

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held at Whitestone Parish Hall on Thursday 26th April 2018 at 7.30pm.

Attendance: - Chairman of the Parish Council – Councillor L Hickman, Councillors Deric Munro, Tony Reed, Mary Belt, *Beryl Bramhall, Andy Rose, County Councillor Alan Connett, Pat Vaughan (Clerk to the Parish Council), Ms L Dyer, Mrs M Dyer, *Margaret Nierop, Philip Nierop, *Mike Quinn, Gary Lee, *Ron Bramhall, *Marian Durrant, *Gill Oakey, *Jennifer Kellagher, *Dave Lee, Dr Jane Richards, Laurence Blades, *Dr Anna Kellagher, Sheila Greenfield, *Vicky Bryant.

*These parishioner left during the meeting some of whom were attending the "Village Voices" who were practising in the Main Hall.

Apologies: Cllrs Robin Phillips and Linda Fairley, Derek Fisher, Liz Watkins, James Bryant, Judy Sandford, Martin Fairley, Peter Hanson, Sophie Collins-Evans and Eve Martin - Whitestone Baby and Toddler Group,

Councillor Hickman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone saying he was conscious that several of the parishioners present were anxious to give their reports early in the meeting as they are attending Village Voices rehearsals taking place in the main hall from 8pm and he would defer making his report until later.

Public Participation

• Dr Anna Kellagher made a complaint that notice of this meeting was not given in the forthcoming events column on the Whitestone Website. Mrs Vaughan said that the necessary notice of the Parish Meeting had been sent to Jock Kirkpatrick for publication at the same time as the notice for the April Parish Council meeting and she regretted that it had not been included in the forthcoming events although it had been posted in the Parish Council section of the website.

• Philip Nierop then made the following statement:-
I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman and his fellow councillors for their time and service to the community through their involvement on the Parish Council.

That being said I now want to raise some serious concerns about the way council business is conducted.

Chairman, it is a matter of law that any Council must both have an Agenda that specifies the business to be discussed at a Council Meeting and, that the Council cannot make a decision on any matter that has not been so specified.

Under Matters for Discussion the Council agendas routinely feature generic heading, e.g. Crossway Park without any reference to the subject for discussion – is it about dog fouling, increasing the frequency of grass cutting or maybe replacing all the play equipment with something new .. who knows?

Two such examples appear in the draft minutes of the April meeting, a decision under the heading School Houses relating to a rental review (which I will come back to) and one taken during Matters raised by the Chairman relating to an increase to the Clerk's Honorarium. Neither of these items appeared on the agenda for discussion. Guidance contained in the Governance Toolkit states "Each agenda item should make it very clear what the Council is going to consider and be precise about the subject under discussion". The agenda items I referred to were neither clear nor precise, therefore the resulting resolutions are invalid and should not be acted upon.

The April meeting was not the first occasion in which expenditure decisions have been made under "Matters raised by the Chairman". This has happened three times in recent months (The other occasions were in July last year and January this year). This practice is also contrary to the Council's own Standing Orders section 12(v). The Order and Conduct of Business, that states "the business will be conducted in accordance with the Agenda for that meeting and voting limited to items on that Agenda".

Returning the School Houses the draft minutes refer to 'three proposals being brought forward regarding a rent increase and after debate it was resolved that there should be no increase' (A decision incidentally that goes against the advice of the Letting Agents). Although as I have already stated I believe this decision is invalid I have heard an alternative version of events in which a rent increase of £10/month was proposed and carried by a formal vote. But immediately after the alternative version goes a further proposal of no increase was made then voted upon and supported by a majority. This is clearly not what appears in the draft minutes and if the alternative version was correct the second vote for no increase would in any case be invalid as it contravenes Section 8 of the Council's Standing Orders that "A decision of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except by a special resolution.

We will not know whether the draft minutes are a correct record until they are approved (or not) at next month's meeting. But if the minutes prove correct it should still be a matter of concern that the voting process was sufficiently lacking in clarity that the outcome was so misunderstood by people present in the Council chamber that night,

Lastly I would like to comment on Councillor Bramhall's proposal that details of the budget should be shown on the village website. It is surprising and disturbing that such a perfectly reasonable proposal was not supported by other Councillors. It may be inconvenient if members of the public can see the figures and ask questions but that is how local democracy is supposed to work!

In any case you may like to review guidance given to Parish Councils by the Information Commissioner's Office as this includes finalised budget under a list of information to be published. In reality Councillor Bramhall was asking the council to do something that it is expected to do under the Freedom of Information Act. So, well done Councillor Bramhall.

Chairman I don't know whether the issues I have highlighted are due to inadequate training, lack of planning or a cavalier attitude to the rules and regulations relating to the conduct of council business. I hope its not the latter.

I have raised some serious issues this evening that I believe require an equally serious response and I would be interested to hear what others may think about this. An obvious place to start would be to initiate a full review of the way the council conducts its business and its compliance with relevant guidance and legislation and I suggest that this should be an early agenda item for the new council year.

Finally I have no desire to see the Clerk deprived of an overdue increase in her honorarium but the decisions you took in the April council are not soundly made and should appear anew as clear and precise agenda items for discussion and resolution at a future council.

• Jennifer Kellagher requested that the defibrillator currently installed in the Parish Hall could be made more available for any parishioner in need in view of the time delay in accessing the hall. Discussion took place with Councillor Hickman and Dr Jane Richards saying that this problem was already under review and further negotiations would be taking place regarding moving it to an outside position.

• Lou Dyer complimented the persons responsible for the Rural Skip signage which had been placed by the bus stop to advertise the event on this coming Saturday and regretted the amount of litter which had been left along the road when the rubbish bins had been emptied by Teignbridge Council.

- Dr Anna Kellagher complained about the potholes within the parish and County Councillor Connett said that he was aware of the problems and had been assured by Devon County that they would be dealt with. He requested that all parishioners report potholes on the Devon County website as the more complaints they receive the more they will realise how serious the matter is.

Councillor Hickman thanked parishioners for their comments and then requested reports from the various organisations who are in attendance.

Cuban Airwaves

Report by Dave Lee

Last year in order to increase the scope of music played by Cuban Airwaves a decision was made to include world music in our playlist. I am pleased to report that this decision has proved to be a great success with all band members enjoying the wider choice of music. We meet in the Parish Hall on the third Friday in every month, in the evening, to play and sing a playlist taken from the popular music of the world.

So far in this first year 2017/2018 we have played:- African roots music; Portuguese Fado; popular Italian music including Neapolitan; Irish music in both Music Hall and folk tradition, Scottish songs – Mainly “The Proclaimers”, French music – Mainly from the era of Edith Piaf and Charles Trenet. One of our group has recently purchased an accordion which contributes to make a very French sound.

Our full repertoire over the 4½ years since our first meeting now encompasses 40 songs representing a wide variety of world music. This year at the Social Club music night we will be able to showcase our new French songs, and use our huge back catalogue to provide a varied programme.

Currently we have 12 enthusiastic members including 3 new singers who have temporarily joined us from the choir to sing some of the French songs.

We will always welcome new members and encourage any new instrumentalists and singers to come along. To get in touch I have included my contact details dave.lee1071@gmail.com or phone 01392 811579

Arts and Crafts Club

Report by Marian Durrant

We currently meet once a month on the second Thursday of the month from September through to May although sometimes we may have to change the date due to the pantomime or holidays. We welcome some new faces to our group this term. We work on a variety of crafts including knitting, painting, crocheting, weaving, cross stitch, embroidery, spinning, card making and sewing. We share ideas, helpful hands and enjoy a cup of coffee and a biscuit. New members are always welcome.

Whitestone Handbell Ringers

Report by Jennifer Kellagher

We are a small group who normally ring on Tuesday afternoons and would welcome new members. We rang at Treelands in February and also at the Music in the Garden event.

Whitestone Garden Club

Report by Gill Oakey

The Garden Club meet regularly for our monthly meetings, some months we have speakers covering all aspects of gardening. There were several garden visits, a day at RHS Rosemoor and two evening visits to Moretonhampstead and Bovey Tracey – both well attended.

Our Human Fruit Machine at the village fete was a great success and we also raised a few more pennies for the charity with a Splat the Rat game – real fun! Our Cream Tea and Plant afternoon had the added bonus of our first Gardeners Question Time and this proved to be very popular. Our monthly competitions have been well supported – this encourages everyone to have a go with a free membership to the year's winner.

All year we encouraged members to collect flower seeds and dry them so in December we had a seed exchange and festive supper which was a lovely way to end the year.

The Community Garden continues to be tended, spring flowers are blooming well considering the wild winter we have had. Some railway sleepers will need replacing soon so in order to keep the area up to a standard to benefit everyone we will be approaching the Parish Council to set this action in motion. We will be advised on your decisions on this matter.

Our group is now 29 people, we cannot expand too much more as the billiard room is full enough now – but we will always welcome new members and maybe some day expand to the large hall. Membership remains at only £12 a year.

Church House Educational Foundation

Report by Dr Anna Kellagher

This Trust was set up in the 18th Century by Mr John Splatt, a successful candle-maker in Heavitree. It is intended to provide financial assistance for residents of the parish of Whitestone who wish to further their education or training. All applications are assessed in confidence by the Trustees with reference to the provisions of the Trust Deed. Successful grant applications range typically from £50 to £500, depending on particular and personal circumstances.

The Trustees met twice during the year. Grants totalling just under £ 3,400 were made in response to 9 applications during 2017.

Applications, with details of what is needed, should be sent to the Hon Secretary, Mrs M. Nierop, Hillcrest, Whitestone, Exeter EX4 2HR (Tel: 01647 61419)

Whitestone Parish Plan

Report by Sheila Greenfield

Parish Plans are a statement of the community as it is at a point in time and how it sees itself developing over the next few years.

The current Steering Group volunteers would like to thank the Parish Council for its continued support over the past year and also to restate our thanks for the support received for the plan process from District Councillor Peter Bromell and County Councillor Jerry Brook.

Over the last 12 months we have been busy auditing all the documents aiming to ensure consistency of wording and presentation. We have also compiled an Appendix to the full Parish Plan which contains key documents not found within the full Parish Plan itself, e.g. copy of the original Questionnaire, parishioners 'free format box' comments, proposed Draft Action Plan, coffee morning feedback and responses, copies of the summary leaflet and final Parish Action Plan.

We have now completed production of the suite of four Whitestone Parish Plan documents and have had these printed. The Steering Group members have, as previously promised, hand delivered two documents to every household in the parish. These are a summary leaflet of the findings from the parish Questionnaire [Parish Plan Summary] and a copy of the Parish Action Plan which identifies and aims to progress items/actions which attracted significant community backing.

We have delivered three good quality copies of the full Parish Plan and its separate Appendix, printed and bound, to Les Hickman [Chair of the Parish Council] – these are for Parish Council and parishioners' use, i.e. one copy is for the Parish Council records, one copy is for Parish Councillors' use and we suggest that the third copy is placed in the library area of the parish hall [with permission, of course] where parishioners without internet access can read or refer to it but not remove or copy it. We have also made three copies available of both the delivered Parish Plan Summary and Parish Action Plan to be held with the bound documents.

We will also be putting PDF copies of the four documents [i.e. Full Parish Plan and its separate Appendix, the Parish Plan Summary and the Parish Action Plan] on the parish website. The documents are currently being carefully checked to remove 'personal data' prior to being made accessible. Once on the website, parishioners will be able to download these documents for their personal use if required.

The members of the Parish Plan Steering Group hope that residents of the parish will find the final documents of interest and use. Whilst we have now finished our work, Steering Group members are happy to attend a hand-over/start-up meeting for the Parish Action Plan if that is of assistance to those who come after us! We are in discussions with the Parish Council over this and the lists of volunteers that we have already collected after the questionnaire phase will be passed on to the Parish Council and to those who volunteer to take the Action Plan [or parts of it] forward.

We really hope that other parishioners will now volunteer to lead and/or help with implementing the Action Plan [or parts of it]. There are lots of different things to get involved with, both big and small and all of benefit to our community. After all, this is where identified aspirations can turn into reality. Have a look at the 'What's next?' front page of the Action Plan for information or contact any member of the Parish Council to express an interest. Look out for future 'start up' events.

Vicky, Marian, Peter, Andrew and Sheila would just like to say a big thank you to everyone for their interest, patience and support for the Parish Plan.

Whitestone Parish Footpaths and Bridleways

Report by Councillor Deric Munro

I had a lovely surprise on our Bridleway 2A at Rowhorne! When entering through the first gate, full of expectations to find deep mud, HEY it had been filled with hard core along its length in the first field. Of the 13 public rights of way that come under the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme 10 complied with the criteria for ease of use as laid down by Devon County Council. Those that had failed at the time of inspection were:- Footpath 9 between bottom of Hill Lane and C50 – the wide gate across from Hill Lane was extremely difficult to open or close as it was not hung at the hinge but is held with cable ties, the latch end rests on the ground and one had to stand in a muddy gully worn by water if attempting to open it. Since then on passing I noticed that the gate has now been repaired and correctly hung thus 11 public rights of way now comply!

Of the two remaining that fail both were for broken finger posts where they join the main road:-
Bridleway 10 at Whitehorse Garage – the signpost at the northern end is broken off at ground level
Footpath 23 at Copperwalls – the signpost at the southern end remains broken off at ground level.

Those that require attention, but I feel should pass, are:- Footpath 22 at Bowlsh – wooden steps installed some years ago, on steep parts of the track are in an advanced state of decay.

Ecclesiastical Parish of Whitestone with Oldridge

Report by Dr Jane Richards, Churchwarden

Since reporting to this meeting last year the church has moved on satisfactorily with a small but definite increase in attendances at services. We have been guided by our Rector, Reverend Martin Wood, assisted by Canon John Tutton and Reverend Tim Gorrington and led by the Parochial Church Council. John and Brenda Tutton were offered places at Gracey Court In Broadclyst and left us in January after many years of generous service to the team. The PCC comprises of Chairman – Reverend Martin Wood, Hon Treasurer – Dr Anna Kellagher, Secretary and Vice Chairman – Martin Fairley, Churchwarden – Dr Jane Richards, and 12 members of the congregation including representatives of Pathfinder and Oldridge.

Objectives:-

- Worship and prayer
- Pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Mission and outreach

We have one service every Sunday rotating through a said communion, a sung parish communion, a family service and evensong and Pathfinder has a weekly communion on Thursday. When a priest is unavailable members of the laity lead out services. Oldridge has three services a year – Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

Events of the past year – Mission and Outreach

As part of the week for Christian Unity in February we held our annual ecumenical service with members of other churches. During Lent the Rector ran a course at Pathfinder on Tuesdays for all the parishes of the Team. We also hosted Lent lunches on Wednesdays in the Parish Hall. It was disappointing how few people took advantage of a free meal of soup, home-made bread and apples – and an opportunity to contribute to two charities and the Exeter Food Bank with no obligation to do so.

Some members of the congregation have set up a prayer group with other local Christians which meets monthly and spawned a prayer walk in June 2017, a wonderfully Family Activity afternoon in the Autumn and a pre-Christmas children's craft session. More recently we re-gathered the children for a Palm Sunday procession led by a pony (no donkeys available).

Events of the past year – Fabric and Churchyard

During summer 2017 the outside of the church and inside of the porch was repainted. In August we held our annual churchyard working party aided by many members of the parish who are not necessarily part of the congregation. At this time we discovered that the grassy path from the porch to the Glebe House was cobbled. It has now been cleared and is much safer and more useful.

On and off throughout the year there have been problems with the church heating due to a faulty delivery of oil to the boiler. We hope that this is now resolved. The recent snow built up in the valley between the nave and north aisle roofs and leaked into the church. There were many broken nails and slipped tiles.

The most important event has been the removal of Bell 3 and its transport to Taylors of Loughborough for turning and renewal of headstocks. It was away from November until February and the sound of bell-ringing was missed by us all. We are most grateful for the support of the whole parish in raising money for this to be done, for providing labour on site and moral support throughout.

I wish to record our thanks to the people of Whitestone for the contributions they make to St Catherine's Church in cash and in kind. The Financial position of the PCC is healthy and we have paid our Common Fund due to the Diocese on time. We have also donated to a range of charities.

Whitestone Players

Report by Laurence Blades

The 2018 pantomime was Sleeping Beauty by Alan Frayne. Despite being very carefully chosen to take into account new scenery painters and an expected new adult costume team it proved to be a difficult pantomime both to produce and to perform. However, we did it! The pantomime was well received and our audiences appeared to enjoy it. It was especially rewarding this year to have several youngsters to join the cast and they all gave outstanding performances. They often showed the older cast up by the speed at which they could learn their lines and their natural ability on stage!

The final figure showed a profit in the region of £1,000. This has enabled us to make a donation of £300 to each of our designated charities for the year – DRAVET Syndrome UK and CEDAS. In addition the players contributed towards the cost of the new stage curtain.

Sadly, our costume team (who came back to help this year) have definitely said that they really are retiring this time. It leaves the Players with a serious problem and an urgent need to recruit new people to come in and take over this role. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. In most cases it will involve altering costumes rather than having to start from scratch as well as having an eye for colour and seeing a final result. Advice will be available throughout from the previous team.

In addition to the pantomime itself the children performed some of the dances at the village fete and it is hoped that this will be repeated this year. We are already planning for the next pantomime and looking forward to lots more fun and laughter.

Table Tennis

Report by Philip Nierop

Table Tennis is fun - as the raucous laughter emanating from the Parish hall on Monday evenings attests. It also makes you younger. Our average age has dropped from 58 to 44 years and it has nothing to do with the welcome addition of two new junior players. It is also a good stress buster. A hard whack at the ball even if it lands on the wrong table does wonders for the soul. We even do coaching for those who want to learn or improve their game and this can start from very first principles. No excuses then. Come and join us. Contacts Philip or Margaret Nierop and Andy or Jane Rose

Financial Report of the Parish Council

This unaudited statement of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 was presented to the Council at their meeting on 12th April 2018. The Annual Audit of the Parish Council will be completed by the Audit Commission on the 4th June 2018.

Opening Balance	£30,572.94	Expenditure	£25,322.25	
+ Income	£27,882.76	Closing Balance	*£33,133.45	*closing balance includes
	£58,455.70		£58,455.70	£615.13 P3 Grant money

An Internal Audit was completed by Mr David Hinchcliffe on 20th April 2018 confirming that the accounts properly reflect the Council's transactions in 2017/18.

Parish Council Chairman's Report

Report by Councillor Les Hickman

Previous Parish reports have indicated the increasing responsibilities passed to Parish Councils by Teignbridge District Council. Indeed this is reflected across the country as an expectation of all local communities. I am sure we have all seen the impact that changes to available resources has had on our individual and community lives, an example being the increase and severity of potholes due to a reduction in highways maintenance.

The Parish Council has continually aimed to take a balanced view in relation to decision making, in order to represent the Parish as a whole. I am pleased to report that all the areas within our Parish are now represented as we now have a Councillor living in each area, which thus optimises our local knowledge and informs decisions.

Our attendance at District meetings has meant that your voice is heard in these strategic and decision making arenas. It is, however, imperative that we recognise that any major changes in Devon will in some way have an impact on our Parish.

As you can see from the statement of accounts, your Parish Council has practiced due diligence in all its financial activity through sound financial stewardship, whilst continuing to support local activities that maintains local connectivity and engagement. However, I wish to take this opportunity reaffirm these accounts are fully audited by a local employed external auditor and the Audit Commission. However the Parish Council fully acknowledges the right of each parishioner to express a view on these matters, and as such we have received a very small number of conflicting comments in respect of the financial management of accounts. This criticism has centred on the level of reserves held and the proposed increasing Precept. For the benefit of the wider community I will take the opportunity to deal with these points.

As can be seen from the published statement above our reserves are in a healthy position, primarily due to our sole asset the School Houses. The financial benefit to the Parish amounting to (circa £8000 taking into account house insurance that is accounted for elsewhere under Parish insurance) has not only contributed to the Parish in meeting its revenue costs but has also kept our reserves healthy. We believe the purpose of these reserves is to be able to respond to projects, ensure we can manage risk and to ensure the Parish is in a sound financial position for the future. As a result we are now in a strong position to maintain services and withstand the impact of any change in the financial support that we currently receive.

You may be aware the Parish Council has asked for the Precept to be raised next year by £100 (to £6,100 p.a) even though our reserves are healthy. This increase amounts to 14 pence per person per year based on 700 people living in the Parish. May I point out that the Precept is less now that it was between years 2008 to 2012 when it went from £8,000 to £7,000 per annum. Since 2013 the Precept has been set at £6,000 and to date has remained unchanged. The planned increase of 14 pence per person is equivalent to an annual incremental rate of 2.8 pence per person over the past five years. This increase provides a small yet affordable contribution to the inflation driven costs of maintaining the Parish. I suggest that Whitestone Parish remains one of the most cost effective places to live in Devon. In addition you will be aware the Parish Plan has been published and is available. The small increase in Precept will provide a small contribution to its implementation.

The Parish Council is pleased to be able to report that a number of groups have been allocated grants this year in order to assist their continuation. Whilst this indicates support for these specific activities it is also an important function of the Parish Council to support and recognise the social connection that these groups offer individual parishioners. It should also be acknowledge that financial support for particular groups also supports the running of the Parish Hall, as monies are recycled back to the Parish Hall by way of room rental charges. The Parish Council have also this year made a "once off" extraordinary grant of over £1,000 to ensure the iconic parish bells could peel again and to compliment the tremendous fundraising activities of parishioners. Our total grant allocation out of the Precept amounts to 33.8%. May I also take this opportunity particularly to congratulate Parish Pals and Neighbourhood Watch initiatives who continue bringing individuals together.

As the focal meeting point of the parish the Parish Council maintains a clear commitment to support the work of the Parish Hall Committee, both through the grant system and by committing 41% of the Precept as a contribution towards the care and maintenance of the Hall.

We are pleased to see Crossways Park being enjoyed by so many people. This year we have further improved the park to make it accessible for everyone – there is now an additional level-access entrance to enable those with pushchairs, wheelchairs, or mobility need, to enter the park.

New garage doors have been put in place to ensure equipment of hall users is secure.

A small groups of parishioners have been trained by Devon and Cornwall Speed in speed-watch activities to try and improve road safety by increasing driver awareness following being recorded as speeding.

The Parish Council aim is to reflect your views of planning proposals and on average consider three applications at each meeting. Whilst your Council is not the arbiter of the final decision we are confident that the final decision by the Planning Department at Teignbridge District Council takes our local views into account.

This coming year your Council will continue to ensure strong financial stewardship and will also work within the new Data Protection Legislation. From a practical perspective the focus on enhancing our local environment is beginning to emerge and completing those projects already commenced – an example being the restoration of an antique plough to be erected on the milk church plinth in Whitestone as a symbol of the Parish's agricultural heritage. Whilst discussions are yet to be had to align future plans with the recently published Parish Plan it is intended that these will include the ongoing exploration of outdoor gym equipment for adult use, enhancement to the bus shelter and grassy area in the centre of the village, continued support of the great work undertaken by the Gardening Club to continue to improve the Community Garden, enhancement to the signage within the Parish and replacement of the old gardening shed adjacent to the garages.

If you have any ideas please contact a Parish Councillor – your thoughts are always welcome.

This evening I would like to record my thanks, not only to our Clerk, but to all the Councillors for their work, commitment and time that benefits the community, all of which may I emphasise is voluntary. We are particularly delighted that our long serving Councillor Mary Belt has been invited to the Queens Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in June in recognition of her many years of sterling service to the local community. Many congratulations indeed to Mary.

Finally during the coming year the Parish Councillors will continue to work on your behalf as your elected members and endeavour to reflect a balanced view from parishioners comments and feedback, many of whom are the silent majority. We hope on that basis you will see fit to support your Council during the final year prior to Parish elections. Thank you all for your reports this evening.

Mrs Vaughan (Clerk to the Parish Council) read the following reports which have been received with apologies for non-attendance:-

Whitestone Social Club

Report from Mr. Peter Hanson, Secretary

The Social Club is now 12 years old, having come into being because without a pub (at least in the village centre) or a shop, there wasn't an easy way to meet others in the village. The basic formula for our meetings is to model ourselves on the kitchen at a party - where everyone seems to congregate because that's where all the food and drink is! We all bring something to eat and drink and put it on a big table to share.

There's usually a talk or other activity at the start and this year we've had ones given by the Woodland Trust, Hamish Marshall the BBC "Spotlight" reporter and Sir Neil Butterworth, a High Court judge. We had a show by Gary Jones, a local magician which was excellent as well as our usual mid-Summer music evening to show off all the local talent. There were also a couple of visits to Coldharbour Mill and Yellingham Farm which were very enjoyable.

We have over 40 members who each pay £12 a year and anyone else can come along for £2 a time. This brings in enough to pay for speakers, hire the hall, subsidise some of the trips and gives everyone a free 3 course meal with bubbly on our anniversary, as well as a meal in the run-up to Christmas. Everyone is welcome to any meeting and we look forward to another great year

Whitestone Pilates

Report from Judy Sandford and Martin Fairley

This well attended group continues to meet every Monday evening from 6.15 to 7.15pm. With regular attendances into double figures we are able to keep the cost of a class to £5 per person. Members come from Whitestone, Tedburn, Exwick and Beyond. We are very fortunate to continue to have Caroline Dodd, an experienced and attentive teacher to lead our class. New members are always welcome and easily integrated into this friendly group.

Whitestone Band of Bell Ringers

Report from James Bryant, Tower Captain

The last 12 months have been significant in regard to the bells at St Catherines, Whitestone. In November 2017, bell hangers from John Taylor of Loughborough visited Whitestone and with assistance from a number of local parishioners, Bell 3 (dating from 1793) was removed from the tower and taken away for repair. This was a fascinating process which required the temporary relocation of the Tenor Bell on a platform in the bell chamber and then the movement and lowering of Bell 3 through two trap doors to the ground floor using block and tackle.

Unfortunately it was not possible to reinstate the bell before Christmas and so there was no Christmas or New Year ringing this year.

On a more positive note the bell was reinstated in February 2018, again with support from the community, and a number of smaller repairs were undertaken at the same time. Ringing has now recommenced.

The ringers and PCC are most grateful to all members of the community who organised and/or contributed at various fund raising events to the cost of the repairs, which amounted to around £7300 excluding VAT. We are also grateful to those who either provided their time and labour or contributed in other ways, such as providing overnight accommodation for the bell hanger (reducing costs) in order to contribute to the project. Furthermore, we wish to thank the Parish Council for a significant contribution to the funds and also District Councillor Peter Bromell, who agreed to provide a contribution to the funds from community organisation support funds available to him.

In addition to the above we are also thankful to the Parish Council who funded the full cost of a new full set of bell muffles as the previous set were no longer able to be securely attached to the bell clappers when required. The total cost of these was just over £400.

Whilst ringing has been restricted this year, we have had a new ringer learning to ring in the tower as a new skill which will help them achieve their Duke of Edinburgh award.

We continue to seek new learners and any existing ringers new to the area are most welcome. We continue to practice from 7.30 on most Thursday evenings. Please check with me or another ringer before coming along as occasionally practices do not take place on a Thursday.

Village Voices

Report by Liz Watkins

Village Voices has had a quieter year on the whole, however our appearances in the summer were well received and we continue to explore a widely diverse repertoire from a variety of genres and areas. In September we were honoured to be involved in the opening of the newly refurbished Tithe Barn at the Glebe House at the invitation of Sir Roger and Kay Norrington. Our programme included music of the era in which the barn was built. At Christmas we gave a programme of readings and carols devised by Carole Jones and Jane Rose. It was well attended and benefited as usual from the lovely acoustic in the hall and the warmth of the surroundings. As always we are indebted to our two accompanists David Lee and Gene Alford.

Parish Hall Management Committee

Report from Derek Fisher, Secretary

The past year has seen further consolidation in respect of the maintenance and improvement of the facilities offered by the hall. A Hearing Loop has been professionally installed, the main hall completely re-decorated and exposed pipe work 'boxed in'. A table trolley has been purchased, the piano renovated and rails for the stage curtains replaced. Outside signage has been illuminated and two bicycle racks installed.

Policy Documents are reviewed and amended as necessary, on an annual basis, whilst the regular checks and services in respect of fire alarms systems, boiler and portable electrical appliances have been carried out. A periodic, full electrical systems inspection was also carried out during the year.

The Committee has lost the input of one trustee during the year (yet to be replaced) but has been able to retain the services of a first class cleaner. Due to the lack of a caretaker, however, Committee members continue to perform relevant tasks on a voluntary basis.

Bookings for the hall continue to be received on a regular basis and the venue continues to be a popular facility for both local individuals and organisations as well as outside hirers.

Work has commenced on securing the highest Quality Assurance Award available for village halls and the Committee agreed to publicise its activities to a wider audience with minutes of its Committee meetings now being available on the village website.

The Parish Council has assisted in the funding of the Hearing Loop and has continued to meet the cost of both insuring the hall and funding half the cost of the cleaner for 2017 for which the Committee remains grateful.

Whitestone Baby & Toddler Group

Report from Sophie Collins-Evans and Eve Martin

Thank you for the invite, we again send our apologies as we can't make this year's meeting. We have just celebrated our 5th Birthday as Whitestone Baby & Toddlers and our numbers remain good, we still have approx. 50-60 members on our register and on average we have 18-25 regular attendees every week. We are still visited by the South Dartmoor and Teign Valley Children's Centre every 2 months with soft play and crafts.

In December last year Wendy Tume one of our founding members stood down from the group after 4½ years to take up full time employment in childcare. We have lost a valued member of our team in Wendy who has worked hard to get the group to where we are today. We wish Wendy well in her new career.

Whitestone Baby & Toddlers continues to provide a safe and friendly environment for the local community and we have families joining us from Exwick and Redhills too. The annual events of Christmas Party, Easter Egg Hunt, Mother's Day and the Summer Party are still very popular, and we continue to fundraise for new toys and equipment throughout the year.

We still run the group through volunteers and without them we would not be able to offer the sessions we do. We have recently had a clear out of the garage of all the old toys, so we can fill it back up with new ones. We already have a new kitchen and shop.

We would like to thank you for this opportunity to let you know what's been happening at Toddler Group, and for the continued support from both Whitestone Parish Hall Committee, the Parish Council and the lovely community of Whitestone. We still feel welcome and we are proud to be part of this lovely community. Wishing you all good health and happiness in 2018.

Public Participation

Gary Lee raised more points regarding the potholes within the parish and the Chairman and County Councillor Connett reiterated the need for everyone to report these on the Devon County Council website.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

These Minutes were presented to the Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 10th May 2018 and duly signed by the Parish Council Chairman as a true copy.