## CHRISTOW ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021

Over ZOOM on Tuesday 4th May 2021

**Minutes of the Meeting**

### Apologies received from Cllr S Purser, Cllr J Brook and P French

### Chairman’s Report for the year 2020/2021.

This report starts from April 2019 those 2 years which has seen such a change in the way we live our lives.

What is very disappointing is that we still have not received mobile phone coverage in the parish, even the planning permission was given by the Park for a tower on Bennah Hill 3 years ago.

Speeding through the village has been an issue for many years, the council having discussions with the police and Devon County Council the outcome being that with their hands being tied with present legislation nothing officially could be achieved, 2 parishioners Angela & John Newton came up with the idea of the children at Christow Primary School designing notice boards to put up around the entrance to the village, this proved very successful with the county agreeing to this as long as they were put on private land.

Another topic was the forming of a community garden in the village, finding a piece of land was proving very difficult, finally the land owned by Teignbridge District Council adjoining Stafford’s Close was the preferred site, things was moving forward with 12 interested in getting it started when at the same time a housing needs survey was being conducted within the Parish, the outcome being that 14 affordable houses were needed to be built to cover the need, this being established there was a likelihood of the building taking place on the same piece of land, therefor the community garden project is on hold to see the outcome of the land or we can find an alternative site.

We are also looking at producing an A5 sheet welcome letter for people who move into the village, we are working with Community Land Trust, Acorn and the Church to finalize the content and best way of distribution.

Another welcomed addition during lockdown was the formation of the farmers market in the valley, it was very well supported and being able to see people although at a distance was refreshing, when the field at Frenches, Nursery became too wet to use the Parish Council allowed them to use the car park by the Community Hall as the hall was not open because of Covid, this importantly meant they could continue.

Finance and the precept, we had to increase the precept this year above inflation for many reasons, when we were encouraged by Devon County to have a Lenghtsman and they would fund 50% it is now 22% we will look to continue this work as it has proved so beneficial to the village, we received a Council grant of £1000 per year up to 3 years ago now it is zero, the play area at Layne fields is leased from Teignbridge D.C. for £300 a year soon the council are stopping to cut the grass at the same time we will not be paying the £300 but the cost of cutting the grass will far exceed that, so as you can see our funding is being cut and the increase in precept this year will only bring in £463.00 on top of this we are blest with such excellent facilities Playpark, Skatepark, recreation field, toilets, allotments and cemetery which all have to be kept at a good standard.

Finally, as we are fingers crossed beginning to come out of lockdown and leading a near normal life again, the council with other organizations are looking to have a village celebration in August as a thank you to all those who have done so much in the community over this very difficult time.

Tom Archer Chairman

**Report from County Councillor, DNP Ranger and Police.**

Annual Report from Devon County Councillor Jerry Brook - As we draw to the end of the year and the end of a four years election term it is worth reflecting on what has been an extraordinary period.

The coronavirus has tested the resolve of everyone throughout the county and although we are seeing a way forward with the vaccination programme, some of those challenges will persist into the future. The county council has received considerable funding from central government throughout to help individuals and businesses and to co-ordinate with the NHS processes and schemes to assist in making the people of Devon safe. More latterly the vaccination program spread across various sites in the county has functioned well and has worked very efficiently. I think it is worth thanking the many volunteers who gave their time to make this possible. The overall infection rate in Devon is the lowest in the country which I believe is testament to the people of Devon and their self-discipline.

The 2021/2022 financial budget is the first for ten years not to be influenced by the austerity measures that we have worked with since 2010. Over the ten years period the council has made savings of expenditure in excess of £280m and now receives £180m less funding directly from central government. The savings have been achieved through reorganisation of some services like the libraries and youth services. A massive reduction in staff numbers, mostly through natural wastage but not entirely, contributed to those savings. The contributions from council tax have increased year on year. This year’s increase being the highest with 3% of the 4.9% increase being ring fenced for adult care provision. The increases overall have helped to mitigate the reduced funding from central government.

Adult care services and Children and young people’s services continue to be led by demand.

People in general are living longer, as they get older their needs inevitably increase and so does their vulnerabilities. To ensure they are cared for properly requires more intensified assistance and care.

Young people’s services saw a considerable upward spike in the numbers of children entering the service. This I think could well be linked to the difficulties generated by the lockdown. Hopefully most of those individuals with the correct help will get through their problems.

The highways and waste service has continued to provide service throughout the year. Recycling centres reopened as soon as was practicably possible. A number within the county are to be enlarged to assist in the increase in recyclable commodities.

The highway network as we all know has been excessively damaged from long periods of continuous bad weather. The service during the first full lock down was unable to make repairs in the usual way. This put the system on the back foot for the remainder of the year. It meant that £7.5m destined for pothole repair remained unspent by the end of the financial year. That money has been brought forward to 2021/2022 budget year and will be utilised for the purpose intended. £75m of capital was invested into the highway network along with £50m in revenue. With 8000 miles of highway in the county that amount of revenue remains relatively low. Increases in the gulley clearing services has helped with getting water off the highway, however, without proper jetting of connecting pipe work, sometimes that procedure can be ineffectual. Much of the drainage system is now aging and does require capital investment to get it working correctly. The council have though been successful in drawing down funding from special funds made available from central government to assist in road repairs. This has made possible the resurfacing of some of the minor road network that might not of been a priority. Tedburn, Dunsford and Hennock to name three of those parishes that benefitted from these funds.

Transport links are essential if the county is to become an economic force. Improvements to the rail network along the Dawlish line are progressing. The government have agreed to open the line to Okehampton which will be a great boost for that part of the county. The A361 north devon link road is to be upgraded in parts to make it safer. The pilot scheme in Newton Abbot to bring speeds down to 20mph will I’m sure be successful. This will enable safer driving but more importantly allow walkers and cyclists to commute in the confidence of being safe. On the success of that pilot I’m sure that will start a process to alter speed limits elsewhere in the county.

On education I have reported often the massive financial disparity in what the children receive in the education budget in Devon in comparison to what other authorities receive in other parts of the country. We have been part of the 40 Group receiving the lowest contributions. This situation has improved slightly, due mainly to continued lobbying by James McInnes the portfolio holder and the educational team. This work needs to continue so that the school children of Devon receive the same financial support as other children throughout the country.

The climate emergency has become a very focal issue for all of us. The recent climate change strategy document that was out for ten weeks of consultation is the blueprint for the future. It clearly sets a timetable for the council and the people of Devon to meet carbon zero. More importantly though it will eventually create a sustainable environment for everyone. It won’t come free or without massive cultural changes and sacrifices by all of us. The strategy though is well constructed with scientific support and I support it one hundred percent.

As many of you will be aware the county council owns about nine and a half thousand acres, divided into sixty farms across the county. I’ve had a significant role throughout my tenure as a councillor in the farm’s estate. This service that is not unique to Devon, is though continuing to create opportunities for new entrants into agriculture. Many come to the estate with entrepreneurial ideas and environmentally sensitive farming systems. As agriculture progresses into the carbon neutral future these new entrants will be at the fore front of that aim.

In conclusion the year has been a massive challenge for the council from changing working practices to accommodate the pandemic, at the same time maintaining a solid financial situation whist ensuring all service provision continued unimpeded. What ever the outcome of the election your county council is very fit for purpose.

Teignbridge District Councillor Stephen Purser - In this extraordinary year of virtual meetings that unfortunately are about to become illegal we are all holding meetings prior to the deadline.  
I will try to attend some but my own parish council has three meetings on Tuesday and I have other commitments later in the week.  
Over the year I have tried to send all of you that have held meetings a monthly update of what is happening at Teignbridge. I therefore do not feel a rerun of all those in an annual report is what you really want, I trust you agree.  
In terms of this months update we are in the period of purdah up to the election on Thursday. Please do exercise your right to vote in a COVID secure way, do remember to take a pencil!  
Various grants are ending and starting so please do look at the Teignbridge website for current situation.  
Newton Abbot town centre to have a £9 million plus revamp with proposed 4 screen cinema and changed market hall and performance centre.

Garden Club Report - All 2020 planned Garden visits/shows were cancelled due to the pandemic. Our 2020 accounts were approved “virtually” and the existing committee and officers remained in place for a further year. We were fortunate in late summer to enjoy a sunny Summer Gathering in the garden of Kennick House. Good food and conversation were a welcome change for many members. 2021 has started in much the same way with all inside meetings cancelled but we all look forward to our first garden visit on May 6th at Torview in Highweek. Paul French, Chair of Bridford & Teign Valley Garden Club

1st Teign Valley Scouts report - During the pandemic face-2-face meetings have not been permitted. Beavers (6-8yrs) and Cubs (8-10yrs) did however meet on Zoom doing quizzes, cooking etc. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts (10-14 yrs.) recently resumed outdoor activities following strict covid Risk Assessment rules and procedures and we look forward to a full outdoor summer programme. But we desperately need more adult help in all three sections, so please make contact with any of the section leaders, or me if you can help.

We held our AGM on Zoom. Dawn Clayburn stepped down after several years as Treasurer and was replaced by Duncan Riches. The rest of the Exec Committee remained in office. Many thanks Dawn and welcome Duncan. Paul French, Group Scout Leader  
Teign Tennis Trust – As playing Tennis was not restricted under the Covid guidance the club has had a good year with an increase of membership. The coach now reports 38 juniors, and he is doing an amazing job. There has been some trespassing on the court and the people were spoken to so this will hopefully not happen again. Membership from young adults have increased also.

Church – Ruth Frampton reported that the Church has suffered from the Covid restrictions, but the telephone service has been a lifeline to many as a lot of the community has not be able to come into the church building. Sher hope that this service will continue and in August there are plan for a community celebration.

Community Larder – in 3 days’ time the larder has been open for 1 year. It was created from Emergency funds and donations and its aim was to support struggling families. The organisers have been surprised by the need for the larder which is now inside the church. Larder boxes are in other villages and we believe it is here to stay for the foreseeable future. The larder is now also being uses as a source to reduce food waste from generous donation of greens and vegetable and the community are being encouraged to take from that and donate something else if it can be afforded.

TVCH – Thanked the community for their support of the hall although it has been shut for most of the lockdown time grants from local authorities has ensured that hall will still be a viable building once restrictions have been lifted. The grants have helped to make sure the hall will be Covid safe for users. During lock down the first phase of hte refurbishment was undertaken and once the hall is open again the community will see the differences, including new commercial dish washer, acoustic panels which are presently being decorated by a local artist. The hall is open for Election day.

### Open Forum for parishioners.

The clerk read an email from a parishioner with regard to the parish flag pole, the councillors agreed to add this to the next agenda to discuss further.

**Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Tom Archer will present the Parish Award and closing remarks.**

Cllr Archer explained that the parish shield had been donated by a former councillor who had it made from an old school desk. He then noted that during the last 18months the community has pulled together supporting one and other throughout the Covid pandemic and it was very difficult to single out just one individual. Cllr Archer praised the community and admitted that he felt glad to be living in such a caring village. All the councillors agreed with the chairman’s comments and agreed that award should go to the whole community as a thank you during this very difficult time, the clerk will ask the surgery in Layne Field if the shield could be displayed there for all to enjoy. The council will go back to face-to-face meeting from the 1st of June and looked forward next year’s Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 21.08pm

