



## **Cornworthy Parish Council**

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held.  
In Cornworthy Village Hall at 6.00pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Present: Cllr Tuppen (Chair), Cllr Bailey (Vice Chair), Cllr Hunt, Cllr Finn, Cllr Fowler, Cllr Thompson, and Cllr Hammond were present as was C Campos Parish Clerk.**

### **1. Chairmans and Finance Report**

Cllr Tuppen opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. He noted that a Parish meeting should be about listening, not just reporting so suggested that after each item, there could be questions from the floor. He noted that after the May 2023 election the Council was entirely new and had a lot to deal with. The March 2023 internal audit showed the council failing in 11 out of the 13 key audit areas. This year, CPC passed with flying colours, with 12 ticks and just one cross. He thanked the Clerk and his fellow councillors for all their hard work in achieving this result. He reported that in the year to March 2023, the bank balance had reduced by 44% to just £13700 but that the finances had now stabilised. The Council now has a solid authorisation and reporting system and sensible budgets. The budgets and the exact details of Council income and expenditure are posted on the Council website at the end of every month. A new parish lengthsman has been appointed, Andrew Best who lives in the Annex to End Cottage. He has a clear job specification and a sensible budget and is already getting to grips with keeping the village tidy and the drains flowing. Andrew's contact details will soon be available on the village website. However, he noted that it is everyone's responsibility to do their bit to keep the Parish looking good. Finally, he reported that the Council now has a top-class website and Facebook page. He thanked Paul Mcloughlin for creating a website that is easy to navigate, up to date and useful. A resident thanked all the Councillors for their hard work which is very much appreciated.

### **2. Defibrillators and VETS**

Cllr Fowler noted that Cornworthy Parish has 3 defibrillators, outside the Village Hall in Cornworthy, in East Cornworthy, and in Allaleigh. When he took over responsibility for the defibrillators a year ago, one was non-functional due to an expired battery. This defective battery has been replaced as have the pads in all 3 defibrillators, and a spare set has been purchased so that no defibrillator should ever be out-of-action for more than a few hours. All defibs are now fully functional and checked at least once a month.

The VETS (Volunteer Emergency Telephone System) is a scheme supported by the Community HeartBeat Trust which trains local responders to cardiac emergencies. There is a single local telephone number (01803 501019), advertised on all defibs, which contacts local volunteers who can assist. The local organiser is Janet Ronson. This year training has been provided for volunteers, raising the number of trained volunteers in the Parish to 21. A relationship with Ashprington VETS has been successfully started, leading to an exchange of ideas, and savings in the cost of training for both parishes. A map of all properties in the Parish has been produced by local volunteers and

will be distributed to VETS responders shortly. This will help them to find properties in an emergency. Local fund-raising events have raised in the region of £1500 to help with the ongoing costs of maintaining the defibs, the VETS telephone system, regular volunteer training, and other costs involved with the effective provision of defibrillators in Cornworthy Parish.

### **3. Sustainable Cornworthy**

Cllr Thompson referenced CPC's support for a Sustainable Cornworthy group (SCG) along similar lines as Sustainable Dittisham and Sustainable Ashprington. He then introduced Martin Fodder who shared a few thoughts on how to set up this organisation. He suggested arranging a meeting in the next few weeks to sort out a constitution, which is needed to tap into grant funding and getting insurance. These projects would be determined by the members of the group but could include a local Community Composting site, organising talks on home insulation, the purchase of a heat seeking camera, Hedgehog highways and Swift boxes. More ambitious projects could include electric charging points for cars. He hoped that these ideas would inspire other residents to join Sustainable Cornworthy. Cllr Thompson said that more details about SCG will be posted on the CPC website in the next few days.

### **4. P3 Parish Paths**

Cllr Finn reported that all footpaths have been surveyed and a grant application for 2024 has made to DCC. Andrew (Best) the newly appointed Parish Lengthsman, will be undertaking the footpath repair work going forward. Cllr Tuppen noted that the P3 scheme covers the replacement of steps and stiles but that it is the landowner's responsibility to keep paths clear. A resident noted that as a former P3 organiser they thought that Cornworthy's path network was very well maintained compared to other Parishes.

### **5. Village Hall**

Cllr Finn stated that it has been a successful year for Cornworthy Village Hall (CVH). By the end of November 2023, the energy efficiency and fire system upgrades had been completed and new internal doors had been installed. In April 2024, Wi-Fi was installed. The replacement of the external doors and two windows is planned to take place in June. Significant repairs to other window frames are being undertaken by volunteers, and CVH is especially indebted to Kelvin Gitsham who consistently invests a lot of time and effort into routine electrical maintenance issues. Subject to raising additional funds, further works will hopefully be undertaken in 2024 to replace the bargeboards and improve the meeting room and the kitchen.

The committee continues to focus on income generation and has a programme of events planned throughout the year. The Christmas Craft Fair at the end of November was a huge success, as was the dog show which took place on 6th May. Apple day is scheduled for 13th October and other events will follow in the autumn. These and other fund-raising activities and Hall rental income should cover the Hall's annual running costs. CVH plans to launch a Just Giving page as to date it has only raised half the target of £70,000 required for capital works

The Hall is benefitting from increased use and once again becoming the focus of village activities. Cornworthy Cinema Club screens a film every month, the Table Tennis Club is going strong, and the Pickle Ball Club set up in January is building its membership. After the dislocation caused by Covid, the Hall is once again securing bookings from residents for parties and other gatherings.

In January the CVH joined the Devon Communities Together charity, part of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). This independent body helps communities deal with the challenges which can arise from living in a rural county and has a specific team focused on helping village halls. As a result, the Hall has also become part of the South Devon Village Halls Hub which is a support network for village halls in the South Hams. Membership of these bodies has already provided significant benefits in terms of know-how and ideas for grant funding.

To foster greater collaboration and thereby support for any of the events that take place in the village, the Hall committee has established a Village Events Forum involving representatives from each of the groups/organisations/entities that organise community events in and around the parish, including the pub and the Church.

#### **6. Charlecombe Woods**

Cllr Hunt reported that the Woodland Trust are planning to cut back and deal with Ash dieback this Autumn to avoid the bird nesting season. A resident asked whether the dead Ash trees would be removed but Cllr Hunt thought that they would be left in situ.

#### **7. Dame Elizabeth Harris & John Peter Charity**

Cllr Hunt stated that details and the history of this local charity will shortly be available on the CPC website. During the financial year to 31st March 2024, gifts were made to 25 parishioners at a cost of about £875. A meeting of the trustees took place on 15th November 2023 at which they approved the accounts to 31st March 2023. These show a total of £1,204 in the current bank account and in hand, and £1,035 in the Business Reserve account. Total income in the year to 31st March 2023 was £888. The charity's main source of revenue was rental income from land. The trustees intend to hold a further meeting in the autumn of 2024 following which it is expected a further distribution will be made. A resident said he was very touched to receive a gift from the charity after a recent operation.

#### **8. BT Switch off 2024/25.**

Cllr Hammond said that the planned switch-off has been delayed until 2027. This is good news for Cornworthy as it leaves more time to find solutions to this issue. The present copper wired service, which dates back to the 1800's will be withdrawn and replaced by a service that uses wireless technology. However, in the event of a power cut routers won't work, therefore nor will the phone service. This would leave residents in the Parish relying on very patchy mobile signals in an emergency. One solution for this would be to look at ways to boost mobile coverage. Cllr Hammond said that in the short term the phone box in Cornworthy will still work. Cllr Tuppen said that the Parish Council will actively work to find a solution. A resident said that battery backups (a possible option for vulnerable residents) only last for an hour or two and cost £85. They are also hard to source.

#### **9. River Dart**

Cllr Bailey remarked that the Parish was fortunate to have access to such a beautiful river. He has attended a workshop held by Southwest Water on the issue of sewerage dumps in the river. He said it was a complex issue and that governments penalties for this were incentivising water companies to find solutions. Now there are four designated bathing sites on the river which will have to be monitored and the results made publicly available. The results make sobering reading and will be available on the CPC website.

#### **10. Reporting Problems in the Parish**

Cllr Fowler explained that residents can now report issues such as potholes, blocked drains or fly tipping to Devon County Council or South Hams District Council via the Cornworthy Parish Council website. He then gave a live demonstration on how this could be done. Cllr Bailey said that the responses to these reports had generally been excellent. A resident mentioned a recurring problem with debris on the road, Cllr Fowler also demonstrated a page which shows planned roadworks. Cllr Tuppen said it would be helpful if residents could use these resources to report issues.

A resident asked whether there could be a communal electric car charging point in the Village. The

narrow roads of Cornworthy present a challenge but Cllr Tuppen said it would be put on a future agenda for discussion. Cllr Tuppen thanked everyone for attending before closing the meeting.

The next **Parish Council Meeting** is on **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024** in the **Village Hall at 7.30pm**