meeting.

#### Allotments

A tenant has reported a problem with rats on the site and has asked if rat poison could be used and whether other tenants would be able to share the cost. After discussion it was resolved that rat poison should

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# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT.....APRIL 2019

Eight Councillors attended the April Parish Council meeting and were joined for some of the time by Cllr Peter Hare-Scott (MDDC) and Cllr Margaret Squires (DCC).

**The Annual Parish Meeting** was held prior to the Parish Council Meeting and the Chairman's report for the year and the accounts were read. The Chairman's report will appear in full elsewhere in the Newton Wonder. At this session the Community Volunteer Award was presented. This is awarded to somebody who has given excellent service to the community and this year the worthy winner was Peter Hawksley, editor of the Newton Wonder and supporter of many events and organisations in the parish.

Also on display were draft proposals for traffic calming in the village through a pedestrian crossing. Residents were able to see the two proposals in details and asked to make comments on them to the Parish Clerk during the next few months. These proposals can also be found on the NSC Parish Council website. Ian Sorensen from DCC Highways was on hand to explain the proposals and also to inform the residents that average speed cameras had been agreed for the centre of the village and these may be installed at any time. There was a full room for the input from Highways and eight members of the public stayed throughout the remainder of the evening.

Cllr Peter Hare-Scott is leaving the area and will not therefore be standing as a candidate in the forthcoming District Council elections. Peter was thanked for his support of the Parish Council over the term of his office and he in turn thanked the Parish Council for all their hard work and efforts in so many areas.



