REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TO PARISH COUNCIL November 2017

This last month has seen me even busier than normal. I have spent a few evenings talking to the youth in the village centre, possibly some of them may have been partially responsible for the anti social behaviour around the Library. I have been investigating the possibilities of a Youth Shelter on the Recreation Field with funding from other organisations. The young people I spoke to seem to favour this idea, the main reason for them skulking around the Library appears to be to create mischief and having nowhere to go. A Youth Shelter would give them their own space. Evolution, the builders of the skatepark have indicated between £2000 and £5000 for a Youth Shelter. However, I am sure that the Parish Council will have their own suppliers and avenues of funding if this proves to be worth following up on. The two police officers I spoke to were trying to get their shift pattern changed so that they could be in the village at evenings and spend some time with the young people.

Existing tree problems continue to need sorting out between various parties and with the harsh winds we experienced in October and early November new tree, leaf and drainage problems have arisen now. The road sweeper has been seen in the village and a gully cleaner has been booked now to sort out some drains which are blocked with fallen leaves.

I took part in the Library Challenge which was all about using the Library facilities. One task was to read a book in an unusual venue or an unusual way. I read my book holding it one handed whilst feeding our alpacas with my other hand. It took me a week to read my book and made everyone who read my completed form laugh. I found the Challenge to be very worthwhile, but apparently only two other people took part which is a great shame.

The Knit & Natters who double as my residents panel held a children’s education session during the Half Term holiday and quite a few children attended. It was mainly to learn how to knit, but there was lots of conversation as well and I found it very interesting to hear the views of the youngsters on various topics.

As you already know District councillors attended a day of workshops relating to the Purbeck Local Plan and new studies and papers have now been released to the public. We look forward to another meeting with certain invited parties for discussions working towards the next public consultation.

I attended the Annual General Meeting of DaPTC at County Hall in my role as Vice-Chairman of Purbeck District Councillor. Purbeck District Council feel it very important that DaPTC has a place on the Board of the new Joint Committee to represent their members, many of whom are very well informed on the issue of Future Dorset and spoke out very strongly on this subject at the AGM. My feeling, which is reflected by many other district councillors, is that our parish and town councils are now more than capable of picking up many of the tasks currently carried out at higher levels of local government, but must have the funding and further skilling up which proves necessary. Therefore, it is important that DaPTC is on the Joint Committee Board with a vote.

Purbeck District Council’s Council meeting took place last Tuesday, the main issue being the future of Purbeck Sports Centre. It was agreed to negotiate a new lease with DCC on the existing terms and conditions but for a longer time of 20-25 years. A simultaneous tendering exercise will also be carried out looking at an external management party although the specification will need careful drawing up to take into consideration the very valid points raised by interested groups, hence a professional procurement company will be appointed. It was stressed at the Council meeting that this must be carried out now in order to lay down a marker as one of the joint working projects for the future may well be a partnership for all sports centres in the rural unitary authority. No decision regarding the actual management future of the Centre would be made at the moment because of the lease, but would be looked at when the tender process had been completed. It was also mentioned that the negotiation of the previous lease took almost eight years and we cannot afford this length of time with the probable dissolution of PDC in April 2019.

The annual planning tour took place this morning and visited Eldons Drove in this village amongst other venues. The new crematorium on Randalls Hill was also visited and it was interesting to see the local craftsmen that have been employed for such projects as the landscaping and the dry stone walling.

I visited the Christmas Village Fayre, spent money but enjoyed the chatter and it was good to see some stalls being run by village people. It was disappointing to discover though that most of the stallholders were from Poole and Parkstone. This seems to be another example of not enough interest, energy or enthusiasm from the village, rather like the lollipop patrol person. I have received numerous e-mails on this subject from parents of children at the school all complaining that THE council should provide someone and the dangers of not having a patrol person in place. When I point out that there is funding and a willingness by the school and ALL councils to have a patrol person, but it needs applicants and perhaps you would like to apply, I get no further response. It is very disappointing. At the Village Fayre I also saw a sign of the austere times in which we live. There was not a single chocolate bar, chocolate cake or anything chocolate there and the raffle prizes were not bottles of wine or alcohol, boxes of chocolates etc., but bags of pegs or jars containing dishcloths and pan scourers. I won one of those and was really pleased.

However, on two other matters the village seems to be coming together. The Remembrance Parade and Ceremony was very well attended yet again and it is really rewarding to see so many of the youth organisations taking such a strong role. I think we are very lucky to have Mr. Wadham, a local lad, to play the trumpet at the War Memorial. At many of the ceremonies this does not take place or is from a CD and I have always thought that Mr. Wadham makes a real difference to our ceremony. He is perhaps, one of our unsung heroes because although I am pretty sure he does not look for any thanks, he doesn’t get any anyway officially which is a shame. I don’t know if anyone can throw some light on who did all the weeding, tidying, gardening etc., which took place very quickly by a large team of people on the preceding Thursday morning. I saw them and thanked them very much but did not recognise anybody there and one gentleman said that they just looked at notices to see where Remembrance Parades and Processions were going to be held and they just turned up to make everything look nice then moved on to the next one (some sort of guerrilla gardener project it would seem). The same was true for the dismantling I think. I was honoured to be one of the officials inside by the Memorial and thank the Parish Council for allowing me to be amongst their number. It took me almost 48 hours to get O God Our Help in Ages Past out of my head to the relief of all around me who were getting fed up with hearing it.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the Christmas Light Up seems to be going ahead with tree, lights, mince pies, songs, carols and reading all organised between Tesco, the Primary School and the Church. A competition of decorating a star for the tree is already taking place at the school with a prize donated by Tesco for the best one although all the stars (a possible more than 400) will be placed on the tree. The lighting up will take place at 5 p.m., on Tuesday 5th December. Flyers will appear shortly around the village and it is hoped that Parish Councillors will be able to attend. Please spread the word and thank you to those of you who gave me a heads up about the School Fayre because we were able to quickly rearrange the light up.

As always I am happy to answer any questions or listen to any suggestions.