

Appledore Annual Village Assembly (25th April 2016)
7.30pm Village Hall

Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

Apologies

None.

Minutes of 20th April 2015

These were agreed by those present. Proposed by Mr. B. Knight. Seconded Mr. A. Elphick.

Report by Chairman of the Council

The chair introduced the new team of councillors. Over the year, the council had considered 22 planning applications which included the development of 7 houses replacing the The Railway Tavern at Appledore Station. Cllr. Helen Hennig was thanked for her sterling work which had brought the toilets up to such high standards that the council often received compliments. Tom Hennessy was congratulated for keeping the roads and verges free from litter and was presented with a brush to clean the road signs with. The Knights and Elphicks were thanked for saving Parkwood Picnic site. A new initiative Community Speed Watch was being trialled and had been seen out on Appledore roads. Cllr. Chris Vane had spent many hours on the new website which would be up and running shortly. The council's new logo designed by Nigel Comber could be seen on council paperwork, etc. The new road surface and rumble strips at Fourwents Crossroads had been completed and should reduce the dangers there. Ken Girkin was thanked for overseeing the footpaths. Thanks also to everyone who had helped organise the refreshments. The chair also advised of the passing of Barry Wright who had been a council member for many years.

County Cllr Mike Hill Report

County Council tax had increase by 2% and 1.99% for Adult Social Care whilst funding from central government had fallen by 20%. Services had not been affected greatly. Libraries had stayed open and the council was looking to make full use of the buildings. Community Wardens though reduced in number were still working with communities. Cllr Hill apologised for the lack of proper consultation over the sale of Parkwood. The process was being restarted and the council was open to suggestions for its management. The funding announced for the lorry park off the M20 was good news as it should address the issue of lorry parking on rural roads.

Borough Cllr. Mick Burgess

Ashford Borough Council funds came from council tax and business rates. It was looking to make savings and to take income from all assets. Landscape services would be brought in-house to make savings and buildings were being renovated to be able to rent profitably. The borough council had plans to improve economic activity in the area through various ideas: New Cinema in Bank Street; Ashford College Campus; Expansion of the outlet; Dance Academy; Signal upgrade for station so that the Eurostar would stop there; Creation of an industrial zone at Sevington; further housing expansion at Chilmington Green. The benefits of increased construction, tourism and education provision would spill into the rural areas as well.

Appledore Recreation Ground Management Committee

The Recreation Ground is used by two active football clubs. The senior Sunday football team came close to winning their league. The Prince Albert team are also doing well. A youth team may be starting up too. The Recreation Ground Management Committee have recently resurfaced one of the tennis courts. The courts are open free to the public, just turn up and play. They will be working on the football training area next. Future plans include adult fitness equipment and improving the parking alongside the track. The committee had organised its 33rd car rally and it had been the most successful one ever.

Appledore Village Hall Committee

The Village Hall Committee had spent the last year ticking of the safety requirements including new emergency doors. With the closure of the surgery, Hamstreet Surgery is considering using the hall for prescription collections. The committee will be holding its AGM on the 13th June at 7.30pm. All welcome to attend.

Carm (Care in the Community)

Carm is a group funded by the big lottery and other donations providing services for older people with mobility issues. They provide three services. The befriending service is a home visit or telephone call once a week. Meeting points (coffee mornings) provide an opportunity for people to spend time with others. One is held every Tuesday at 10 am in the Methodist Church. Reminiscence is a musical therapy, to help people to talk, held in care centres and residential homes. More volunteers are needed, as there is a waiting list for those seeking help.

Appledore Garden Society

The Garden Society is a very social club covering the technical to the social with, speakers and summer visits to homes and gardens. Its full program is available from its website or its secretary Tessa Knight.

Appledore History Society

The History Society, which meets on the 3rd Thursday in the Methodist Chapel, also hold short talks by members or outside speakers as well as assisting the general public with research enquiries. Its' aim is to collect information and artefacts to do with current and past events in Appledore ranging from newspaper articles to hats, books, signs, etc. Residents were requested to keep anything they see and pass it on to the society. They are looking for a new home for its archives in order to open them to visitors. Any suggestions would be welcomed.

Riding Club

The Riding Club is still very active with events run throughout the year which include a treasure hunt, an organised trip to Olympia for the horse trials and a Christmas meal. There is also plenty of opportunity to learn and improve skills through the skills clinic, competitions and their own mini show.

Appledore Art Club

The Art Club, which has recently been set up, is becoming well known. It meets on a Tuesday morning every other week in the village hall. Just bring your own paints and enjoy creating something unique. It is quite informal. Later this year, they may hold a small exhibition for residents to enjoy over a coffee.

Appledore Walking Group

In the last year, the walking group had enjoyed 10 walks, 6 local walks which always start from the recreation ground and 4 local area walks. The recent wet weather had made conditions very difficult and they had had to abandon a walk, in Rye, due to strong winds. The six regular walkers try to use as many of the paths as possible so as to keep them open.

International Community of Dark Skies

There was also a presentation from Ashford Astronomical Society about the proposal to create a 'Dark Skies Community' which would include Appledore and the surrounding parishes. Currently the Ashford area has some of the least polluted night skies of the country, allowing good night time observation of the constellations and stars. The 'Dark Skies Community' would be an area where the provision of future lighting for roads and towns would be selected so as to direct lighting onto the roads themselves or to where the light is needed only, with little emission upwards into the sky. Hooded lights and LED lights are possible solutions.

Public Questions

Defibrillator: A resident requested the council to enquire about these and whether Appledore should have one.

Financial Report: A resident asked why no financial report about the council had been given. It was advised that this meeting was not a council meeting and that a financial report would be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Creation of a footpath by Griffin Cottages: It was advised with the current finding shortage, it was unlikely that this would be achieved in the near future.

Allotments: A resident observed that the allotments were very untidy. It was advised that part of the hire agreement was that the plots should be maintained. The parish council had no authority to control the actions of hirers.

Goal Posts on the Recreation Ground: It was commented that local youngsters had not been allowed to use the goal posts and that the recreation ground was not used by residents.

Dark Skies: It was suggested that the allotments could be turned into a dark sky viewing area.

The meeting was closed.