

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Public Hall, Station Road on Tuesday 3 April 2018 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT

Cllr A J Dent (Town Mayor)
Cllr T D Wright (Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr Mrs L D Evans
Cllr A N Gooding
Cllr S V Hall
Cllr M C Hilliar
Cllr A L Jones
Cllr Mrs M L Kenneally-Stone
Cllr C A Kitson
Cllr C Richards
Cllr R D Sherriff

Clerk: Mrs J E Vanstone

Others Present: Twenty-one members of the public

Welcome by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor, Cllr A J Dent welcomed everyone. He said the format of the meeting would be slightly different this year – the reports would not be read out by the various Committee Chairmen but had been photocopied for all to read at leisure, adding that if there were any questions relating to the reports, the relevant Chairman would be happy to answer them.

111. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs C A Sismore-Hunt.

112. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Wednesday 5 April 2017 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record.

113. Guest Speakers

The Town Mayor advised that representatives from the town's festivals plus representatives from groups that had received a Grant from the Town Council during the previous year had been invited to give a brief update on their activities and how their Grant has been used.

Music Festival – Jean Quinn

Mrs Quinn said she had been Chairman of the Festival for three years and the Festival, now in its fourteenth year, was held every July.

National and international musicians come to the town to perform at a variety of events including hour-long free lunchtime concerts.

The Festival was run by amateurs and the only fees paid were to the artistic director and administrator. Ticket sales and Friends' subscriptions covered all the expenses. This year's festival line up was already online and included performances of work by Brahms, Strauss and Debussy. The brochure would be available soon with tickets on sale in May.

She said that local input was essential with local residents acting as stewards, hosts and helping with refreshments. There was also great support from shops and businesses.

This year they were holding an event just for children which included an African drumming workshop!

They had already started to book artists for 2019 and she hoped the Festival would continue for years to come.

Literary Festival – Malcom Elliott

Mr Elliott thought most would have expected him to come with lots of books but all he had was last year's brochure!

He said that 2018 would be the 10th anniversary so a few special events would be taking place to mark that. This year members of the Budleigh Salterton Art Club had been invited to design the front cover of the programme. The committee had commissioned a painting and some poetry to recognise the anniversary and it was hoped it would hang in The Hub. There would also be an event to remember the Festival's founder Chairman, Susan Ward.

This year the Committee thought it was a good time to reflect and where they might go in the future. He explained that the first phase of the Festival had been successfully managed by Susan Ward who had a great network of people to bring to the town and with Sue Lawley as president, had been able to tap in to a wealth of talent.

Sadly, Susan had passed away in 2012 and the second phase was how the Festival would cope without her. An Artistic Director was brought in and with it a different type of writer. Chris Briscoe was chairman at that time and he introduced the marquee on The Green.

Mr Elliott said he was now in his fourth year as Chairman, so was unable to say "he was new at this"! The Festival was now a five-day event – it had started as two days, then three and now ran from Wednesday to Sunday.

He said it was good to engage children with the festival and there was now an extensive programme of events free to children. The cost of this was £8,000 so it was very dependent on donations from Friends and Sponsors.

In recent years the programme had become more inclusive and welcomed a broader base of visitors. In 2017, 7,000 people had attended events.

He hoped in the future, the festival would become more diverse, adding that the writing workshops were popular. He thought this could be developed in the future.

He said that the number of literary festivals and events was growing and Devon was a very popular destination.

Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival had many special qualities which would help it go from strength to strength. Festivals were big business and they were dependent on volunteers and their commitment to responsible jobs – he was lucky to have such a loyal band of helpers.

He concluded by advising that the website would give a flavour of what was on this year.

Food Festival – Wilf Wilkinson

Mr Wilkinson said he had been involved with the Festival since 2014 during which time they had organised three and a half festivals. He said, as with other local Festivals, the Food Festival very much relied on volunteers with twelve people doing all of the hard work!

The next festival would be held on 6 and 7 April 2019 and would continue pretty much as always with marquees on The Green and a stage and exhibitors taking over the Lower Station Road Car Park. There would be a Farmers Market, lifestyle marquee and entertainment with cookery demonstrations and bands in the Public Hall.

Last year's Festival had been a great success with over 7,000 visitors – a high percentage of whom were new Budleigh Salterton visitors. The Festival wanted to promote "Buy Local", particularly East Devon and specifically Budleigh Salterton. School involvement was also key.

The Masterchef tournament had been very successful. One of the best quotes had been “just like Exeter used to be before it became more commercial”.

The Festival relied on sponsorship and he thanked the East Devon AONB, Earls, Bowmers and Bickton Park for their sponsorship. Another income stream was a fee from exhibitors.

They would be advertising on Radio Devon as well as the website which he thought looked very professional.

Other fundraising events had been held including the “Beer Bangers and Band” nights which had been very successful.

One of the main concerns they had for future events was the new street trading licence which had been introduced by East Devon District Council. He said Cllr A J Dent was helping them with that issue. Organisers were worried that it may become unviable to continue to run the Festival but he hoped they could come to a compromise about this. At present all events were free to attend but if the street trading licensing rules came into force, they may have to look at charging an entrance fee.

He said he had moved to the town in 2011 and joined the organising committee soon after the first Festival.

There then followed reports from three organisations which had benefitted from a Donation from the Town Council.

Budleigh Salterton Ladies Choir – Sue Lake

Mrs Lake said she had moved to Budleigh Salterton in 2014 and had soon joined the Choir. By 2015, she was on the Committee!

She then explained that the Choir had been founded 40 years ago and had approximately 50 members. The aim was to improve and develop singers of all types – the Choir had many different types of singer including some who could not read music.

She said the Choir was mainly self-funded and the main expenditure items were sheet music, royalties and hall hire. They had recently bought two new pieces of music and as 2018 was an important year with the Raleigh 400 celebrations, there would be a watery feel to the spring concert.

She explained the Choir supported local charities and helped to promote them at their concerts. They also sang at local charity events such as the Lions Christmas lunch and this year for the first time at the Hub Christmas lunch.

She felt it was a warm welcoming organisation and as many members were alone, it had a good social value too with a lot of strong friendships formed at Choir practice and at social events, including days out and lunches.

She thanked the Town Council for its support, which was not just financial.

Cllr Dent thanked Mrs Lake and said that one of the first delights as Town Mayor was to attend the Spring Concert which he and his wife had thoroughly enjoyed.

Budleigh in Bloom – Christine Ireland

Mrs Ireland thanked the Town Council for its generous grants over the last two years. She explained that she and her team plant up over 100 areas in and around the town two times a year, all of which need watering. The Town Council grants meant they could pay someone to carry out this watering for them and the volunteers could concentrate on planting and weeding! They would be planting more sustainable plants around the town which they hoped would cut down on man hours and the cost of watering.

The team consisted of twenty-four volunteers, ten of which Mrs Ireland classed as “hard core”. However, they were always looking for people to come and help as most of the current team were 65yrs plus! They had launched a poster campaign and website, and had already attracted three more volunteers, two of whom were men, which was always very useful!

She said that as 2018 was the 65th anniversary of HM The Queen's accession to the throne they would be planting 1,000 extra plants around the town. She said a lot of the plants could be re-used so they were trying not to waste money received from sponsorship and donations.

They had received launched their own Facebook page which would showcase events and let everyone know when planting was going to take place.

She concluded that their aim was to keep the town attractive to those living in the town and visitors.

Cllr Dent thanked Mrs Ireland and all her helpers for their hard work in making the town look so lovely each year.

Budleigh Salterton Carnival – Michael Hilliar

Mr Hilliar said the Organising Team had received some great comments following the 2017 Carnival and had made the decision to do it all again in 2018!

The town would be joining the East Devon Carnival Circuit which would mean more floats in the procession hopefully making this year's event bigger and better.

He explained that the main expenditure was on all things health and safety including radios for the stewards, road signs and insurance and the donation from the Town Council had gone some way to funding this.

The team would be holding various fund-raising events throughout the year, the next one being a Race Night during Gala Week. He said all the races and nearly all the horses had been sold – it was going to be a fun evening.

Cllr Dent said one of the main hazards had been the tree at the traffic lights and he was pleased it had been pruned back somewhat before the Carnival.

114. Reports

Chairman of the Town Council

Cllr A J Dent said that unquestionably the major event and success story of 2017 was the opening of the Budleigh Health and Wellbeing Hub in the premises of the old Budleigh Hospital. The Hub had already started offering services from the youngest to the oldest residents with locally-based Carousel Nursery providing childcare support for children under five and Age Concern Budleigh Salterton supporting older people from the local community.

The Hub Café provided a range of snacks, freshly cooked meals and hot and cold drinks. The Café was being run by Launchpad, a local social enterprise, providing supported training and work experience opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum conditions.

The gym was proving to be hugely popular and was benefitting a wide range of people for both rehabilitation and general fitness.

Age Concern had moved to the Wellbeing Hub which meant after many years the Norman Centre was now unoccupied. It had been refurbished more than twenty years ago and now looked tired and dated. After considerable debate the Council had opted to bring it up to modern standards and once the work was completed the Centre would be available for use by community organisations. The Council was in the process of getting tenders for this work which would hopefully be done during the summer.

Other highlights from the year included the adoption of the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan (BSNP) which, in conjunction with East Devon District Council's (EDDC) Local Plan, would help to control building development until 2031. This was the culmination of two years' hard work by the steering group led by Roger Sherriff and involved public consultations and a referendum before being presented to and passed by a government examiner. He said that in the referendum residents agreed overwhelmingly that the Plan should be used to determine planning applications, with

94.7% voting 'Yes'. He thanked Roger and the whole steering group for their hard work in producing the document.

He then reported that thanks to the generosity of Budleigh in Business, the Lions Club and Robert Kettle, the town now had a number of defibrillators at strategic points in the town and on the beachfront. Other new additions to the town were intelligent traffic lights at the end of Station Road and, thanks to developer contributions, an activity wall for youngsters at the Greenway Lane play area.

He also thanked the Football Club committee for their cooperation with the Devon Air Ambulance which was now able to use the pitch for emergency night landings and he understood they had already done so some four or five times.

He then reported that the Town Council was considering investing in CCTV for the High Street following some vandalism and security issues during the past few months.

He said that whilst the town was considered a quiet and peaceful town, ideal for retirement, there was a huge amount of activity going on and with the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Carnival Club, Gala Week and several Festivals, together with a host of voluntary organisations all making their contribution, the future looked bright!

He concluded by thanking the members of the town council for their hard work and support during what had been a busy year. He also thanked the Town Clerk, Jo Vanstone, and her assistant, Kate Harrison, for their contribution and the support they have given him personally, as well as everyone living in the town. There was a lot of unseen work going on in the background and both Jo and Kate were very much the mortar that keeps the bricks in place!

Chairman of the Planning Committee

Cllr C Richards reported that over the past year the following applications had been received:

- 115 Applications received, which was an increase of circa 25% over the previous year. Many of these applications were for extensions or alterations to existing properties, as opposed to new builds.
- Of the 115 applications, 67 were approved by EDDC and 9 were refused.
- 6 applications had been withdrawn prior to any decisions being made.
- 13 applications for tree works were approved with 2 applications resulting in a split decision.
- 12 applications remain "awaiting a decision".

He then reported that the opinions of the Town Council and EDDC differed on only five applications. These were:

- A new build in Clinton Close
- A new build on Chapel Hill
- A new house in Boucher Road
- A two-storey garage and outbuilding in Moorlands Road
- A lean-to shed at Flat 1, 24 Station Road

He said that in all these applications, the Town Council could not support the application, but nevertheless EDDC had approved them.

He then reported that at last year's Town Meeting, reference had been made to the upcoming Neighbourhood Plan. This had now been approved and signed off by all parties – the official term was 'made'. The plan had received many favourable comments from all who were involved in its approval and once again, he thanked Roger Sherriff, who had led the group, as well as the many other people who were involved in its production. He explained that the document set out guidelines and policies governing any development within Budleigh Salterton, giving much more weight to the recommendations made by the Town Council's Planning Committee when considering applications. As a result, when the TC made a recommendation on

an Application, the relevant Neighbourhood Plan guideline or policy would be quoted to EDDC to support the recommendation.

He said that work now appeared to have restarted on the Evans Field development and when completed, this would deliver more much-needed social and affordable homes to the Town.

Recently planning applications seemed to have dwindled, but he was sure that the volume would build up again as the year progressed.

He concluded by saying that the Planning Committee would continue to look in depth at all applications that came before it to ensure that they met with both the character of the Town and also complied with the Neighbourhood Plan and that they added to rather than detracted from their immediate locality.

Chairman of the Finance Committee

Cllr C Richards said that another year had passed and yet again he was able to advise that the Town's Finances were in good shape.

Recent Council Tax Bills showed that the amount the Town Council took from residents had risen by only 1% which was considerably less than the other constituents of the bill!

The past year had seen the Council continue to pay for grass cutting in some areas of the Town, as well as supporting Budleigh In Bloom who did so much to make the Town attractive. Among other organisations to which donations had been made were the Chamber of Commerce (to install boxes to drive the Christmas Lights), Fairlynch Museum, the Exmouth & District Community Transport Group, St Peter's PCC, the Lions Club, the Football Club, the Ladies Choir, Budleigh Young Arts Project, St Peter's School PTA and Budleigh Salterton Carnival.

The coming year would undoubtedly see the Council making a similar level of donations to local organisations.

He said that another continuing expense was the Public Hall. Over the past year £10,000 had been spent purely on maintenance and in the year ahead this would be more than double as the boiler was to be replaced at an approximate cost of £10,000. £2,000 was also earmarked for other small improvements.

At last year's annual meeting, he had predicted a small deficit in the annual budget but due to some of the provisions not actually being needed, the year had ended in the black. The year ahead would probably reverse this as, previously mentioned, the Council was considering installing CCTV in the High Street and whilst there was a considerable amount of planning still to do on the project, the cost was likely to be considerable.

As the Town Mayor had already mentioned, Age Concern had relocated to the Hub, leaving the Norman Centre, at the south end of the Hall, vacant. To get the facility up to a standard where people/organisations would want to rent it, would involve another significant amount of expenditure, so all in all, he was forecasting a deficit of almost £80,000 in the coming year but fortunately, due to a tight rein on the purse strings over previous years, the Council had adequate funds to cover this as well as leaving a healthy reserve.

He concluded by repeating that the town's finances were in good shape and it was his intention to see that, with prudent management, they remained that way.

Chairman of the Public Hall Committee

Cllr Mrs L D Evans reported that over the previous twelve months, the Hall had been the venue for numerous groups to raise funds, keep fit, educate and entertain.

At last year's annual meeting she had said it was her hope not to incur too much expenditure over the 2017/18 period – she had tried but the Hall was old!

- One of the clock motors had failed and it was virtually impossible under Health & Safety rules for the engineer to access the clocks from the inside of the building. The engineer had suggested this could be overcome by some adjustment to the internal framework, which was duly carried out. Hall Committee Members had agreed that, as one motor had already failed and

the other three being of the same age, it was sensible to replace all four. She was pleased to report that work had been completed earlier in the year.

- During the early part of the year a water leak was discovered in ladies' toilets. This had led to pipework being replaced and then the walls had to be re-skimmed prior to painting.
- New carpeting and vinyl had been laid in the inner and outer foyers.
- A number of the upper windows have had the lead decoration replaced which, for some unknown reason, was stuck to the outside of the window rather than between the two glass panes. She congratulated the Town Clerk for finding a company able to do this at a reasonable cost!
- As previously mentioned by the Town Mayor and Chairman of the Finance Committee, Age Concern had vacated the Norman Centre in October, and since then the Town Council has taken the decision to refurbish the Centre. She had asked via social media, and the Journal, for residents to say whether the Council should retain the Norman Centre unit or close the door on it. The overall majority voted for refurbishment and use. She wanted the Centre to offer the same standard of facilities as the Public Hall and be available to hirers or smaller groups. To this end builders had been called in to provide quotations. The overall estimated cost had made the Chairman of the Finance Committee wince, but the committee had found a way, with the proviso she got the hirers in! So, if anyone wanted to hold a small function she had the place.....! Currently, Library Staff were using the facilities whilst the Library building was repaired.
- The offices had been burgled, so CCTV cameras had been installed, which had since helped the Police with regard to a missing person.

She then spoke about future projects. The main expenditure would be the replacement boiler.

- In December 2017 there had been boiler problems in the main Hall and she hoped a new boiler and extra radiators would alleviate these issues.
- She had received a comment that the blackout material in the arched windows on either side of the stage needed to receive attention. She thought the existing blackouts looked like insulation material stuffed between window and screen, so the decision had been made to install new thermal roller blinds, but this had highlighted more problems. The walls were lathe and plaster and liable to crumble, so the walls would need re-plastering and whether it was the whole wall or just around the window, time would tell.
- She had previously mentioned the hall floor – this would be a major expense. A decision would need to be made as to the way forward as the floor boards could no longer be sanded, and an increasing quantity of plastic wood filler had been used to repair the boards where they were buckling due to the tongue and groove failing. The question was to replace with wood or install manmade composite flooring. She said she would be interested in everyone's views.

She said the Hall was a fantastic venue and asked everyone to keep using it – a list of events was regularly updated on the Town Council website.

She concluded by thanking the Town Councillors for their continued support, the Town Clerk and her assistant for taking care of bookings, and the caretaker and cleaning staff who ensured hirers always found the hall clean and inviting.

Chairman of the Foreshore & Footpaths Committee

Cllr A J Dent reported that sadly, Cllr Harrison had decided to step down from the Town Council, so the Council had decided to wait until the new council year for a replacement Chairman to be appointed – he was acting as the 'stand in' Chairman for the time being.

He said, as always, the beachfront remained a massive attraction for residents and visitors alike. The unspoilt frontage and sweeping beach towards the Otter Estuary

were always going to be popular. The Council's role was to make sure the facilities and general standards were as good as they can be.

The Environment Agency still rated water quality as 'Excellent' and this was despite considerable run-off from the River Otter. The beach benefited from committed residents who picked up litter, plastic, small trees and bushes as well as all the usual debris brought in by the tides.

As part of the drive towards eliminating single use plastic, the town council was actively looking at installing drinking water fountains at Steamer Steps and the Jubilee Shelter. This was in addition to the existing taps towards the eastern end of the beach. The cost of water fountains was in the order of £500 each but the additional cost of linking to a water supply and installing suitable drainage was substantial. The Clerk was obtaining quotations for this work and she would report to the Town Council in due course.

At the same time, the Jubilee Shelter was in need of both redecoration and new windows as the existing window frames had succumbed to the effects of wind, rain and salt water. It was his aim to have these projects completed in time for the summer season.

Recent work undertaken by EDDC Streetscene staff included:

- Painting the railings above Steamer Steps
- Capping the railings on the steps by the Gentlemen's Club
- Resiting the boat registration sign by those steps to stop cars driving up on the grass behind the winches

Every day Streetscene staff empty the bins, clean the toilets and generally ensure the beachfront was looking as good as possible. He thanked those staff who had a real pride in the beachfront and were available seven days a week to keep it in good order.

He also thanked the following:

- members of the public who gave their time to clear up flotsam and jetsam from the beach
- the Knowle Village Traffic Group who had cleared the footpath by the Knowle Village Hall
- Clinton Devon Estates and the Otter Valley Association who organised the annual Otter Estuary litter pick.

He said everyone loved the unspoilt seafront and he hoped it would remain that way for a long time.

Chairman of the Community Gardens Committee

Cllr M C Hilliar said that since 2017 three plot inspections had been carried out and he was pleased to report that the plots were looking extreme good. The inspection team was once again made up of himself and two tenants, Steve Hagger and Jerry Hitt. He said if any plot holder was interested in joining the team, they should contact the Clerk who would pass on the message.

During the year a second notice board had been installed at the edge of the unloading area. He explained there was already one notice board by the bottom pedestrian gate.

He said during the last year the waiting list had been reduced from twenty-four names to ten and he was pleased that there no troublesome plots unlike previous years! During the last year eighteen plots had changed hands and this was due to various reasons but mainly because the inspection team, along with the help of the town clerk and her assistant, had been working hard to ensure high-standards were maintained.

He concluded by Steve Hagger, Jerry Hitt, the Town Clerk and her assistant for their hard work during the last year.

District Councillors

Cllr A J Dent

Cllr Dent advised that his main areas of responsibility were still within Planning and Scrutiny. He remained a member of the District's Development Management Committee (commonly known as the DMC) and he was also the Vice Chairman of the East Devon Scrutiny Committee which acted as a 'critical friend' to the cabinet and council.

The Scrutiny Committee had been chasing the roll-out of high speed broadband to homes in the rural community. The government was now claiming that the 95% target had been reached but this was nonsense as far as rural areas were concerned, particularly East Devon. The 95% target was easily reached in urban areas (there was excellent coverage in Budleigh) but once in the countryside the coverage was dismal. He knew that both the District's MPs (Sir Hugo Swire and Neil Parish) had been lobbying in Westminster and he thanked them and asked they continued their efforts.

The Scrutiny Committee had also been lobbying for improved mental health services which had been cut back in many areas – Honiton and Exmouth for example.

One surprising area which had been looked into, with the help of the Community Safety Partnership, had been that of modern-day slavery. Residents would be surprised how much of an issue this was and recently a specialist unit had been set up in Exmouth to combat this vicious crime. He said that slavery covered the exploitation of vulnerable people through forced labour, domestic servitude, forced street crime, sexual exploitation and several other categories.

He then reported that DMC sat each month and made judgements on approximately 10% of the 3,000 planning applications submitted each year. These were always the applications that caused local upset and resistance! He said that making decisions could be quite heart-searching when trying to balance local opinion against householder and developer aspirations. Members had to stick by the policies of the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF), the Local Plan and now the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan.

He said that a large proportion of refusals were taken to appeal by the applicants and to have the appeal upheld by a government inspector risked an award of costs against the council. As the government was hell-bent on easing planning regulations to overcome the national shortage of housing, this meant DMC members had to tread a very fine line when making a decision to refuse.

On a local note, the conversion of the old Post Office had been resisted on amenity and health and safety grounds, but everyone would like to see the building brought back into sensible community use. He was hopeful that a compromise could be reached with the developer, so this ambition could be achieved. He said everyone need to support the High Street which suffered from strong local competition as well as the internet.

Tesco still seemed to be progressing the conversion of Prior's shop but it was hard to tell what was happening as the windows have been obscured! There was a rumour that Abele Tree House would be converted into bed and breakfast accommodation which, if true, would bring more life into the town.

At District level, the move from Sidmouth to Honiton was progressing and the new office building had already reached three storeys. He understood the offices at Knowle would be vacated by the end of 2019.

Along with the regeneration plans for Exmouth seafront, councillors were making a big effort to make Exmouth a modern attractive town with all-weather facilities working for both local residents, visitors and the local economy for many years to come.

He said that it was what was left behind that mattered.

Cllr S V Hall

Cllr Hall advised that he sat on two District Council Committees – Audit and Governance and Licensing.

He explained that Audit and Governance had the ability to question the Council on both financial and reputational matters and Committee members regularly probed officers on subjects such as the office relocation programme, Exmouth Regeneration, and appointment of consultants and contractors. He said that it was within that forum that project budgets and impacts on project time slippage could be examined and monitored.

He said that the Council was overseen by two completely independent auditors – an internal auditor and an external auditor. The internal auditors were South West Audit Partnership who, on a rolling cycle, would normally examine a dozen or so departments each year. He was pleased to report that there were currently no major concerns.

The external auditor was KPMG who provided verdicts on the Council's ability to provide clear and concise accounts which were delivered on time. They also commented on the Value for Money given by EDDC. On both counts they had given "unqualified approval" which in auditor speak was as good as it got!

He then reported on his work on the Licensing Committee, of which he was Chairman. He said that 2017 had seen the approval of a tougher Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licence regime which had gone smoothly.

The second major policy had been implemented to encourage vibrant but controlled street trading in areas where it had previously been prohibited. It was intended that apart from charitable events a fee would have been payable by commercial operators, but it soon had become apparent that many charity events rely heavily on commercial stalls to make it a successful event. As an unintended consequence many long-running community events were going to be scrapped.

EDDC members had been disturbed to hear of this so had reacted quickly by suspending all fees and streamlining the application process. There would still be a number of conditions in place which would have to be adhered to and each application would trigger engagement with the relevant town or parish council, local businesses, highways and environmental health, where appropriate. This policy was due to be reviewed again in 2018 with a view to seeing what changes could be implemented in order to raise some much-needed revenue.

He concluded by mentioning the Budleigh Salterton Traffic Group which he chaired. He reported that in 2017 a Traffic Order had been granted which would mean a number of vitally important changes could be made to improve safety and access issues around the town. This would not have been possible without the support of County Cllr Mrs C Channon who had worked tirelessly to represent the town's interests.

Cllr T D Wright

Cllr Wright reported that in May 2017 he was appointed Portfolio Holder for Environment. This covered a wide range of EDDC business including green spaces, car parks, gardens, nature reserves, inspection of food outlets and safety of bathing waters and cliffs. The part of the business that had most impact on communities was the waste and recycling service.

In June a new 3-weekly residual waste collection had been rolled out in combination with a more comprehensive recycling service. There were a number of reasons for this: cost, better protection of the environment and public demand. The response from residents had exceeded all predictions so much so that more recycling rounds had to be organised as the volumes were too much for the existing crews to deal with!

EDDC now recycled 57% of collected waste (up from 46%) and the residual waste per household has reduced from 5.33 kgs per HH per week in 2012 to just 3.3 kgs pphpw which had resulted in much lower disposal costs and more income from what was recycled. The next stage was the run out of a green waste recycling service which would be starting in May. It would be a subscription service at a cost of £48 per year, which was less than £1 per week. There will be a collection every two weeks and those who registered early would get a free bin, saving £20. This service had also been brought in as a result of public demand.

He explained that the waste and recycling service put EDDC very much at the top of the league with regard to recycling rates.

Council tax bills for 2018-19 had been sent out and residents would see that EDDC had increased its precept by £5 per band D home which was an increase of 3%.

He then reported that he continued to sit on the Police & Crime Panel (PCP) for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This was the body that monitored the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The town had recently lost PCSO Major as the Chief Constable had decided that to improve performance he needed to increase the number of warranted police officers to over 3,000 and to do so, the number of PCSOs had to be decreased. In light of the increased precept the PCC was allowed to levy, the Chief Constable had agreed to look again at the numbers of PCSOs. Prior to deciding on the £12 increase in the precept for policing, the PCC had carried out a survey across many media channels – East Devon had the largest number of respondents to the survey and over 76% had been in favour of the increase, the highest proportion in the whole of the police area. The precept for a band D home in East Devon was now £188, whereas in Gloucester it was £228.

115. Open Forum

- Mr M Webb commented how attractive the town looked but was disappointed that the flag of St George was in a terrible state. He wondered if the town could take responsibility for the flag. He had spoken to a StreetScene operative who was unaware that this was their responsibility!

Cllr T D Wright said the flag was changed regularly but he would take these comments on board and see if a new flag could be purchased.

- Mr Webb also asked who was responsible for the repainting of the bridge over the old railway line at Upper Stoneborough Lane

Cllr Wright said he would look into that as well.

Cllr Dent thanked everyone for attending. He said that there was a councillor vacancy and if anyone was interested, the deadline for applications was 11 April.

He thanked his colleagues on the Town Council – everyone worked as a team and particular thanks went to Jo Vanstone and Kate Harrison who dealt with a lot of issues behind the scenes!

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.49pm.

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Chairman

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Date