

East Portlemouth Parish Council: Annual Report to the Parish delivered on 6th May 2008

Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting and thank you to Helena Holt for her very interesting talk about her role and the work of the Devon Air Ambulance Trust. Now follows a brief report on behalf of the Parish Council of council activities during the year. Thank you to Peter Reed, Vice-Chairman, for his help in preparing this.

Planning

We have had 24 planning applications to consider this year (17 previous year) and 1 alcohol licence application. The alcohol licence was refused. We objected to 5 planning applications, 3 of which have been withdrawn. A 4th objection was not supported by the Planning Office which granted the application with conditions; the 5th is currently subject to appeal following the Planning Office's refusal of permission.

Of the 19 applications we supported, with conditions in 7 cases, 2 were withdrawn. Just 1 has been refused by the Planners and this now subject to appeal.

This means that overall we have been supported by the Planning Office in the majority of cases and we will continue to work with the case officers to achieve planning outcomes that are of benefit to the community as well as the applicants.

Roads, Parking, Hedgerows and Footpaths

This year we have been troubled by over-size vehicles using satellite navigation rather than road signs to navigate our lanes – with disastrous results. A number of us have been directly involved; (I had a memorable journey one night in the cab of a 10 ton lorry guiding the driver from Goodshelter back to the A379 at Frogmore!). Emergency service vehicles also got into difficulties and reports of ambulances trying to ford the tidal road prompted a swift response from the Council. Local emergency services now have details of routes to avoid and we are expecting Devon County Highways to improve signage – and repair the damage done to lanes – thank you to Rowena House for her work.

Last year I reported that anecdotal evidence suggested nuisance parking is on the decrease but double yellow lines alone would not prevent the illegal parking we witness on a regular basis over the summer. Illegal parking and traffic wardens is now a matter for SHDC. The vexed question of how to ensure that traffic wardens are here and ticketing vehicles at busy times has yet to be addressed by them as far as we are aware – we wait to hear.

Our hedgerows and footpaths officer, Rowena, has been kept busy and we hope to see improvements to the condition of the Ferry Steps and Ditch End paths, SHDC and DCC funding permitting.

Rubbish Collections and Litter Bins

I understand that SHDC are reviewing the arrangements for rubbish collections and the collection day and time, as well as the types of lorries used, may change. Litter, particularly on the beaches and around the Ferry steps and Venus Café, continues to be a problem. SHDC Environmental Services have been asked to improve the provision and maintenance of litter bins and the collection arrangements. A new bin should now be in place at Ditch End. Please contact Environmental Services on 01803 861234 with any litter problems.

Progress with Parish Plan

It is worth repeating the Vision that underpins our Parish Plan because it is this vision that guides the Council in it's day to day work as well as in the medium and longer term.

- A Parish which protects the outstanding beauty of the local environment in which it is situated but is prepared to embrace the best the modern world has to offer
- A caring community which supports each other to provide a safe, secure and healthy way of life.

- A lifestyle that benefits from improving the living standards of all its age groups.

There are signs of progress.

Now that the final plan for the Gara Rock includes a 14 bedroom hotel as well as apartments, we have opportunities for more jobs for local people, during the construction and into the future.

Affordable housing is likely to be on the agenda for the Parish during the next 12 months. With the advice from SHDC we have commissioned an independent Housing Needs Survey together with Chivelstone and Southpool parishes and look forward to the final report. We will make sure that everyone has the opportunity to read the report and give feedback to the Council.

Finances

We started off the year with £971.00 and finished it with £1405.38; keeping enough in the bank to pay for the 2007 election expenses yet to be billed by SHDC. The unaudited financial statement is available and will be presented at the Annual Parish Council meeting which follows.

For Information.....

We look forward to good weather on Saturday, 9th August when the red arrows are attending the Salcombe Regatta. The Regatta Committee, in consultation with the Harbour Master, Police and other emergency services, is making arrangements to deal with the expected increase in visitors on that day. I attended the first consultation meeting and will ensure that everyone is kept informed; please let me know if you have any concerns or questions.

The Gara Rock site developers have informed the Parish Council that they plan to be on site towards the end of May and begin construction in June. They wish to complete the construction by September 2009. We are currently working with them on a Travel Management Plan to be agreed by SHDC.

Times for collections and deliveries of post are fast approaching the ridiculous and have been the cause of several complaints. Just because we live in a rural area should not mean that we should expect a sub-standard service. This is not a criticism of our 'posties' but of the local management who schedule the rounds and collection/delivery times.

Rumours that the public toilets by the Ferry Landing may close are apparently unfounded; I have verbal assurances from SHDC that no such plans are being made.

On the subject of affordable housing, I have asked Isobel for an update on the work of the Waterhouse Housing for East Portlemouth Ltd. Isobel tells me that the trust is expecting to receive formal confirmation of charitable status very soon; this has been complex and time consuming but is important for the success of the trust. The trustees hope to be in a position to submit a planning application in the next couple of months.

Finally, my thanks to fellow councillors and to everyone who has supported the work of the Council this year, particularly our clerk Sall Winstanley.

This ends my report. If you have any questions or comments to make to the Council you are welcome to do so now.

Lindsey Lindley, Chairman, East Portlemouth Parish Council

6th May 2008