

STOCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL, ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Clerk's report 23rd May 17

1. I've just received a grant the Council applied for from EDDC Parishes Together Fund for improving the drainage around the Victory Hall to overcome the increasing risk of flooding, identified by the Victory Hall Committee last winter. It will include replacing the steps up outside the Committee entrance and the Council would welcome ideas on what to provide, given that this is also an emergency exit? The work will begin after the Stockland Fair.

As well as this short term work, the Council, as owners, are investigating what longer term work needs to be done on the Playing Field to divert flood waters away from the Hall itself, working with the other riparian owners. This work has been partly funded by a small amount from the Precept and if any major work is required the Council will need to find the funds.

2. A lot of work has been going on with the Turbaries over the year and not just on the ground. A Management Committee is responsible for deciding what work needs to be done and includes three residents from the Parish, three from the Council and one each from Devon Bird Watching & Preservation Society, RSPB, Natural England and the Blackdown Hills AONB. Grants to improve the land need to be applied for from the Rural Payments Agency by May each year and, subject to a tendering process, is currently undertaken by Land Agent, S Machin.

3. The Smaller Authorities Transparency Code came into force on 1 April 2015 and requires the online publication of certain information. All Parish/Town councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 are subject to the Transparency Code, those over that and up to £200k must produce an Annual Return with the Accounts. This Council is now below the £25k with nearly 50% of that restricted for Turbary spending only. All these documents are therefore online to be replaced by the latest versions for last year when agreed by the Council in June.

4. The Neighbourhood Plan was confirmed and agreed by a Referendum last November and is now part of the material considerations that any Planning Application has to take into account for it to be supported by EDDC. There is currently discussion across the country as to what extent Local Planning Authorities are ignoring their own Parish/Town Council Neighbourhood Plans.

5. The Council agreed to join the DCC Community Roads Warden Scheme after Ian Morgan volunteered to become the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Any community signed up to the scheme, after being trained, has the opportunity to carry out minor road repairs by volunteers; able to apply for funding support towards materials/equipment required and are covered by County Council third party liability cover for work as well as this Council's own personal injury insurance.

Ken Pearson

Stockland PC Clerk, 8 Fairfield Green, Churchinford, Taunton, TA3 7RR

email stocklandpc@outlook.com; web: <http://www.stockland.org.uk/parish-council>