

**RATTERY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Held Tuesday 14th April 2009 @ Rattery Village Hall 7.30pm**

**Present** - Cllr P Smerdon (Chairman), Cllr Mrs B Palk (Vice-Chair), Cllr J Hampton, Cllr A Coker  
Cllr S Levy, Cllr B Evans, C Cllr T Pennington.

**Attended by** – 8 members of the Public & Mr Gordon White – Devon Air Ambulance Trust

**Apologies for absence** – Cllr M Daymond, D Cllr C Jones

- 1) Mr Gordon White – Devon Air Ambulance Trust - a presentation was made about the work done by the Air Ambulance and how it all began and the Parish Council gave a donation to the Air Ambulance Trust on behalf of the Parish Council and Parishioners of Rattery.
- 2) Questions from Public and Councillors present.
- 3) Chairmans Report – Cllr P Smerdon – The Public Inquiry into the status of Willing Lane was held in the Village Hall over two days in August. This naturally attracted a lot of interest in the village, and needed a lot of work and research by the parish council as we were invited to present evidence to the inspector on behalf of concerned parishioners who were unanimous in their agreement with the Woodley family that the lane stay classified as private access. Thankfully, after walking the lane twice, and giving a lot of time to his deliberations, the inspector found that the case to open the lane to all traffic was not proven, and it remains private. We have had good attendance at monthly meetings, although it would be nice to see more parishioners to take part. We congratulate Trevor Pennington on being re-elected as County Councillor for our area. Trevor has forwarded our request to the County Highways for the siting of more grit bins at vulnerable places in case we experience another hard winter like the last one. The severe frosts of January have resulted in a lot of damage to the road surfaces, the resulting potholes will need constant reporting to make sure Highways are aware of them. The village hall has had its photovoltaic panels fitted, and is now contributing a significant amount of green energy to the village. The Post Office held there every Tuesday is proving increasingly popular, with regular attendance from the Police, who are keen to talk to parishioners about any issues that concern them. There is also a mouth watering selection of bread, cakes and vegetables for people to buy. Sustainable South Brent who are keen to have their own wind turbine, have submitted a planning application for a site for a 225mw turbine at Marley Thatch Farm. This is very close to our Parish Boundary. Whilst on the subject of the Parish Boundary we invite all parishioners to join us in beating the Bounds of Rattery Parish on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010. This is usually a very enjoyable 13 mile walk, all we need is good weather! We also had a chance for parishioners to put their views across to John Halliday, of County Highways, at a well attended meeting to discuss their concerns about traffic speeds on the A385. This was in response to requests from people who live along that stretch of this busy road. The proposed unitary council saga for Devon continues to drag on, at present it appears that most of Devon will retain two tier local government whilst Exeter City Council will have the status of a unitary authority. However this is subject to challenge in the courts, and the Conservatives have vowed to reverse the decision if they get elected. I guess we will still be talking about this in 2011! I have attended several meetings on the councils behalf to discuss the proposal. As usual I would like to thank the members of the council for their hard work through the year. I would like to thank our Clerk, Sharon Raggett for all the things she does on our behalf. Sharon does a lot behind the scenes to keep this council (and others) running smoothly, she always has things done on time and we are very fortunate to have such an efficient clerk.
- 4) County Cllrs Report – C Cllr T Pennington – Local Government Review – Exeter is to be a Unitary Authority and DCC have now gone for a judicial review of this decision. Council Tax and Budget for 2010 – 2011 now approved – Net Budget Increase - £9,937,000 from £525,554,000 to £539,256,000 this represents an increase of 1.89%. Band D Council Tax increase of £21.69 from £1,094 to £1,116 ie: 1.98% - this is the lowest increase in 30 years. DCC are having to make savings in view of the credit crunch one economy is leaving vacant posts infilled unless they are absolutely essential and

amalgamating departments. Currently I am Vice-Chairman of DCC and serve on the Development Management Committee and the Audit Committee. I also serve 11 parishes, Holne, Dean, Buckfastleigh West, Rattery, Staverton, Littlehempston, Berry Pomeroy, Marlton, Stoke Gabriel, Dartington.

- 5) District Cllrs Report – D Cllr C Jones – SHDC report 2009/10 - Another eventful year - with more changes to come. 'Highlights' were ....
- a) Local Government Review in Devon - Bizarre twists and turns from both the Boundary Committee (which ignored most people's views - and the lack of evidence to support change) and the Government (which defied all logic in deciding on a Unitary Exeter) with the result that the whole process became a shameful, wasteful farce ..... and pending the coming General Election we still don't know what the final outcome of all this will be .... hmmm
  - b) Streamlining and Shared Services - This continues apace at both West Devon and South Hams in order to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale - but how far can it go, and how sustainable can it be in the longer term ?? But it certainly seems to be producing some cost savings.... and it's a much better idea than a wholesale and highly expensive restructuring of local government in Devon !
  - c) Budgetary pressures - This is the ticking time-bomb, as the government (and any government) has made it clear that things will get much worse for public sector finances, and local government seems set to take a huge hit in 2011/12. SHDC is already looking to offload some services and costs on to parish councils (pretty unfairly in my view - and I'm fighting them) to save money on its own budget. But that doesn't help anyone else - especially parish councils and the residents who will still have to foot the bills, if services - especially in rural areas - are to continue. There will be trouble ahead - but even in tough times the SHDC approach needs to be fair and equitable to ensure that rural parishes (which already lose out badly to the towns in terms of services received and resources allocated) are not further discriminated against. A few barricades may need to be manned !
- 6) Village Hall Report - Mrs R Coaker - Photovoltaic panels - the hall was surveyed before they were installed and it was agreed that it was the best option and that 9p a unit will be given for extra being made to go into the grid. Now a new consultation has been done and no money is being received for the extra electricity made unless the grant money received is returned - then there are still no guarantees that if it was repayed the extra electricity produced would be payed for. This item to go onto the next PC Agenda for further discussion.
- 7) Village Green Report – Cllr S Levy - no problems this year cutting the grass and keeping it clean and tidy.
- 8) Badminton Club Report – Cllr S Levy - still going could do with some new members.
- 9) Playing Field Report – Cllr S Levy - all apparatus in good working order, some litter, and fence panel broken.
- 10) Annual Report to all Parishioners - now to be distributed May 2010.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25pm to be followed by a Parish Council meeting.