

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HAWKCHURCH

Hawkchurch Parish Council has had some ups and downs over the last year.

Long serving Councillor Sally Matthews resigned in the spring. The Chairman, Nick Over, resigned in the summer so the Vice Chairman, Ruth Churchill took over the chair. Dr John Horrocks, joined in autumn - bringing with him a wealth of expertise, as a former Chairman of Feniton Parish Council.

The new Playfield lease led to changes in the governance of this village asset with the Playfield Committee now more directly linked with the council.

Green Hedge attempted an appeal against the decision to refuse planning permission for a battery energy storage barn, based on EDDC's Development Management Committee allowing a similar project to go ahead at another location in East Devon. The Hawkchurch Action Group secured permission for the decision to be made by Public Inquiry. The delay caused by this coincided with the Governments' change of policy on such developments and grants being withdrawn which forced Green Hedge to withdraw their application.

East Devon Planning department have released updated policies regarding the preservation of the landscape and safeguarding rural assets, namely *The East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidelines (2018)* and *The East Devon Heritage Strategy 2018 – 2031*. It is thought that these could help protect Hawkchurch from intrusive industrial development in the future.

Network Rail installed new bridges at Axe and Broom to alleviate the flooding problems on the railway line. This meant that construction traffic had to be routed through the village. Network Rail gave a presentation at the Council Meeting in April explaining the necessity for this. In the event Osbornes, the contractors, contributed greatly to the welfare of the village – one example being the provision of a shortcut from the school playground to the car park (which was much safer as it avoided the road).

Devon Air Ambulance sought permission to use the Playfield as a Night Landing site which would greatly improve the survival chances of people who experienced medical emergencies during the night. The Parish Council actively supported this and agreed to help fund the cost of erecting a special lighting column which could be activated by remotely to facilitate landing. Some of the funding would be provided by a grant. Permission had to be sought from the Diocese of Salisbury who own the land and, after a long waiting period, it seems this has finally been granted.

The Hawkchurch Fete was held in August the day after a very windy day which had damaged a Marquee and probably contributed to reduced attendance. Nevertheless, it was a profitable day and a cheque for £300 was presented to the Parish Council's Air Ambulance Fund. The Axe Valley Show in Axminster also gave £250 to the Air Ambulance Fund from their profits.

November saw the Community Shop obtain planning permission to build a new shop on the same site at Cowlings' yard. Plans are for a new timber building that will enable the shop to expand its stock and provide a coffee area.

Following the Election six Parish Councillors remained as John Horrocks did not stand for election. We are pleased to welcome two co-opted Members namely Ann Nolan and Lesley Harper.