

The Parish of Colaton Raleigh

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

held on Thursday 25th April 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr. R. Clay (Chair)
Cllr. C. Pound
Cllr. J. Papworth
Cllr. Stephen Manley
Cllr. M. Stoyle
Cllr. C. Pawson-Pounds (7.50pm)

In Attendance: Mrs. Susan Tyrrell (Clerk)
Cllr. Jess Bailey (DCC)
Members of public – 13

1. Apologies for Absence: Ed Suttee

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th April 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. The Chair's Review

I would like to start by welcoming you all to our Annual Parish meeting and will quickly run through a review of the last year.

The council elections at the beginning of the year resulted in the return of six councillors leaving two vacancies. At our May meeting we co-opted Chloe Pawson Pounds back onto the council and welcomed Mark Stoyle as a new councillor. This gave us a full complement of eight councillors.

Following the recent resignations of our Chairman Kevin Donnelly and Jere Woods we are again recruiting to fill two vacancies. Thanks to Kevin for his work as Chairman and Jere for his work co-ordinating the Flood Emergency Plan.

I would also like to thank our Parish Clerk and the Councillors for their continued efforts to maintain the council and its business. I would like to thank those members of the public who have attended our meetings and contributed fully to council work at sub-committee level and with direct involvement in work on the ground.

Last year we also welcomed three new District Councillors – Melanie Martin, Charlotte Fitzgerald and Henry Riddell. Along with Jess Bailey, who has remained as our Devon County Councillor, we would like to thank them for attending our meetings and keeping us updated with District and County Council matters.

In May we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles and distributed Coronation mugs to the children who live in the village. We would like to thank Janice Papworth for her efforts in obtaining the mugs and distributing them to the children. Finding the children is not an easy task under the Data Protection Regulations.

The flooding on 9th May was the first time that our Emergency Plan had been put into operation and we learnt that several parts would need to be revised. The plan is currently being revised and we would like to thank Chris Silverthorne, Jere Woods and particularly David Forward for all of their efforts to resolve the issues. The Parish Clerk and Janice Papworth attended a number of Flood Recovery Group meetings organised by the Flood Resilience Team at Devon County Council. These have resulted in the Property Flood Resilience Programme which is now being put in place in Colaton Raleigh.

In May the Council signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge allowing it to demonstrate that it is committed to standing up to poor behaviour across the sector and to drive positive changes to support civil and respectful conduct.

At our July meeting we welcomed Dr Sam Bridgewater who gave a presentation on the Lower Otter Restoration Project. He also introduced us to the Landscape Recovery Plan which has now received funding from DEFRA. This proposes to improve the wider Otter Valley area for wildlife and for people. The Parish Council has agreed to become part of the Stakeholders group allowing us to contribute and participate in the development phase of the project. This will ensure

that local communities can have our say about what we value in the current landscape, what aspects of the countryside we feel are less than ideal and what changes in land management, access, and habitat creation that we would like to see. Janice and Danuta are our representatives at these meetings, and we look forward to their reports as the plan progresses.

Planning

We continue to monitor the emerging East Devon Local Plan and its impact on Colaton Raleigh. Chris Pound attended a workshop in November, and more are planned for later this year.

Some 20 Planning Applications have been considered in the year and our comments have been returned to East Devon District Council.

Footpaths

We extend our thanks to Ed Suttee and Danuta Joyce for their continued sterling work to maintain our footpaths. Unfortunately, the heavy rain and hedge cutting tractors have partly negated the resurfacing work that we carried out on Wrinkley Lane last year and we are in discussion with Clinton Devon Estates about the reinstatement. The path along the river is badly eroded in places and continues to be monitored. The footbridge at Dotton has now suffered erosion and has been closed and we continue to monitor the situation although it is not in our Parish area. Devon Highways are investigating alternative remedial options.

Highways

Thanks are due to Jess Bailey, Stephen Manley and the Highways Working Group for persevering in the battle with Devon Highways to and get a response to proposals for traffic calming and pedestrian protection in the centre of the village. We wish Stephen Manley a rapid recovery from his illness and look forward to him being able to take an active part in the Parish Council again.

Potholes continue to be a major problem although at last the resurfacing of the bad section of road at the Southern end of the village has improved this area.

We have added an additional mirror at the Hawkerland Road junction to try and improve visibility. Thanks are due to Jess Bailey for providing the funding of new Speedwatch signs which will soon be erected on Exmouth Road.

Thanks are due to the Speedwatch team for their tireless work. They would very much welcome any new volunteers to their team if anyone can make the time available to join them.

Community Infrastructure Levy

There is over £20,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 monies which are available to us if we can develop compliant projects. This money comes with certain caveats and is available for sport, open spaces and infrastructure improvements. We need the community to let us know how they would like to spend the money and we plan to set up a group of volunteers to develop these ideas and engage with the District Council to take these ideas forward.

Robert Clay, Chair, Colaton Raleigh Parish Council

4. The Colaton Raleigh Charities

One request for a grant was received and approved during the year.

The bank balance at the end of 2023 was £884.99 and share investments amounted to £4097.34

Christopher Pound (Trustee)

5. Presentation from Otter Valley Association given by Haylor Lass (Chair of OVA) and Geoffrey Porter

The presentation included an explanation from Haylor Lass of the activities currently undertaken by the OVA, which sets out to encourage and educate in the appreciation and enjoyment of the Lower Otter Valey.

This was followed by a discussion, given by Geoffrey Porter, on the water testing being carried out on the River Otter by Citizen Scientists.

We were told:

- The OVA regularly test the River Otter at Colaton Raleigh at sites including opposite the mill at Otterton, below the farm at Colaton Raleigh, Colaton and Otterton brooks
- A total of 270 results have been taken from 22 surveyors on the River Otter. In 2023, 92 samples were recorded by 11 testers.
- Testing is carried out in Colaton Raleigh due to concern about water safety at swimming spots alongside a large dairy herd.

- Testing is fairly basic and attempts to provide data not taken by the Environment Agency. Sites approved by Westcountry Rivers Trust are ideally 1.5k to 2k apart.
- Over half of the pollution comes from agriculture, one-third from SW Water and the rest is miscellaneous
- Turbidity and the issue of soil run off – silt settles on the riverbed smothering plants and hinders fish spawning.
- Importance of farming practices. Arable crops are more of a problem than pasture, maize growing poses the biggest problem due to the resulting bare earth.
- Himalayan balsam when it dies back leaves bare earth on the banks and is more liable to wash away the banks during flooding
- Phosphate testing in the river showed levels at 200-300ppb/particles per billion in August and October (River Otter limit set at 120ppb). Testing cannot differentiate between sources, but generally 50/50 farming and SWW discharges. Phosphates encourage the growth of algae which takes oxygen out of the water.
- TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) in ppm. Drinking water: 50 to 150 excellent, 150-250 good, 250-300 fair 300-500 poor. Recommended levels for rivers 118. Colaton Raleigh levels 106 (Feb) to 188 (May).
- Wildlife count reported 26 birds, 5 water birds, but an absence of grey herons and dippers.

Questions from Councillors and members of the public included:

- How responsive is Clinton Devon Estates to reports on agricultural issues?
- Where is the discharge from SW Water sewerage getting into the River Otter?
- What improvements are coming in the future?
- How soon will there be legislation to ensure the separation of storm water and sewage to prevent overflows into water courses?
- Who owns the River Otter?

Further information can be found at www.ova.org.uk

A final request was made by Haylor Lass for a member of the OVA in Colaton Raleigh to come forward as a village representative.

6. Open Forum

Comments from residents:

- Litter in the countryside – thanks to everyone who has helped with litter picking which is a particular nuisance by Dotton and in the layby on Exmouth Road. Could a notice be placed in the layby stating ‘No Overnight Parking’.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Susan Tyrrell, Parish Clerk, can be contacted by telephone on 01395 568166
or by email at clerk@colatonraleigh-pc.gov.uk Website: www.colatonraleigh-pc.gov.uk

Signed (Chair)

Date