**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING IN BURLESCOMBE**

**Held in the URC Hall, Westleigh**

**On Monday 3rd April 2017 at 7pm**

**Present**: Les Neville (Chairman), Judy Downing, Karen Collard, Cliff Taylor, Kevin Stower, David Sprague, Ray Radford, Christine Collis and heather Bainbridge

 Leslie Findlay (Parish Clerk)

Four members of the Public attended

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting thanked everyone who had submitted reports. All the reports were available to view at the meeting and will be available on the website [www.burlescombe-pc.gov.uk](http://www.burlescombe-pc.gov.uk)

1. **Chairman of the Parish Council Report**

This has been my second year as Chairman and whilst it has been at least as busy a year as last year I do feel a little more at home with my responsibilities and Local Government procedures. It has been pleasing to note the increasing number of Parishioners who have attended our meetings to raise matters of interest to them in Open Forum or simply to observe Local Government in action. I must again thank my Clerk for her guidance, support and hard work.

During the year, together with the usual, and sometimes contentious, planning applications, we have dealt with issues including, Affordable Housing, the proposed J27 development, Westleigh Quarry ROMP, the condition of our highways, HGV traffic, the condition of the play areas and the Old Railway Line (ORL) project. We have also supported and encouraged the provision of two defibrillators, one in Burlescombe and one in Westleigh. We thank and congratulate Rachel Barbary-Sprague for this highly successful initiative.

Together with the Chairmanship I am currently responsible for matters concerning the Grand Western Canal and PROW (footpaths). We are most fortunate to have the canal in our midst. Who does not enjoy the flora, fauna and leisure opportunities afforded by this Country Park? The Rangers, voluntary helpers and Wardens, do a fantastic job preserving and improving this ‘jewel in the crown’ of Mid-Devon. The amount of improvements achieved this year is quite extraordinary. A new ‘tilting weir’ has at last been installed adjacent to the old sluice near Fossend and should enable more effective control of water levels and therefore prevent a repeat of the near catastrophic breach. A new, and most impressive, information board is about to be located at Lodwells. Within the Parish, we have over 16 kilometres of PROW. These 18 paths, together with the 3 permissive footpaths along the Old Railway Line, through Park Wood, and along the western boundary of Westleigh Quarry provide excellent opportunities to enjoy our local countryside. The location of these PROW is displayed on the noticeboard by the railway bridge in Burlescombe.

I am especially pleased to report that the Old Railway Line project is within a whisker of being completed and there will shortly be an official opening. This permissive path and leisure area has become a considerable asset to the community. Many thanks go to Councillor Cliff Taylor, the volunteers from ORLAC, especially Grahame Hawkins, Councillor Ray Radford and Aggregates Industries.

In my wish list for next year I would have to include:

* Even more responsible behaviour from dog walkers regarding dog fouling along the canal towpath and our other footpaths.
* Less litter being in evidence throughout the Parish and especially at the ‘truck stop’ on the S bends above St Mary’s church. (Thank you to Councillor Judy Downing for her regular clearing of the detritus)
* DCC and AI to be more proactive in mitigating the impact of HGV traffic on the residents of Burlescombe. A commitment made 11 years ago!
* The refurbishment of the telephone box in Westleigh.
* The reestablishment of an independent community website.
* More Parishioners putting themselves forward for election or co-option as Councillors.

I sincerely thank my officers for the time, effort and commitment that they put into their Council work in general and their individual portfolios in particular.

Les Neville

1. **Highways Report from Councillor David Sprague**

My portfolio contains Highways, St. Mary’s Church, Community Hall and I am on the Planning Committee.

Our roads in general are in fairly good order, there are some exceptions. The A38 at Red Ball has some serious issues with potholes and a deteriorating surface along the hatched central area, although some potholes have been filled there is still one enormous one near the lay-by, which is causing serious vibrations to properties near the Poachers Pocket. Beer Lane is rough to say the least and has become a dumping ground for fly tippers.

The main access route through the village is also causing concern with the surface breaking and cracking up most of the way, repairs have been promised but not fulfilled. With 50,000 vehicle movements a year and a quarry with an asphalt plant we could expect some of the best roads in Devon, but instead we are told there are no funds available we will do it next year. The least we should expect is meaning full discussions on an alternative route for quarry traffic. Roads under water, flooding, blocked drains, road signs broken or missing, white lines that need painting, the catalogue is endless, with self-help being the only answer.

The Church stands at the top of the hill and is exposed to all winds and weathers is generally in good repair, although we are a small congregation we are always available for use by the community, baptism’s, weddings and funerals plus our normal Sunday services. The PCC would like to thank the council for the contribution towards the cost of churchyard grass cutting.

The Community Hall continues to flourish and improvements being carried out,

But things like digital projection and sound system is out of reach at the present time. We now have been given a DEFIB, for the use of the whole community, which is on the outside wall of the building. It is all up and running and the hall has been certificated to say we are an ‘Accredited Defibrillation Location’ having achieved the necessary standard. It has been insured and we would like to thank the council for the funds to cover the insurance.

1. **Planning Report from Councillor Karen Collard**

This will be my last report for chair of planning as I am stepping down but I will remain on the team of planning.

Well what a busy and interesting year this has been. We have had two new members which has helped amazingly. We have had three big planning issues recycling and soil at Ayshford, Junction 27 and the affordable housing in Burlescombe.

We have had on average four planning applications a month all very different in size and type.

Maiden down still goes on, we will await this year to see what happens next.

I would like to thank the planning team for all their help and attendance this last year it has been much appreciated. I would also like to thank the clerk for all her help and assistances she has given me.

I would like to wish my successor of chair of planning every success for the coming year.

1. **Quarry Liaison Report from Councillor Judy Downing**

WESTLEIGH QUARRY.

I have attended Westleigh Quarry Liaison Meetings on June 20th 2016, October 10th 2016 & January 9th 2017. The next meeting will be April 24th 2017.

I attended the Inspectors Hearings for the Devon Minerals Plan (2016-2040) at Devon County Council Headquarters in Exeter on May 24th, 25th, 26th & 27th 2016.

I spoke twice on behalf of Burlescombe Parish Council as to our concerns for the development of Penslade Sand Quarry & the effects on infrastructure & traffic movements.

I explained that residents in Burlescombe are hugely affected by lorry traffic mostly from Westleigh Stone Quarry & a little from Town Farm Sand Quarry & that if Penslade is permitted to develop there must be infrastructure in place to take lorry traffic away from residential areas, I also mentioned the possibility of development at Junction 27 & the effects of lorry transport on the Waterloo Cross area & roundabout.

The Inspector was very fair & gave all the public a chance to 'air their views'.

The outcome of my attendance was that Aggregate Industries should widen Clay Lane (near the A38) to allow lorry movement two ways & alleviate problems at Broadpath Lane at the bottom of Lambs Hill (At a later date Penslade Sand Quarry traffic can be fed into this by partially extending the exit a little more).

The Inspector also in his summing up highlighted the effect on Waterloo Cross 7 recommended highways & Quarry Industries must take this into consideration.

On July 8th Neil Parish (MP) arranged a meeting with Parish Cllrs, Aggregate Industries, Mid Devon Council & Devon County Council representatives to discuss an alternative route & possible funding- this meeting did not prove to be very fruitful!

Since this meeting Neil Parish (MP) has had a meeting with Aggregate Industries CEO (Francois Petry) at Westminster & at this meeting in November 2016 A.I. intimated they would be willing to help in some practical way (possibly supplying rock & asphalt) with an alternative route.

Devon County Council are to prepare an updated feasibility study for this alternative route.

Aggregate Industries are also willing to pay towards 20 MPH signs (Sitings suggested - St. Mary’s Car Park & near the Electricity Substation Canonsleigh), an idea has been put forward for a competition for pupils at Burlescombe C of E Primary School to design a sign.

BROADPATH & HILLHEAD QUARRY.

I have attended meetings on June 6th 2016, September 5th 2016, December 5th 2016 & March 13th 2017.

Viridor Landfill is now on course to close December 2020.

Broadpath IVC- composting closed in March 2017, green & food waste now go to Punchbowl, Crediton.

The Bagging Plant has now been sold to GRS Roadstone- no change in hours of working etc.

Houndaller is soon to start processing sand & gravel- preparation work having been carried out.

A planning application by A.I.is in for the importing of sand/gravel from Straitgate Farm (Ottery St. Mary) into Hillhead Processing Plant & the widening of Clay Lane from the Processing Plant to the A38 to facilitate two way traffic- thus will alleviate pressure of lorry movements on Broadpath Lane & the bottom of Lambs Hill in our Parish.

Devon Minerals Plan 2016-2040 will be available at the next meeting -June 12th 2017.

TOWN FARM Sand Quarry.

I have intimated that, as the Inspector recommended at the Devon Minerals Plan Hearing, Burlescombe Parish Council liaise with Town Farm Sand Quarry (Hansons) also in our Parish- we hope to have possibly a 'once yearly ‘meeting with this Quarry management!

I still pick up 'fast food' litter every weekend between the A38 & the church & continue to notify Mid Devon Council Fly Tipping of any larger items dumped!

Beer Lane is becoming a well-known 'dumping' spot also!

On April 27th 2016 I spoke on behalf of Burlescombe Parish Council at MDC (Phoenix House) concerning land allocation at Junction 27- my main points were concerns about heavy goods traffic, effect on Waterloo Cross & lack of infrastructure, also loss of farming land!

On September 9th 2016 I attended a private display at Tiverton Old Town Hall of a proposal for Junction 27.

I attended the Local Plan Review (Proposed Submission Consultation) at Willand Village Hall on January 18th 2017 & the Greater Exeter Consultation Plan at Phoenix House on March 15th 2017.

A long report due to much activity with Quarries & Planning in our area!!

**5. Old Railway Line (ORL) and Park Wood Report from Councillor Cliff Taylor**

Great progress has been made on the ORL project

Ten tonnes of scalping's have been laid around the bench and picnic tables both which are now in place.

New gates and fence have been installed at the far end of the ORL by the industrial units which has a lock to prevent unauthorized vehicles entering ,keys  are held by Myself , Parish council Chairman Les Neville and Parish Clerk Leslie Findlay , also The quarry have a key for access if required held by Jonathon  Sims.

Warning signs have been installed on the gates at the top and bottom of the steps down to the canal by the bridge.

And a sudden drop warning sign has been fixed to the tar platform.

The Tar platform is cleared in front and looks very tidy.

We have laid the scalping's around the new gates and part of the lane to help with drainage, as well as the entrance into the sports field.

The level around the picnic table has been brought up and is now much safer for the public to enjoy the view to the canal.

The project is virtually complete apart from a sign to be fixed to the gate into the wildlife area and the signage from the quarry.

We have a combination lock so we can keep the gate secured to the wildlife area.

I have attached some photos and I am sure you will all agree the ORL is looking the completed project?

The Dormice survey has been carried out by Paul Chanin Mammal Ecologist, the survey and site inspection attended by Leslie, myself and Grahame Hawkins.

The report sent has lots of information on Dormice safety and wellbeing and has helped moving forward with our coppicing schedule for the woods which has now been completed.

Myself and Leslie have a copy of the report which we will keep on the ORL file for reference

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A risk assessment has been carried out on the ORL by Les and myself on the 23rd October, a copy has been saved on file

Coppicing work has been carried out by Ben Coker, this has enabled the bank to be cleared along the garages, the fencing and adjoining properties.

Wildlife encouraging banks have been laid along with environmental woodpiles, this will enable a safe haven hopefully for varied wildlife to inhabit. The clearing will also enable plant growth over the next season and will prevent any damage of undergrowth to any adjoining property.

All overhanging branches and dangerous or rotten trees have been pruned or removed.

The whole site of the ORL has had all the undergrowth cut back on the banks and around the Tar platform.

 **Park Wood**

Dangerous fallen trees have been laid down and any overhanging branches over the footpath have been cleared.

An ongoing maintenance contract is in place for the following twelve months and a quarterly report will be provided by Grahame Hawkins on work carried out including weed killing general maintenance of footpath etc.

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**6. The Play Areas in Burlescombe and Westleigh Report from Councillor Kevin Stower**

Following my co-option onto Burlescombe Parish Council in June 2016, I took on the responsibility of overseeing use and maintenance of the two parish Play Areas in Burlescombe and Westleigh.

As someone who walks past the Play Area in Burlescombe at least twice a day, it is pleasing to see that it is used well and often by local children and visiting children, and that it is generally very well maintained in terms of appearance, control of litter, and safety. I am able to get to the Play Area in Westleigh less often, but that too appears anecdotally to be well used, and is also well maintained.

To my knowledge, there has been only one negative incident, when the litter bin in the Westleigh Play Area had not been emptied and was overflowing. My thanks to Cllr Collard for reporting and rectifying this immediately at the time.

In July 2016, I reported some damage in terms of normal wear and tear to the matting in both Play Areas, which areas were repaired and made good immediately by Mid-Devon District Council.

In February 2017, I raised some concerns I had about potential trip hazards where matting had deteriorated in some of the corners. Mr. Mike Watts, the Parks and Open Spaces Officer responded immediately as follows: “I don’t think these mats need to be replaced. I inspect both of these areas on a monthly basis and the surface meets BS1177 Standards. The standards say that gaps on rubber should be no greater than 30mm. Even when gaps are bigger then 30mm we take in account where you would fall etc. We monitor any issues in play areas and have a 10 year programme of works, which we work to.” Mr Watts and I are hoping to meet on site in the near future so that I can better familiarise myself with requirements, and to develop an ongoing dialogue with Mid-Devon District Council to ensure that the best possible service is provided to our community.

Finally, my thanks to Mr Watts and Mid-Devon District Council for the work that they do on ensuring that our Play Areas are safe and pleasant places to be, and to the Clerk and my fellow Councillors on Burlescombe Parish Council for their support and for keeping me alerted to any issues.

**7. Parish Clerk Report from Leslie Findlay**

It has been another busy year but a chance to settle into all the changes with the new legislation to do with the Transparency code. The website is fully functional now and provides all the essential data that is required as well as all the planning information.

The Parish Council received the following income in this financial year:

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| --- | --- |
| **Received** | **£** |
| Precept | 8658.25 |
| DCLG grant | 431.78 |
| VAT reclaimed | 400.71 |
| Locality Budget grants (3) | 625.00 |
| Interest | 3.79 |
| Parish Paths payment | 620.00 |
| **Total** | **10,739.53** |

Expenditure has exceeded £17,000 ranging from work being done to complete the Old Railway Line (ORL) project, maintenance of Park Wood, the ORL and footpaths, grass cutting, grants to get the grass cut in the two cemeteries, wages, Councillor expenses, rent and the annual subscriptions. The accounts will be audited both internally and externally and will be available to view.

The Parish Council purchased 150 Commemorative coins which celebrated the Queen’s 90th birthday. These were handed out to all the children in the Parish.

The assets have been increased with the purchase of the Phone Box in Westleigh, currently the PC do not have a particular use for it and would welcome any suggestions. Also an Armed Forces Day Flag which now flies above St Mary’s Church during Armed Forces week.

Training. Councillors Kevin Stower and Cliff Taylor attended the DALC new Councillors course and the Clerk attended the DALC Essential Clerks Course.

There are currently three vacancies for Councillors on the Parish Council.

**8. County Councillor Ray Radford Report**

I am pleased to represent you as your County Councillor for Burlescombe & Westleigh for the last 12 years. This May sees County Council elections and the end my term and it is my intention to stand again to represent you for another term of 4 years.

This division is called Willand & Uffculme, you might wonder what Burlescombe & Westleigh has to do with Willand & Uffculme, why it was called this, I am not sure, it is not an appropriate name, because it also includes Culmstock, Hemyock, Clayhidon, Sampford Peverell, Holcombe Rogus, Huntsham, Hockworthy & Clayhanger.  All of which have their own Parish Councils. I try and attend all these Parish Councils, as I find it the best way to pick up what is happening and needs to happen within their communities.

What do I do at County, well I am the Chairman of the Place Scrutiny, which deals with all Roads, Waste Deposal, On Street Parking, Minerals, Corporate Energy Savings, Libraries, these being some of our main activities. Devon County Cabinet will meet every month, to which I attend. Then bi-monthly we have our Full Council meeting to confirm or reject all decisions taken.

Besides this we then have more local committees, such as Highways and Traffic Orders (HATOC), we meet every three months and deal with small local traffic problems within the Mid Devon District Area. The Grand Western Canal Advisory committee which will include members from interested groups that have connections with the canal as well as Parish Councillors and MDDC members.

Even more locally, we have the Quarry Liaison Group, which is an advisory Group that Group consist of the Quarry Management, Highways, MDDC Environment, BEL and Parish Councillors. We have been for many, many years trying to make progress with improvements to HGV traffic improvements, you think the road coming out of Burlescombe is steep, that compares nothing to what we are trying to achieve, all up hill and the bottom line is money.

It is very difficult to please everyone, particularly as we have to operate with a 40% reduction in budget, brought about by Government funding cuts. £267million, it hurts, but we have managed to maintain services as well as we could with the funding available. I am hopeful that road improvement should show through, as we have been successful in applying to the Government and have been awarded a £7.1million grant for rural roads.

I will just touch on Schools funding, because Devon receives £290 per child less than the national average and all our MPs are making very strong representation to Government, that this is unacceptable. Because of our aging population, the Adult services over heated to the tune of £7m last year, therefore we are increasing the budget by £19m to cover this.

I have a small budget per year and have been pleased to have used this for the benefit of local groups, charities and organisations, this will continue.

Pleased to represent you in recent years and very much hope that I can do the same again.

9. **Report from District Councillor Heather Bainbridge**

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**10. History Group**

Meetings are held at URC hall Westleigh at 7.30p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of every month. We have a speaker every alternate month and subjects vary widely. Just a brief example, past subjects have ranged from the Romans in Exeter through teaching History in schools to the development and ultimate demise of the Concorde. After all, history is anything that happened before today. July meeting is usually an external visit, this year will be a visit to Dunkeswell aerodrome to hear about its wartime use. Meetings without a speaker are an open forum to discuss anything at all, at the moment we are reminiscing about the fifties and sixties. We ask regular members to pay £5 per year and there is a £1 sub for every meeting. Everybody is welcome, if you just want to drop in now and again we would be very pleased to see you. If you would like a current events list please contact Peter Bostock 01823 673221 or email pandcebostock@gmail.com.

**11. Craft Club**

It has been a sad time for the Craft Club as we lost our dear friend Glenis; she was such an active member and is greatly missed. Mrs Joyce Norton is doing a sterling job helping to run the club, we have about 12 regular members.

We have had several demonstrations this year including a Potter who kindly brought along a portable Pottery wheel; he gave us a very interesting talk.

Among our members are some really enthusiastic ladies, who have organised several sessions. The hall looked very festive at Christmas with knitted Santa’s, Snowmen and Angels. We are now preparing for Easter making Pom Pom Chicks and Bunnies.

We meet every 2 weeks on a Tuesday 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. in the Community hall Burlescombe, new members always welcome.

Contacts Christine Hammond 01823 674431 or Joyce Norton 01823 672582

**12. BURLESCOMBE AND WESTLEIGH COMMUNITY HALL**

The alterations to the have now been completed and the Hall Committee is grateful to all the fund-raising efforts and the Viridor Environmental Credits grant which made the work possible. Thanks are also due to the locally based builders, Colman’s, for completing the work to such a high standard.

A commercial dishwasher has been installed in the kitchen which is a further improvement to the facilities.

The Defibrillator is now installed; the Hall Committee is grateful for the initiative and effort put into this project by Rachel Barbary-Sprague and helpers.

The Hall Committee hopes to install a digital projection and associated sound system – another improvement.

The Hall continues to be a popular venue for both public and private occasions organised by Parish residents and also groups from further afield.

The Hall’s Annual General Meeting will be held on 17th May. All residents are welcome but most of all some who would be willing to join the Management Committee – none of us is getting any younger. PJW

**13. BURLESCOMBE AND WESTLEIGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

The Society continues to meet during the winter months and members enjoy a full programme of summer outings to gardens in the area.

Declining membership has meant that the Summer Show has been discontinued but the Spring Show for members only and the Craft Show (September 23rd this year) open to all residents of the Parish, are still held.

The Society, founded in 1954, can only continue if there are enough members to maintain its viability so new members are always most welcome.

 P J Walter, Hon. Secretary

14 **THE AYSHFORD FOUNDATION TRUST**

The Ayshford Foundation Trust provides grants to full-time students aged 18 and over from of the Parishes of Uffculme, Holcombe Rogus and Burlescombe, to pay for essential books and equipment. The nine Trustees are appointed by the Parish Councils, two appointed by each Parish Council, and three appointed by Devon County Council.

In 2016 nine students, including two from this Parish, applied successfully for grants.

This year there were seven applicants, including two from this Parish, and each was awarded £200.

Details of the scheme and application forms are available from the Clerk to the Trustees, P J Walter, Eastbrook, Burlescombe, TIVERTON EX16 7JT. Tel: 01823 672545

The meeting closed at 7.12pm