

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of the St. BLAISE TOWN COUNCIL
Held at the **ALEXANDER HALL**, St. Blazey
on Thursday, 27th May 2010 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Councillors:

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| J. Anderson | G Allen |
| G. Miller | R .Heyward |
| A. G. Putt | A. P. Seel |
| D. Hooper | M .Gill |
| D. Goddard | D. Scrafton |

In Attendance: Cornwall Councillor Hughes
Town Clerk

APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received Cornwall Councillor Taylor and St Blazey Police.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 28th May 2009, were taken as read, confirmed as being a true record of the meeting, proposed by Councillor Seel and seconded by Councillor Heyward, carried UNANIMOUSLY and later signed by the Chairman.

REPORT TO ST BLAISE TOWN COUNCIL BY CORNWALL COUNCILLOR ROY TAYLOR

My apologies for not giving this report in person to the annual meeting of the Town Council.

June of 2009 saw the elections to Cornwall Council and I was voted in as the member representing St Blaise. My electoral division is smaller than the former RBC ward with the excluded parts now being ably represented by David Hughes as part of the Tywardreath Division.

The new Cornwall Council has a Conservative / Independent administration and for the first year of the council I have taken on the Shadow Cabinet role for Waste and the Environment. I have been actively campaigning against the incinerator intended for St Dennis (we are downwind of the thing). The SITA planning appeal is still ongoing and the result will not be known for some time.

I serve on the Waste Panel, the Fire Working Group, the Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Human Resources Committee. I also attend meetings of the Environment Scrutiny Committee (this matches my shadow cabinet role), the Cabinet and of course full Council. A part of the Housing working group, I have been involved in single issue panels on Homelessness, the Empty Property Strategy and Homechoice.

There have been monthly meetings with officers updating on the progress of the Eco Town and I am pleased to be a part of the St Blaise Town Plan development process into which many have contributed and Doug Scrafton has put so much work.

After much persistence I was able to obtain the £15K funding for 2009 / 2010 for the Neighbourhood Wardens from Cornwall Council. In the process it became apparent that the 2008 / 2009 funding had also not been paid. This was rectified. I continue to attempt to get funding for future years.

The lack of a proper footpath outside the Middleway Doctor's Surgery is still the most important outstanding local issue in need of a resolution. Land ownership is still the problem and I am trying to

open negotiations with the relevant parties. This has been delayed and I would prefer to give a verbal explanation than to give an answer in print. I remain determined to “make it happen” nonetheless.

Last summer I joined the board of the Burrows Centre Ltd and continue as Chair of Fourways Management Committee.

I continue to hold surgeries as before and without going into detail have to say that the breadth of issues I now meet in casework is quite astounding.

Former Councillor Michael Burley recently accompanied me to a meeting of the council and he will always be welcome at County Hall.

REPORT TO ST BLAISE TOWN COUNCIL BY CORNWALL COUNCILLOR DAVID HUGHES

To me it seems incredible that over a year has passed since the formation of the new Cornwall Council. I must at first thank the Chairman and members of St Blaise Town Council for making me welcome at your meetings. I should perhaps offer an Apology for intervening too frequently during the main body of the meetings and thank you for your tolerance. Having been a member of Tywardreath and Par Parish Council for many years, my role as district and Cornwall Councillor there has tended to merge with my Parish Council involvement and I am guilty of carrying this habit through to St Blazey. I will try to curb my enthusiasm in the future.

Cornwall Council

The new unitary authority was, effectively, thrust upon us by Central Government with minimal consultation or public involvement and this still rankles with many people. Nevertheless, Cornwall Council is here to stay and we must make it work to our benefit.

According to the bean counters, the target of £15 million savings in year one has been achieved and further substantial savings are anticipated over the coming year. Unfortunately, the first years savings have been absorbed by “transition costs” and are therefore not reflected in our Council Tax bills. With the anticipated massive cuts in Central Government funding for the county, currently some 70% of total funding, it seems unlikely to me we shall see any significant benefits from the ongoing savings in the near future, other than some minimisation in the impact on services of cuts in central funding.

The first few months of the new authority were difficult as staff and members adjusted to dramatic changes in procedures and responsibilities. The problems were, in my opinion, accentuated because members and officers of the old County Council had very little appreciation of the wide range of services provided by the District Council and a lack of understanding of the importance which the electorate and Town and Parish Councils give to local input into decisions which affect their communities.

Those of us from District Council backgrounds were made to feel ‘poor relations’. I am glad to say that, little by little, we are disabusing them of this misconception. Early attempts to “kick Community Networks into the long grass” were strongly resisted and I hope that, within the next year, we will be able to shape these as an effective means of developing localism.

Planning

The Planning system established by the Interim Authority was deeply flawed and took away much of the opportunity for local involvement. I am pleased to say that the Planning Procedures Panel has worked hard and effectively from Day 1 to redress the deficiencies and, hopefully by the end of the year, we will have a system which is even more sensitive to local considerations than that which existed before.

Most importantly, we want Town and Parish Councils to play a more active role at pre-application stages so that when applications come forward for approval they will have been amended to take into consideration local concerns. This will inevitably increase the work load of Parish Planning Committees and will require the members to have a greater understanding of the Planning process. Training sessions will be provided and I would urge Members to attend as many as possible.

Flooding

Following the floods in Par Lane last Autumn there has been extensive public consultation and an on-going programme of work by County Highways and the Environment Agency which should help minimise future risks. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to Teresa Frost for using her enormous powers of persuasion and diplomacy to get this up and running.

As part of this action a coordinated flood emergency plan is emerging, involving all relevant agencies and the public. Par/St Blazey is being used as a model for developing similar schemes County-wide.

Boundaries

The divisional boundaries used for Cornwall Council election last year were clearly unrealistic for the area and last autumn the boundary commission invited further consultation on revised boundaries. I presented detailed proposals which would have helped relate divisional boundaries more realistically to existing parishes and foreseeable development. Unfortunately these did not satisfy the “numbers-games” of the up-country bureaucrats and were rejected. As a result, the next election will be fought, for St Blazey, on two divisions, Par-St Blazey Gate (from Polmear Road, Par to the Eden Project) and St Blazey (the rest of St Blazey, including Tywardreath Highway).

Eco Town

During the past year Imerys’ proposed Eco Town has been accepted, which includes the redevelopment of the Par Harbour complex. Whilst I will wait to see the detail before giving wholehearted support to the scheme, initial impressions suggest that this could make a significant contribution to the regeneration of Par/St Blazey.

The developers have so far given every impression of being prepared to consult and to react positively to suggestions made. We must take full advantage of this and seek to use the opportunity to bring real advantages to the wider community of St Blazey. It seems highly likely that the development at Par Docks will start at the end of next year as they see this as a “flagship” of their project. Let’s cash in on this.

Par Beach

Discussions continue between Tywardreath and Par Parish Council and Cornwall Council regarding the ownership and management of Par beach. Progress towards a joint management scheme for the public areas is very positive, but on the transfer of ownership and ring-fencing revenue from the lease of the Caravan Site there is little positive to report. We are soon to have a site meeting with Julian German, the portfolio holder. If this fails to produce progress then stronger action may be required.

Community Development

Over the last year, as I have got to know the part of my division which falls within St Blazey Parish, I have become increasingly aware of the lack of “community” in the large estates such as Manor View and Old Roselyon. This is in direct contrast to the rest of St Blazey, Par and Tywardreath. With the Par Lane estate about to start and the prospect of the Par Harbour scheme in the near future, I think we should be trying to develop ways of bringing these areas into more active involvement.

POLICE REPORT

PC Toms sent the following report.

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|----------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|----|
| Theft | 102 | Detected 12 | Criminal Damage | 99 |
| Detected 6 | | | | |
| Assault | 55 | Detected 33 | Burglary | |
| 27 | Detected 5 | | | |
| Drug Crime | 16 | Detected 16 | Vehicle Crime | 14 |
| Fraud | 6 | Detected 3 | Arson | 4 |
| Public Order Offences | 15 | Detected 10 | Offence against police | 3 |
| Leave without paying | 3 | Detected 1 | Sexual Assault | 3 |
| Death by Dangerous Driving | 1 | Detected 1 | Other | 1 |

Total 349 Detected 101

Total Crimes in St Blazey 2009/10 349

Total Crimes in St Blazey 2008/09 361

With a total of 349 crimes recorded for 2009/10 in comparison to 361 recorded for 2008/9 there has been a slight drop in recorded crime.

This is shown in the figures for Criminal Damage which are down from 119 last year to 99 this year and Burglary which is down from 43 to 27 with an increased detection rate of 5%.

Overall this shows a decreasing trend in crime locally, confirming that Devon and Cornwall is the 4th safest place to live in the Country.

Rob and Jamie are continuing to engage with the community wherever they can and Rebecca is making an excellent start since her appointment in October 2009. The neighbourhood team is back to full numbers and intends to improve on last years success.

The boxing Club is going from strength to strength with plans in the pipeline to get some of the more advances students to St Austell gym to take their training more seriously, whilst broadening the student base at Fourways Youth Club to include younger children also.

Jamie is now trained to coach Tag Rugby and funds are on the way for him and Rebecca to start providing lessons for young children.

Rebecca's enquiries into restoring the Town Fountain are proving successful; a recent engineer inspection has provided the information necessary to begin work, with local groups offering to assist in its clean up.

The St Blaise Growing Together meetings are providing good ideas to get more local people involved in improving the Town.

St Blaise PACT is still running successfully, with three local priorities being addressed:-

SPEEDING – Continued speed checks are being carried out in the area by the Police and PCSO's with Bodmin Traffic Unit making regular checks with advanced equipment.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – There has been a significant drop in the number of calls regarding nuisance youths with local groups becoming more responsive and engaging with the police in a much more positive way.

PARKING – The responsibility for parking is no longer police responsibility and rests with Cornwall Council who use Serco for this purpose. They are in the process of employing more Civil Enforcement Officers to patrol the streets and car parks. Vehicle obstruction remains the responsibility of the Police.

Patrols are carried out by the Nest team (Neighbourhood safety team) between 8am and 10pm , seizing alcohol, dispersing large groups and issuing warning notices with St Austell assisting whenever possible.

Upcoming events include the Fourways Summer Event (date to be confirmed), 999 Emergency Services Day on 19th June at the Eden Project and the Harvest Cup (date to be confirmed).

CHAIRMANS REPORT

As usual I would like to thank all the Councillors for the hard work they have put in over the last 12 months. Councillor Doug Scrafton was elected Councillor and Councillor Richard Heyward was co-opted onto the Council.

The Community Network has met a number of times over the last ten months when issues have been raised over planning procedures (are our recommendations being given appropriate consideration) and with the quality of street cleaning (this is particularly inadequate in parts of St Blaise). These meetings have high-lighted other issues which need to be addressed. There is slow progress in devolving services, mainly due to existing contracts in place.

The Town Plan is in its final draft and will shortly be sent to the printers, I would like to thank Councillor Scrafton for the many hours of hard work he has put into the project. This plan has given us a clear mandate. The plan will be sent to appropriate departments and organisations giving a clear view of the way the residents of St Blaise wish their Town to evolve.

The Burrows Centre was signed over to us on 12th August 2009, Outline planning permission for an extension has been granted. The next step is to source funding to complete the project.

Cornwall Council Highways dept, the Environment Agency and South west Water have been working together to alleviate the problem of flooding in our area, de-silting drains, making sure that leats flow freely etc. There are other problems yet to be rectified and work is ongoing. We have been assured by Highways that all conditions imposed on Wainhomes by them as part of planning permission approval for the Par Lane development must be adhered to, to prevent exasperating the risk of flooding.

Our footpaths and Piggy Alley are being maintained by E Veerman. A new bus shelter has been erected in Lamellyn and anti-social behaviour is being kept under control by the presence of the Police, two PCSO's and the Community Wardens. Funding for the Warden Scheme is in doubt but talks with Cornwall Council are ongoing. St Blazey Community Watch still meet every three months, this is a forum for the residents of St Blaise to bring their concerns to the attention of the Council and the Police.

The redevelopment of Par Docks is now second on the list within the Eco-Town scheme. Regular public consultations are being held by Orascom and Imerys, the development company is now called Eco-Bos.

The Carlyon Bay Project is going ahead and it is hoped that outline plans will be submitted to Cornwall Council towards the end of the year. A liaison group has been set up and we are being kept informed as the development progresses.

A feasibility study was carried out on the land at the rear of Rose Hill with a view to building houses but this was rejected by Cornwall Council.

The Councils wreath to honour the war dead was laid on Remembrance Sunday and the Councils Christmas Trees looked superb as usual. The carol service just goes from strength to strength and this time we had the Biscovey Junior Boys School Choir in attendance at the Football Club. Four harmonising Ladies called De-Je-Vu together with Imerys Eastern Male Voice Choir performed at the Church. After the concert in the Church, refreshments of hog roast, mince pies and mulled wine were served in the Football Club. A goodtime was had by all. In February we enjoyed St Blaise Feast Week, organised by St Blaise Church, Biscovey Junior School, The Eden Project with a little help from ourselves. The high-light was a lantern procession through the town with Bishop Tim in attendance followed by a short service with the blessing of throats. Refreshments were served in the Football Club and we enjoyed a firework display. It is hoped that this event will become an Annual event.

As can be seen, we have had another full and productive year, trying to make St Blazey a better place in which to live. We Strive to Better.

The Annual Meeting closed at 7.18pm