



Ashburton Town Council

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, 8 APRIL 2014 AT 8.00PM IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBERS OF THE TOWN HALL**

Present: Cllr Daw, chairman; Cllr Slater, deputy chairman
Cllrs Nutley, Prince, Hitchcock, Khan, Baker, Brewer, Posner, Nutley, Distin

In attendance: The clerk and deputy clerk, Rev D. Sherwood, The Master Bailiff, 15 members of the public and one member of the press

01/15 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Hyslop, due to work commitment and Cllr Pugh who was unwell. Acceptance of these apologies was proposed by Cllr Posner, seconded by Cllr Hitchcock. All in favour. Also apologies from Cllrs Barker, Dennis and Vogel

02/15 Public comments/statements. The public may speak for a maximum of 10 minutes on items on the agenda or items that may be considered for a future agenda at the chairman's discretion

None of the public wished to speak.

03/15 Declarations of interest. To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

04/15 To receive the minutes of the previous meeting

These were signed by the chairman as a true record.

05/14 Guest speaker – Andy Gould – Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

The chairman welcomed Mr Gould.

Thank you for letting me take up some of your valuable time this evening. It gives me the opportunity to introduce myself and to briefly explain my role. It will also give you the chance to ask any questions you may have.

I've been given the chance to develop my role within Torbay and South Devon as a result of extra funding being made available within the community safety department. Historically the majority of resources have been used to target the more deprived urban areas. Within Torbay and South Devon that would of course be the towns within Torbay, Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. My brief has been to extend the support and help we

offer to towns and areas outside of Torbay, not forgetting the really good work already being carried out by my colleagues at your local station.

So, as explained I've been given the task of getting out to areas it's just not been possible to reach to any great extent previously. I believe it is vital that we do target rural areas for the following reasons. As I am sure you are aware, especially during this extended period of austerity, we all use statistics to justify any actions taken. And I suppose, rightly so. Whatever we think of statistics and how they are sometimes used, they can be useful to allow us to spend public money in an appropriate way.

To that end I have been doing a bit of research and I have to say I have come up with a few figures which make interesting reading.

As councillors I am sure you are familiar with documents such as these. This is the Devon county council profile document for Ashburton, Buckfastleigh and the surrounding area. There are a couple of interesting figures here. Firstly, and I think this will come as no surprise to any of you, it shows the percentage of people aged 60-79 who live in this area. 24.8% in Ashburton itself, 27.2% in the surrounding area, as opposed to the national average of 16.6%. What is the point he is trying to make I hear you ask. Well, I've linked it with this document using figures compiled by research from Bristol university. The title of this document is FIRE DEATHS IN THE SOUTH WEST 22008-2013 A nice bit of light reading!! It's research looking into the demographics of all fire deaths in the South West between 2008 to 2013. What stands out is that the vast majority of accidental fire deaths occur in an age group above 50. I'm sure you can see from these figures why we need to be getting our fire safety message across in rural areas such as yours when you consider the high percentage of elderly people within this area. The document then goes on to show that in 69% of fatal cases a smoke detector was either not present or failed to raise the alarm. Smoke detectors are an integral part of our home fire safety visits.

It also identifies that the highest risk factor for fire deaths was that the victim lived alone. Linked to the fact that 59.9% of residents in this area live in ISOLATED rural communities and you will see the importance of the potential help we can give.

You may or may not be aware that a local community plan is produced for each Station within Devon and Somerset. This is the plan for Ashburton station. I realise I'm running the risk here of teaching Councillor Distin to suck eggs. I'll leave this document with you. It does have some interesting information and yet more facts and stats pertaining to the risk profile of Ashburton's 'patch'. You can also find this document on the Devon and Somerset fire and rescue website.

I could bore you with more statistics if I haven't done that already! Suffice to say that home fire safety checks are just a small part of what we are aiming to offer. As I mentioned in my email we can offer a range of services linked to all forms of community safety. These would include –

Liaising with partner agencies. An example of this would be safeguarding and sure start visits which we do in partnership with the Police or potentially social or children's

services. Over the last few months I have carried out visits in Ashburton and the surrounding area with partners such as the complex care team, the reablement team and childrens social services.

School / group talks. This could be general fire safety talks to schools linked to work the children are doing within the national curriculum. Any groups ranging from the W.I, St. John's Ambulance, Scouts, Brownies, Salvation army lunch clubs etc etc.

Targeted campaigns. This could involve potentially anything within the remit of community safety. The example I used in my introductory email involved a campaign to highlight the dangers of fire involving thatch properties. In the first instance we would concentrate on awareness and education. If ,out of that a pattern emerges in terms of concerns or bad practice we would then develop a strategy.

When I first moved into this role it was explained to me that the concept could be likened to that of a community police officer / pcso. With the best will in the world I would be struggling to be a constant face in the area, but hopefully over time I will become better known and at the very least be a point of contact for anybody needing advice, wanting a presentation, needing a home fire safety check etc.

So hopefully that's given you more of an idea of what I can offer. Like I said it's not all about statistics and figures but I am sure you will understand that, because of the world we live in, I have to be able to justify what we are doing. Within that we can then get on with what's important. And that is getting involved in our communities and providing a service that will make the people within those communities safer.

06/15 Two presentations by Cllr Daw

Cllr Daw stated they had intended to make a presentation to Cllr Pugh. Unfortunately, he was not well and would arrange a future date.

Cllr Daw presented the town council with a silver chain to hang the mayor's medallion on when not using the full chains.

07/15 Chairman's end of year report

I would like to thank my Deputy Tim Slater, all the Councillors and the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk who have given me guidance and help throughout my year of office. To some I wasn't a very good Chairman at the monthly meetings but I did my best. I took pride with Barbara in representing the town at many functions of which most were enjoyable.

It was a sad time when Councillor Wendy Gill was forced to retire through ill health. The town and the council miss her very much.

Throughout the year we have seen the Skate park being developed; Children's play area finished; Fought the closure of the Cottage Hospital; Seen the demise of Kenwyn; Seen a resurgence of the Carnival and the Swimming Pool; Stella Westharling being awarded the MBE at the Cookery School; The Food Festival going from strength to

strength and some progress on the Chuley Road Plan although unfortunately delayed by some amendments proposed by the Railway enthusiast.

In June there was the celebration of 75years of the Ashburton Woman's Institute. Throughout the years they continue to support events and raise funds for various associations in the town.

I must acknowledge the efforts of the British Legion in their programme of events commemorating the First World War. The Display held at the Town Hall on the 24th October was excellent and I think many visitors young and old found it very interesting.

At the moment the proposed transfer of the library in to the Post Office is progressing thanks to the efforts of Stuart and Jackie Rogers with the back up of the Friends of Ashburton Library. There is also the commencement of the building for the Atrium at South Dartmoor Academy. The affordable housing scheme at Longstone Cross has been delayed but it is hoped it will be completed in the near future. On a negative note the proposed closure of the St John Hall and the Methodist Chapel will be great losses to the town.

The Neighbourhood Plan committee are working hard and at present are pursuing possible solutions to the Towns Parking Problems.

In October our Town Clerk suffered a Minor Stroke from which he has recovered. I think it is right to say that the Town was grateful on his return, as no doubt he was himself.

I wish to thank my fellow councillors for electing me as Mayor and suffering my minor misdemeanours. I hope my successor has full support in his term of office and I wish him or her well.

08/15 Parish reports or notices from the public

1. Race night at the Victoria Inn in aid of carnival funds on 18 April at 7.30pm.
2. Film night organized by Ashburton Festival Association at the town hall on 24 April, The Hundred-Foot Journey.
3. Poppy Appeal coffee morning in the town hall, 16 May at 10am.
4. Poppy Appeal dinner and dance at the Dartmoor Lodge on 30 May at 7pm.
5. Collati singers concert at St Lawrence Chapel on 25 April at 7.30pm.
6. Ceilidh at the town hall on 25 April at 7pm.

There being no further business the chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm

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CHAIRMAN