Ide Parish Council

Chairman’s report for the year May 2018 – May 2019

Delivered at Annual Parish Meeting 15 May 2019

**A new Parish Council.**

The 2nd of May saw a new four year cycle with elections to parish and district councils. Four parish councillors did not seek re-election. John Smart, Barry Hookins, Chris Bishop and Sarah Tiley served over 50 years between them. John was treasurer and village hall representative for two decades. Barry was chairman for three years, sat on the planning committee, worked as school liaison, helped set up the new emergency planning group, is a member of the Weir Meadow Working Group, and, twice, built the play area. Chris chaired the Neighbourhood Plan steering group to success despite formal objections from district, city and county councils. And Sarah took on running the cemetery as well as sitting on the planning committee. We thank them on behalf of the village for their marvellous contributions.

Three new parish councillors were elected. Jenny Lundh, Jessica Paine and Carolyn Tysoe join Pete Bishop, Andy Swain, Rachel Herbert, Mark Thomas and Nick Bradley to form the new council. One vacancy remains, and we’ll look at co-opting another councillor over the next few weeks.

Three new district councillors were elected for Kenn Valley Ward: Alison Foden, Charles Nuttall and Andy Swain, whose day job is, of course, an Ide parish councillor. Our congratulations to all three. And our warm thanks to the outgoing district councillors, John Goodey and Kevin Lake, who served our ward and this parish so assiduously over the last 10 years or so, attending these meetings, giving valuable advice, supporting our projects and providing useful financial help. I have written to them both to thank them for their service to our community.

**Parish Clerk.**

The council employs one member of staff, the parish clerk and financial officer, Mel Liversage, who was appointed in October 2017. Mel has a formal contract of employment for 17 hours per month. She and I conducted her annual appraisal in March, with a very satisfactory outcome. We rely on her for the smooth running of parish council and planning committee meetings, and the significant paperwork that goes with them. She holds responsibility for keeping proper financial records, budgeting, and managing the four bank accounts the council runs. Our finances are in good health, and well managed. It is a job requiring calmness, tact and persistence. Parish councils where the chairman and clerk work easily together have a head start – and we are lucky in this respect. Thank you Mel for all the work you do and the way you do it.

This March we commissioned our second annual internal audit by the independent professional, Alison Marshall. She makes objective assessments across the range of administrative functions of the council, the policies we apply, and the records we keep, to assure the quality and probity of the council’s operation. In November, the council adopted a new anti-fraud and corruption policy as part of its response to the audit. Her full report appears as part of the annual council meeting immediately following this.

 **Parish Council Meetings.**

As well as our scheduled two monthly meetings, we held two extraordinary meetings: one on 21 May to consider the Independent Examiner’s report on Ide Neighbourhood Plan; and one on 6 February to approve the appointment of landscape architects to develop a planning application for Weir Meadow as a recreation ground. There were no extra public Parish Meetings. Updated Standing Orders for Ide Parish Council were approved in July.

**Planning Committee.**

Pete Bishop continued to chair the Planning Committee with verve, assisted by Mel Liversage as clerk, and Barry Hookins and Sarah Tiley as committee members. They met five times during the year - in June, August, November, March and April. I stood in once to keep the meeting quorate, and warmly thank the group on the village’s behalf. Its task is to exercise the Parish Council’s planning functions as set out in its terms of reference, which the council delegates to it. The work takes time in preparation; effort in applying planning guidance and policy objectively as a group; and consideration in looking at applications from all sides, to reach a fair judgment. The committee meets in public, if necessary every month to honour the time limits for comments on applications in or near Ide. Neither the committee nor the parish council has the power to grant or refuse an application. But we are a statutory consultee for applications made to Teignbridge DC, and hold the right to have our views taken into account. In this regard, the policies in Ide Nighbourhood Plan carry particular weight. Updated terms of reference for the committee were approved by the council in March 2019.

**Ide Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Independent Examiner reported with full support for the plan a year ago. His report was approved in July; and went on to a village referendum on 26 July. The result of the vote was 114 to 15, in favour of adopting the plan. The turnout was 29.4% of an electorate of 439 voters. On 4 September Teignbridge DC Executive Committee voted to adopt the plan, which was formally “made” on that day. It has been cited in a number of representations made by the planning committee; has underpinned one refusal and one “back to the drawing board” decision by Teignbridge DC; and is allowing us to proceed with plans to develop Weir Meadow having established the principle of a recreation ground in the plan. There are six neighbourhood plans “made” in Teignbridge District: Abbotskerswell (pop. 1267), Bishopsteignton (2570), Exminster (3368), Newton Abbot (24,860), Ogwell (2896) and Ide (547). Special thanks to Chris Bishop for chairing the steering group of Roger Luscombe, Sue Cloke, Peter Pattison, planning consultant Paul Weston, and myself, through scores of meetings, to this historic conclusion.

**The Cemetery**

Mel Liversage attended a course on cemetery management in September, and with Sarah Tiley worked to produce updated cemetery regulations, with new forms for deeds of assignment, applications to erect inscriptions, and applications for a burial plot; and produced a new set of guidance notes. These were approved by the council in November. I’m very happy that Sarah, though standing down as a councillor, has agreed to carry on as the parish’s cemetery administrator. She has developed a wide knowledge, which will not be wasted. This is important, sensitive and fulfilling village work, completely unsung day to day. Thank you, Sarah and Mel.

**Ide School**

In September Alice Purcell took over as head teacher. I met with Alice in January to discuss safety outside the school gate; an allotment for the school – now up and running; and the MUGA. A practical working arrangement was agreed in July to allow residents to book the MUGA free of charge for personal or family use, with a charge for groups or clubs. There is a website booking form; a list of named key holders; and an agreed set of terms and conditions. Thank you to Rachel Herbert, Barry Hookins, and to Ann Boyce chairman of governors, for their work on this.

**Defibrillator.**

The cardiac defibrillator was taken to patients three times, but in each event was not deployed. It needs a monthly check on its battery and housing, which Sarah Tiley took on when we first bought it. Thank you now to Brenda Mosedale for taking on this task.

**Memorial Hall and The Hub**

The work done by the hall refurbishment committee to achieve such a fabulous result, now with solar panels on the roof to benefit the shop and the hall, is extraordinary. They just ploughed on and on and on. In particular our thanks go to Brenda Spivey, Penny Smith who moved back to Cornwall in the winter (a loss to the shop and the art group as well), Ian Campbell and David Williams. Our thanks go to Carol Whitehart and to Jackie Chadwick for holding the jobs of booking agent and key holders for the Hall and Hub respectively – and for always being available on the phone and in person.

**Traffic safety**

An action group called Safe Routes for Ide formed last year to press for improved controls on traffic breaking the legal restrictions along Doctors Walk, Balls Farm Road and Little Johns Cross Hill. Andy Swain and Pete Bishop reported in detail to the January meeting on traffic surveys conducted in November and December; and on police enforcement actions conducted in July, August and October. On the strength of this, the Council passed a resolution in March to support measures to make Balls Farm Road a No Through Road for vehicles by closing it at one end.

**Emergency Planning**

Barry Hookins, Pete Bishop, Dave Black and Ian Campbell formed a working group to look at flood risk. This developed into a wider Emergency Planning exercise, including flood, snow, and traffic accident. It resulted in a comprehensive Emergency Plan which the council will consider tonight. Thank you to this group for the huge amount of work put in. [At its meeting after this report, the council welcomed and adopted the plan].

**Climate Emergency**

In March the council debated the accelerating effects of climate change; and voted to declare a Climate Emergency in Ide,proposed by Andy Swain. Future efforts will concentrate on identifying measures the community has already taken; and highlighting things – not tokens, not lip service - that we can feasibly do in the next year to make an impact.

**Ide Times**

Our monthly village magazine pops through our letterboxes for free. Do you know who delivers yours? Any idea how long it takes to put an edition together? Thank you from all of us in the village to the editors, Ann Boyce and Brenda Spivey, and to the group of volunteer deliveroos.

**Weir Meadow**

My thanks to Richard Cloke who handed over the chair of the Working Group to Stuart Brooking in March, as planned when the group started. Its other members are Tony Stearman (secretary), Cheryl Haddy, Barry Hookins, Doug Bell, Mark and Rachel Thomas, Mel Liversage, Pete Skinner, myself, and Phil Willcock. We appointed David Wilson landscape architects in January to design and develop a full planning application to provide a cricket ground, football and rugby pitch, a lit MUGA for netball and tennis, BMX track, sports pavilion and car parking; and a scheme for an agricultural access track via triangular field (owned by the Church Commissioners), across a new bridge over Fordlands Brook, across NE corner of Weir Meadow, to the Northern Fields (also owned by the Church Commissioners). We had the cost of a track and bridge estimated by two builders; and the fields have been topographically surveyed.

At their last meeting, the working group decided to ask the council to investigate the implications of buying the Northern Fields with a loan from the Public Works Loan Board, as a possible alternative to building an expensive track and bridge. If it could be achieved, this would give the parish an appreciating asset, a source of income, and control of access to the Northern Fields. The Commissioners are willing to discuss the idea. [At its meeting after this report, the council was enthusiastic and asked the working group to investigate further].

For now, our rate limiting step is bats. Pipistrelles , greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats feed in and around Weir Meadow. Julian Perrett is doing the wildlife survey for us pro bono; and he has to wait until the end of October to report because monthly surveys are required for 6 months. Stuart Brooking is doing the tree and plant survey, also pro bono; and he prepared the triangular field for surveying with his mower and tractor. Our thanks to them both.

To launch a proper fund raising effort, we need planning permission, and a three year option to purchase from the Church. This is not a swift project; but it’s definitely got the legs.

**15. Pynes Community Orchard**

In September Andy Bragg took on an annual licence for the Orchard on behalf of the Parish Council. The council shares the rent of £544 pa with him; and Andy occupies the land for us under a set of signed undertakings in the council’s favour. The rutted ground is slowly recovering from years of being a horse paddock. Monthly volunteer working parties through winter and spring restored the best trees; cut up dead wood; and cleared brambles and rubbish – viz one fridge full of food. In January we agreed heads of terms for a three year option to purchase; and expect to sign the option any day. The Pynes Community Orchard Working Group – chairman Peter Cloke, with Trevor Gardner, Mel Liversage, Andy Bragg, myself, Richard Sharman, Julian Perrett, Phil Willcock, Mark Thomas, and Carolyn Tysoe - has met every month. A fund raising prospectus and short leaflet is ready to go to the printers once the option agreement is signed: the option makes it legally binding on the Commissioners to sell it to us. Until we own it, though, the orchard must remain a private farm field, available to organized parish working parties by arrangement with Andy Bragg. It is not yet public open space.

15 May 2019 Nick Bradley