

The annual Village meeting followed by the usual Parish Council meeting took place on the 14th May. The former is intended to provide the villagers with an opportunity to come along and talk informally to the Councillors, about any topic relating to the village. Sadly the number of villagers attending this year was very small. The Councillors welcome everyone to come along to all its meetings during the year and to be part of the democratic process of successfully running our village. Under the leadership of the unanimously re-elected Chairman Martin Richards and the re-elected vice Chairman Tim Stevens, the Council operates in the correct and appropriate way but it is also friendly and inclusive of all opinions. During the next year the Council will continue to strive to provide the village with the best services it can and to protect the heritage of the village, whilst embracing the ever changing world in which we all live.

In last month's Parish News we were pleased to report that the Dolphin Hotel had re-opened after undergoing extensive refurbishments. This month we are pleased to see the re-opening of Woozie's Deli, following the ankle injury which Woozie sustained just before Christmas last year. Her shop facilities have been greatly missed in the last five months or so and we wish her good health and continued trading success.

The 80th Anniversary of V E Day was commemorated and celebrated throughout the village during May. Special mention must be made of the organisational efforts made by Mrs Carol Arnold on behalf of the Royal British Legion together with the Council's Chairman Martin Richards, (who despite having recently faced a personal family tragedy), gave up a huge amount of his time to make all the events a great success. He collaborated with the Royal British Legion's representative Mrs Carol Arnold to organise the events. Many other Councillors and residents also gave up their free time to make the commemoration of the sacrifice of the lives of many villagers during the Second World War, a most memorable and respectful event. We thank them all for what they did. The village still has a number of residents who witnessed V E Day and a "special 90's plus dining table" was arranged on the Jubilee, to honour them. Period music was provided by Devon Daytime Band along with a piper from the Exeter Piped Band, and fortunately for once, the English weather was beautiful all day long! Hopefully future generations will continue to recognise the dreadful events of the Second World War and to commemorate the terrible loss of life and suffering which occurred; all in the fight for the continued freedom of the world.

The Jubilee cliff area was made ready for the above celebrations by the team of workers organised by the Parish Council under collaborations with the Government's Pay-back Offenders Scheme. Over the last year the village has benefitted from this work (principally organised and administered by Councillors Tim and Karen Stevens) and as a result, the "advancement" of the spreading Alexander weed has been partly curtailed. The Jubilee (referred to by many as "the jewel in Beer's crown") has slowly been restored to its former beauty following its neglect by EDDC over many years. It was originally given to the village by Lord Clinton for the benefit of the villagers and it has now been very extensively used for over 100 years! We must look after his gift befittingly.

The recent "Beer Eates" event on the hard-standing part of the Jubilee was again a great success. A large number of people were able to enjoy a beautifully warm, sunny evening savouring the different variety of foods which were on offer. These evenings are organised by the Parish Council during the summer months in an attempt to raise revenue for the benefit of the whole village. We were very fortunate to attract to Beer, many of the stall holders who had previously traded at Seaton under similar conditions. This was principally undertaken by our incredibly efficient Parish Clerk Mrs Nicky Ingarfield, who has given the village a dedicated service since taking over the role. We thank her for all she does, since despite not living in the village she frequently goes above and beyond her role as our Parish Clerk and is seen helping with many unpaid tasks in the village. We are keen to explain that the Council is not introducing competition-trading with the existing food establishments in the village by staging these events. They take place in the evenings, after many of our own food outlets have closed. Those which are still open can benefit from the larger number of people in the village during those evenings, who are looking for a different variety of refreshments from those available on the Jubilee.

The Parish Council has been asked to join with a group of organisations to discuss the future of the Chapel of Remembrance in Clapps Lane. This building has not been used for many years and it is sadly falling into neglect. It needs urgent attention to its roof to prevent it becoming a derelict building. The Council is not being asked to contribute to the funding of these repairs; it is merely being asked to be a party in the negotiations about the future use to which the building might be put. It is an historic building and it has played an important role in the history of the village. It would be a tragedy to lose it.

Lastly this month, mention must be made of the efforts being taken by the Parish Council to try to preserve the use of Common Lane. Many residents may not be aware that any further cliff fall at the narrowest part of Common Lane (no matter how small) will necessitate the complete closure of the road from its junction with The Meadows, to its junction with Southdown Road. This risk has been identified by the Parish Council over many years and attempts have been made before to try to preserve this thoroughfare. At its narrowest point the carriageway of Common Lane is only nine feet wide and beyond that there is only a very small extent of land forming the sheer drop to the beach below. If any further rock/soil falls away from the cliff, then Devon Highways will be forced to close the entire road in the interests of public safety. Beer will have a repeat of the situation which occurred in 2010 to the Seaton Hole Road, leading to the inevitable permanent road closure as happened there. If Common Lane had to be closed, then visitors using the Cliff top car park and Caravan Park would face a detour of approximately a mile around Southdown Road, Clapps Lane, Dolphin Road and Fore Street to reach the beach. This would very seriously affect the tourist trade of the village. Further natural cliff erosion is inevitable; all the Parish Council can do is to try to take steps to extend the life of the highway. The principal way this can be done is by preventing the risk of serious vibration damage (caused by heavy vehicles in particular), from using Common Hill. We are attempting to be proactive to prevent this happening, as it will be impossible to be re-active to the situation. It will be too late, the cliff will have gone! It is vitally important that the village has "its voice" heard over this plan. We are currently in negotiations with Devon Highways; EDDC and Clinton Devon Estates to discuss what can be done and all news relating to that will be published later. Nothing will be agreed without public consultation taking place first.

Cllr Martin Shobbrook