

Minutes of the Fowey Town Council Annual Parish Meeting
held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 17th April 2019

18/208 Present

The Mayor	Cllr Mrs R Finlay
The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J Berryman
Councillors	Cllr Mrs R Cooke Cllr Mrs F Day Cllr P Fassam Cllr S Griffin Cllr P Hughes Cllr Mrs L Simms Cllr Mrs C Woodside

18/209 In attendance

The Town Clerk, Sally Vincent
Cornwall Councillor Andrew Virr
Tasha Davis, Community Link Officer
Mike Larter (TSSO)
PC Chris Coutts
Helen Toms

18/210 Apologies None

18/211 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th April 2018

It was proposed by Cllr Berryman, seconded Cllr Fassam and RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

18/212 Matters Arising not on the Agenda

None

18/213 Annual Report of the Town Council – Cllr Mrs Ruth Finlay

2018-2019 has been an eventful year for the Town Council. The Town was honoured by the visit of TRH’s the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall in July 2018, which saw a town full of visitors. The royal couple were introduced on the Town Quay to gig rowers, local boat builders as well as our Fowey RNLI crew. The Duke and Duchess spent the morning going into local shops and businesses before a welcome drink in Haveners, where they were introduced to many of our community groups.

A few weeks later HMS Montrose, our affiliated ship sailed into Fowey for a glorious weekend of activities. The visit was a very special event for the town, as the Commanding officer, Capt. Connor O’Neill said ‘it was with great pride that we sailed Montrose into her affiliated town for the first time’, the feeling for many of us was mutual.

For 6 weeks from November to December there was a public consultation on the draft NP. There were numerous events which saw members of the public attend to give us their thoughts and views. This consultation was followed by a

period of rewriting, inclusion of new maps, and changes to the website before formally handing over the NP to CC in January 2019. CC is currently completing their formal consultation process and they have appointed an examiner to review our NP. We hope the referendum which will complete this whole process will be in the next few months. Why is the NP significant? It is planning guidelines, which the people of Fowey have said are important to them and it is a blue print for our parish up to 2030.

One of the least enjoyable aspects of life in Fowey this past year has been the closure of Place Road due to the collapse of the wall. This has caused irritation to the people of Place Road, Rose Hill and Vicarage Meadow as well as a longer route for the Fire service. Many months of surveying followed while a suitable engineering solution was found. Work began in March and will hopefully be completed in three months' time.

In October 2018, Barclays Bank closed, which was significant as the last working bank in Fowey. There was much concern with the loss also of the ATM, one of the busiest in Cornwall and a vital resource to our many visitors and locals. Fowey Town Council worked with local organisations, particularly the Chamber of Commerce and attended many meetings with Barclays to impress how the retention of the ATM was essential to the town. We are pleased that the decision to keep the ATM was decided in the town's favour. Sadly in March 2019, Fowey Library also closed. Cornwall had 31 statutory libraries in 2015 and was faced with having to make a saving of 55% to its budget with the result that 25 libraries have now been devolved to Parish and Town Councils. In Fowey, we did not have the luxury of a 'returned library' at zero cost, because of the complicated leases on the old library building.

Fowey Town Council is investigating the possibility of buying Barclays Bank, with a view to providing a 'community hub' on the ground floor of the old bank with a letting opportunity on the top floor to fund it. Within the 'community hub' could potentially be a community café and the provision of a micro library, which would bring a community asset into the town centre. A partnership with Squires Field Community Centre could also enable specific groups such as the pre-school, Brownies, Guides, the Memory Café etc. to have 'targeted' library boxes available at the centre...

The work of the Town Council includes the management of the Town's 'assets' such as the Town Quay, the Town Hall, Squires Field, Playground and of course public toilets. Fowey Town Council also manage the cutting of grass and weed killing within the Town and try very hard to keep the standards of cleanliness and good order our residents expect.

We welcomed two new Councillors in October, Cllr Cooke and Cllr Griffin. Elected and co-opted Councillors are, of course, volunteers who give up a lot of their time to represent the people of Fowey parish. Can I thank all committee chairs for their hard work during the year and all the Councillors for their commitment and patience during what has been such a busy year. Also, can I give a big vote of thanks to our Town Clerk, Sally Vincent who works very hard on behalf of the Town Council and the people of Fowey calmly dealing with the increasing workload of the Council from the day to day issues, to dealing with the far more complex legal and financial concerns which come from an increasing portfolio of public buildings held by the Town Council.

18/214 Annual Report of the Planning Committee – Cllr Giles Asker Esq

I spoke last year on how I believed as a council and as a planning committee we try to be fair and treat every application equally reviewing it within the framework of Planning Legislation as it has been laid out by central government, whether it be a relatively minor application for an extension or the development of new housing, be it for an outline application, detailed or even a retrospective application, which we seem to be getting more of, all are viewed equally with respect to their own individual merits.

This year however, it has at times been difficult to believe that matters are dealt with in an even and equal manner beyond the constraints of our own Town Hall.

As I have said previously Planning Legislation has been written in such a way that it allows for a degree of interpretation, which is fine but it also allows for interpretation to be made in ways that suit agendas. Additionally it requires everyone who is tasked with interpreting it to fully understand the legislation and what Government is trying to achieve with it.

We have this year had the application for 46 new homes within the AONB beyond the edge of the towns defined settlement boundary. The application included a much needed affordable homes provision of 50%. The question is, 'how do you balance the protection of the AONB, avoid unlocking the whole rural approach to the town from four turnings, whilst at the same time delivering much needed affordable housing.'

It at times takes the judgement of Solomon to resolve such conundrums.

My view is and was that if you are going to sacrifice AONB land, losing it for the generations yet to come, it should only be done so if the price you pay is worth what you receive in return.

Which is why it becomes so frustrating that Cornwall Council have set a benchmark of 50% affordable on viability arguments for exception sites. It stops developers sharpening their pencils and delivering what is needed which is more than a 50% affordable provision.

In this application, salt was rubbed into the wounds of defeat, when a County Councillor asked the developer at committee if "In his professional opinion could more than 50% affordable be delivered whilst at the same time retaining the sites financial viability?"

Now that to me is like the Lord of the Manor asking a poacher, "If I cut the number of gamekeepers I employ you won't start poaching more will you?" I am sure I could hear the developer laughing to himself as he drove off in his Aston Martin.

At the end of the day the scheme has been passed, we get more affordable units, but I fear it will be at a greater cost than we have yet to realise.

At the other end of the spectrum we recently had an application for a single dwelling, which generated far, far more comment and objection than the application for the 46 houses did. This too was within the AONB but its massing and proximity to the Parade drew massive criticism and as a council we felt that whilst the piece of land was suitable for development, what was being proposed was not, where the application will go from here we shall have to wait and see.

Yesterday, we viewed the new proposals for the Fowey Hotel and we look

forward to that coming to committee in due course, when everyone will have the opportunity to speak on what is a significant proposal for the town. At the time of writing we still have to find out what the new owners of the Globe have in mind for the site, as their planning applications have been coming through on the drip.

But as irksome to the Town Council as some of the way the planning system works is, it is also the fantastic thing about the planning committee you never know what's coming up next and what the overall outcome will be, the variety can be bewildering and I for one still find it educational and challenging, if not a little frustrating, but personally, I'm not sure it could ever be any other way in a truly democratic society.

18/215 Annual Report of the Environment Committee – Cllr Mrs Ruth Finlay

It has been another interesting year for the Environment Committee and I would like to thank my fellow members for their commitment and hard work over the year.

The Environment Committee have responsibility for fourteen Gold paths in the parish, grass cutting and weed spraying in the town, upkeep of the Old Grammar School Garden, Piggy Lane triangle, the Bus stop at Lambs Barn, and the allotments. It was decided in January 2019 to add Squires Field, the Playground and the hedging area of the car park to their responsibilities.

1. The Gold Footpaths are cut as part of a partnership between the Fowey Town Council and Cornwall Council to look after these scenic Gold Public Rights of Way, with a grant to cut these paths once a the year. We have a damaged bridge with missing planks on the Saints Way near to Tregaminion Farm which Cllr Hughes is pursuing this with Cllr Virr.

At Squires Field, Cllr Griffin has been in touch with Squires Field Community Centre to discuss a proposed arts project with local children to encourage a healthy outdoor life style and clean play areas without dog mess.

Cllr Cooke has responsibility over the Playground with its fortnightly RoSPA H&S checks, undertaken by Cormac. Cllr Cooke has applied for DIY SOS funding to have some of the play equipment and benches repainted.

Cllr Day is Fowey Town Council's Tree Warden and contributes to planning application decisions involving damage or felling of trees which may or may not have a Tree protection Order. Cllr Day submitted a successful bid to the Woodland Trust in February for 60 trees – 30 to provide shade on Squires Field and 30 hedging trees for Readymoney Allotments.

2. Grass cutting around the Town is paid for by CC and Fowey Town Council; these grassed areas are so important to keeping the Town looking good during the holiday season. The committee would like to thank our contractor Lanhydrock Garden Services who have worked hard for the Town over the past year.

3. The Old Grammar School Garden received a donation of £500 earlier this year to be spent on 'planting'. Last November, local garden designer Ali Siddell, designed a new pathway in the upper garden and planting scheme. Many thanks to Ali who has given her support and designs free of charge to support Fowey Town Council's work in this well-loved garden.

4. Fowey in Bloom: Fowey Town Council support the valuable work of the volunteer Fowey in Bloom group to support their activities and also through an

annual grant from the Town Council of £500.00. This very small group of volunteers help create a colourful and cared for town from spring through to the autumn, which our visitors and locals appreciate.

5. Readymoney Allotments: this community resource continues to grow from strength to strength. 2018/19 has seen quite a turnover of plots and the new plot holders have been welcomed by our very active Readymoney Allotment Association. An Apple Orchard was planted in Jan, 2015, with old Cornish varieties which are thriving; through grafting onto new stock there are now 30 Cornish apple varieties. It is a pleasure to see an apple orchard return to the Fowey estuary.

18/216 To receive the Financial Report – Cllr John Berryman Esq

The precept increase this year has been set and it equates to a 4.8% increase. I realize as a Council we seem to go on about the rising cost of running Fowey and the extra costs Cornwall Council tries to put our way but it is true, now we potentially have a cost of providing extra library facilities to augment the once a week service for 2 hours CC have allocated Fowey, so we are trying to generate more income of our own. As I stated last year we can achieve this in 2 ways,

1. to increase the cost of services we provide, we have budgeted for an increase in the parking permits we issue
2. to provide more earning services hence the increase in the number reserved parking spaces at Squires Field.

Most people are possibly aware of the Council's interest in the ex Barclays bank premises, initially our interest centred around maintaining the cash machine as no other site was suitable for it, but as this is now secure our thoughts centre around providing a community hub in town housing a small micro library and meeting place. We have commissioned a valuation and structural survey and await the reports, a decision will be taken when these are available.

Lastly I would like to thank my fellow committee members for the work they have put in to running the finances of FTC.

18/217 Annual Report of the Town Hall Committee – Cllr Giles Asker Esq

I have sat on the Town Hall Committee, like the Planning Committee, since I became a Councillor and chairing it, as I believe my predecessors found is something akin to the Curate's egg.

I was pleased to see that we were able this year to bring the day to day running and control of the Town Quay under the same umbrella as the Town Hall, creating the Town Hall, Town Quay committee seemed to make inimitable sense given their proximity.

Additionally we have set about a very necessary review of our risk assessments for the Quay in particular, but also the Town Hall to ensure that regular inspections are undertaken in order to maintain the on-going safety of all who use the facilities.

We have reviewed the state of the bins that are stored down Webb Street behind the old Midland Bank and have purchased wooden bin enclosures. It is our intention to license the use of the area for Bins and to provide concealed

storage in order to try and reduce the mess, get rid of the fly tipping, particularly the dumping of old oil containers and food waste, in order that the whole area presents itself better for locals and visitors alike.

It is pleasing to see that we are due to host our first Wedding in the Town Hall shortly, which is an avenue that we are keen to see grow and we continue to provide space for the usual range of events held in the town.

As Chairman of the committee, I would have to say my greatest frustration is that given that the Town Hall and Town Quay are the biggest assets that we own and manage as a Council, we are unable as a committee of four individuals to spend the time on the running of these assets to the degree that they really warrant.

There is a proposal to co-opt volunteers onto the committee and I firmly believe this is a must in order to make these two assets not only pay their respective ways, but to also generate a positive contribution to the Town. To that end I will end on a little advertisement, anyone who has any ideas for events or would like to be involved in organising and providing more activities in the Town Hall or on the Quay, please get in touch, we are a very broad church and welcome anyone who has positive ideas and wants to help make the most of these fantastic venues.

18/218 Report of the Cornwall Councillor – Cllr Andrew Virr Esq

Fowey Hospital Steady progress is being made on the future of Fowey Hospital. Following the decision by CPFT to commit to converting it to an NHS Nursing Home, the NHS Commissioners NHS Kernow have agreed to formally review the hospital and consider all options for the Hospital.

Although this seems a backwards ‘process’ step, it shows commitment to resolve the issue and should allow us to move forward.

Place Road I am pleased that, finally, work has begun on repairing the wall. I was dismayed at the time it took for the work to be completed. It was over a year before work commenced. I have asked the Council to review the cause of the delay to see where learning can be gleaned.

Fowey Library Following the decision in 2015 to reduce the library budget within Fowey, CC announced the closure of the library in Fowey in March 2019. After some initial resistance by CC, I am pleased to announce that CC have agreed to consult residents on the available options for a locally run library in Fowey. I am delighted that FTC are keen to pursue the possibility of using the vacant Barclays Bank as a community centre and micro-library.

Coastal Path & Saints Way I am pleased to report that the budget for Countryside management has significantly increased for this coming financial year. I have been given assurances that the broken bridge in the proximity of Tregaminion Farm will be repaired shortly. Other improvements to the coastal path are expected. This is welcome news as walking is a delightful part of tourism in our area.

Brexit I have spoken out in opposition to the government facilitating a no-deal Brexit. I have lobbied our local MP and speak out against it at Cornwall Council.

Speed safety I am continuing to campaign for lower speed limits in the residential areas of Tywardreath and Fowey. Rather frustratingly, the approach from Cornwall Council seems to be to just continue to monitor the

current speed of traffic within the current 30mph limit. My argument is that 30mph is too fast for built up residential areas, with blind corners, parked cars, schools and shops. I am currently in dialogue with the Portfolio Holder for Highways in an attempt to give the powers to Parish Councils to decide on the most appropriate speeds for their area.

Devolution Over the past few years, a deliberate policy from Cornwall Council has been to devolve more assets to local parish councils. We have seen this in Fowey with Squires Field, Town Quay and others. Although this has brought an extra burden on the Town Council, it is heartening to see the benefits of local ownership and the improvements to the experience of residents and visitors. I hope to see more of this in the next year. We have been promised a speedy devolution of the Caffa Mill boat launch to The Fowey Harbour Commission. Please can I pay a tribute to the tireless hard work of Fowey Town Council, Fowey Chamber of Commerce, Fowey Forum and Fowey Harbour Commissioners in leading the improvements and developments of our town.

18/219 Reports from Representatives on Other Bodies

None

18/220 Public Participation

Mike Larter, our new Tri Service Safety Officer gave a comprehensive overview of his role, which was basically to be a figurehead for community safety. He confirmed that the role was still evolving but he would be working a three-day on, three-day off shift pattern and currently expected to be in Fowey for two days and in Polruan for one day.

The Mayor invited all present to join her for light refreshments before leaving.

Meeting Closed 8.01pm