

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 17-April 2024 in the Gildhouse, the Chairman Cllr. Stephen Blake opened the meeting at 6:30pm. Parish Councillors present were Stephen Blake, Steve Haynes, Michelle Carter, Pamela Idelson, Graeme Swatton and the Clerk Mrs. Lynn Pluess.

On behalf of Poundstock Parish Council the Chairman, Cllr. Stephen Blake extended a warm welcome to all gathered for the Annual Parish Meeting. The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 27-April 2023 were circulated and without any comments or matters arising and were noted.

‘Throughout the past year, our Parish Council has been actively engaged in a myriad of activities aimed at enhancing the well-being and prosperity of our community. It has indeed been a busy year, marked by significant challenges and notable achievements.

‘One particular matter that stands out is the crematorium planning application, which was overturned at judicial review. As many of you may recall, this application sparked widespread concern and opposition within our community. Both the Council and our parishioners voiced strong objections and opposition, citing various concerns ranging from environmental impact to its compatibility with the character of our parish. It was our collective efforts, coupled with the dedication of one parishioner in particular, Gemma Watton, who worked tirelessly to advocate our community’s interests and played a pivotal role in securing the decision to overturn the approval granted by Cornwall Council. On behalf of the entire Parish Council, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Gemma Watton for her unwavering commitment and tireless advocacy on behalf of our community.

‘Additionally, I am pleased to announce a significant development regarding the public toilets in Widemouth Bay. After prolonged negotiations and concerted efforts, our Parish Council has successfully acquired ownership of these essential facilities. This acquisition marks a crucial milestone in our ongoing efforts to preserve vital community amenities and ensure well-being of our residents and visitors. We can now shift our focus towards addressing the necessary remedial work required to maintain and improve the condition of the toilets. Initial steps have already been taken to address some pressing issues, including the repair of the roof and the enhancement of the water supply. However, it is important to acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. While we have made progress in addressing immediate concerns, there remain several outstanding maintenance and refurbishment tasks that demand our attention. In planning for the remedial repairs, I want to assure everyone that the Council is committed to minimising disruption to the public. As such, every effort will be made to schedule the necessary work in a manner that avoids closures whenever possible. While some inconvenience may be unavoidable, please rest assured that we will strive to keep any disruptions to a minimum.

‘Furthermore, I am excited to share another significant development that occurred in December of last year, when our Parish Council was awarded a generous grant of £25,000 towards the architects’ fee for the design of a new hall. This funding represents a major step forward in our efforts to realise this long-awaited project, which holds immense promise for the future of our community. In the coming months we look forward to sharing designs with the wider community for feedback and input. Ultimately, your approval will be sought for the final design, underscoring our commitment to transparency and community involvement every step of the way.

‘The newly established Community Area Partnership, covering 26 towns and parishes across North Cornwall, has been a transformative shift from the Community Area Network, with a broader reach and deeper engagement. We are hopeful that this new partnership will empower us to accomplish more than ever before. Planning emerged as the most discussed topic, as we all know navigating the intricacies of planning processes has been a persistent challenge. However, I am pleased to announce that we have

secured access to external planning consultants on a fixed fee basis, this ensures that we benefit from impartial and expert insights into planning matters, thereby facilitating informed decision-making.

‘As the Chairman, I have the privilege of working alongside a dedicated group of Councillors, whose unwavering commitment and tireless efforts form the bedrock of our Council’s success. I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to all Councillors for their exemplary service and steadfast dedication to Council matters. Your contributions, both individually and collectively, are nothing short of sterling, as they serve as a testament to the depth of talent and passion within our Council. Furthermore, I must take a moment to pay tribute to our Clerk, as we celebrate her 30th anniversary serving as the Clerk to our Council, her dedication to our Council is unmatched. As the Chairman, it is my honour to present a bouquet of flowers to our esteemed Clerk, for thirty years of dedicated service as a token of our appreciation and heartfelt thanks from all the Councillors on behalf of the parish’.

As a fellow Councillor, Pamela Idelson extended heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed Chairman Cllr. Stephen Blake on behalf of the Councillors, for his tireless dedication and exceptional leadership throughout his tenure, which has resulted in significant achievements and tangible progress on the projects in hand.

A written report was received from the Poundstock Ward Member Nicky Chopak, who was unable to attend the meeting: -

Another year has passed and I could suggest not much has changed in the world of Cornwall Council. Examples of this are your Council Tax has risen by the same amount as last year of 4.99% , of which 2% goes to Adult Social Care, the increased budgetary pressure on the Council has continued with the need for cuts to statutory services such as highways, school transport, maintenance of schools and public buildings, the lack of affordable housing and the difficulties with access to GP and dental services and NHS appointments and care within A & E.

We now are in the midst of a cost of living crisis, with residents struggling with their energy, rent and food bills, with an increased reliance on benefits and voluntary groups such as the Food Bank – none of which we expected to be in in the 21st Century and more particularly having just survived a global pandemic. Sadly, however, homelessness is now more common in our area, a symptom of the cost of living crisis and the lack of affordable and social housing. Developers are not rushing to help that situation, with open market housing being their priority, particularly in this area . Percentages that developers should be offering is ideally 40% plus, but they always seem to argue against this, which is disappointing. Other legislation is slowly being bought in with 100% loading on unoccupied properties and commercial waste and recycling bills being sent to holiday lets. The new waste and recycling contract is slowly rolling out across the county, and it won't be long before you will be the proud owner of a wheelie bin and food waste bin and then having to get used to fortnightly collections.

We will also be looking forward to a 20mph speed limit in some of our towns and villages. Following a successful practice run in Camelford, this will be rolled out over the next 18months once towns and villages are consulted. This is better than being assumed that 20mph was suitable for every location, so watch out for further information in your village.

Community Networks have been transformed into Community Area Partnerships, which in our case now includes Camelford. 26 parishes now have a joined up stronger voice and I have the privilege of being the Vice Chair. We have very focused meetings and so far we have discussed Health and Housing which have been very informative and well attended. Our next meeting is 10th June and all are welcome. Look out for the agenda. As part of the CAP, we have set up a specific Working Group to ensure the Health and Wellbeing of our residents is fully considered. nAs you know we have serious issues around access to medical care and

we are keen to make sure the NHS providers have North Cornwall on their radar. I was voted as Chair and am looking forward to working with those NHS partners, and fellow Councillors. I will keep you posted.

My Community Chest of £3k has been well spent this year, from goalposts and memorial benches, to flags, planters and defibrillator signage. Hopefully I will be able to offer a similar budget this year and I will let you know.

My casework is as varied as ever, from potholes and drainage, to public toilets, highways, planning and issues around adult social care, healthcare, schools and transport. Please do not hesitate to contact me and I will try my best to assist you.

I also want to give a shout out to all Parish Councillors and clerks who do a sterling job, sometimes in difficult circumstances.

I am always available via email on cllr.nicky.chopak@cornwall.gov.uk

Or leave me a message on 07810302061.

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Matthew Blows was unable to attend but conveyed his apologies. However, the Chairman, Cllr. Stephen Blake was pleased to provide an update on behalf of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group. Delighted to report that the development of the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing smoothly and is well underway towards completion. The dedicated efforts of the committee members have ensured that they are on track to present the first draft to the Parish Council and Parishioners in the near future.

Meeting Closed 18:47.

Signed: _____

Date: _____