



Minutes of Annual General Meeting 11 am 27th February 2021

Held by Skype

Present:

Steering Group: Sue Prosper, Tracy Ham, Lorna Childs, Wendy Plowman, Jan Gent,

Cathie Hamilton, Sean Ross

Members of the Public

- 1. WELCOME:** Vice-Chair Tracy Ham welcomed all attendees and gave an overview of the agenda. All attendees agreed that it felt odd holding the meeting over skype.
- 2. APOLOGIES:** Greg Ham, Dave and Chris Turner, Margaret Mee, Margaret and Tony Chancellor, Sue Mills, Adrian White, Val Sadler
- 3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Sue Prosper**

This report covers the period January 2020 to December 2020 and is submitted for consideration by the Love Braunton Annual General Meeting.

Review of 2020

This year's review of 2020 is against the backdrop of an ongoing pandemic that is playing havoc with all our lives. Love Braunton has not been immune to this with planned activities in 2020 postponed and then cancelled to be carried over into 2021! But as other groups have done Love Braunton has adapted to the circumstances not least the adoption of on-line meetings and workshops whilst verge planting sessions were held with no more than 6 people each time. These changes have allowed us to continue with our activities albeit on a limited basis.

This year as last my colleagues are going to talk in more detail about these activities that we have been able to do a little later in this meeting.

As was reported last year our neighbourhood continues to be threatened by the ongoing activities of developers across this parish and adjoining parishes. Whilst we support applications in respect of truly affordable housing for local residents, the reuse of existing buildings, small local businesses or improved infrastructure, there are unfortunately too many that we respond to where developments will have negative impacts upon Braunton – erasing its heritage, natural environment, wildlife, and overburdening an already breaking infrastructure with the associated pollution issues.

During 2020 there were over 1500 planning applications made to North Devon; of these 209 applied to Braunton's two wards – an increase of 45% on 2019. Love Braunton responded to 78 planning applications where we believed the proposal would have either a positive or negative impact upon our community.

Of these 78 applications - 51 were approved, 6 withdrawn, 5 refused with 16 still to be decided. Many of the applications approved by Planning had been objected to by North Devon Council's own wildlife and countryside officers. It appears that development of our protected landscape is acceptable as

long as the developer pays £100 per dwelling “to mitigate” the damage! This requirement was introduced by NDC in response to Natural England changing their standing advice in respect of the impact that development was/ is having on the UNESCO Biosphere.

The 16 applications that are still to be decided include one at Chivenor (94 dwellings), two at Velator Bridge (23 dwellings) and Yelland Quay (250 dwellings). It is looking increasingly likely that these highly damaging proposals by developers – all of which have been opposed by residents, may be allowed as the Planning team believe they can minimise the impact by attaching so called planning conditions which they believe address flood threat, reduces impact on the River Taw, decreasing biodiversity and increasing traffic volumes. I leave it you as residents to decide whether the use of planning conditions result in the so called “sustainable development” that brings benefit to our area. Love Braunton continues to maintain strong objections to these applications and is in contact with other resident groups at Chivenor and Yelland.

Additionally, the Local Plan for North Devon and Torridge, which was adopted in October 2018, is now in trouble as a Planning Inspector at an Appeal Hearing in March 2020 found that North Devon and Torridge were not meeting their housing delivery target. This has meant that developers are making applications on sites not in the Local Plan on the basis that they will help meet the Five-Year Housing Land Supply. NDC’s Planning Team appear to have accepted this position recommend approvals on basis it will boost the housing numbers. There is now evidence to suggest that the Planning Committee are unhappy with this stance by the Planning Team. The recent refusal of the Chivenor application being a good case in point. That said it is still early days as to how this situation will be resolved but it does mean the case for completing our Neighbourhood Plan is even more pertinent.

At last year's AGM I reported on Love Braunton's submitted response in respect of public consultation for North Devon District Council's Supplementary Planning Document for Air Quality. This document was formally adopted by North Devon in June 2020 and is now a material consideration in planning applications.

Throughout 2020 we have attended the monthly Parish Council zoom meetings and have spoken on number of occasions in respect of planning applications and greening of the area.

Looking to the Coming Year – 2021

The opening months of 2021 have been a continuation of the past 12 months. It is difficult to plan when our community events that we had to postpone in 2020, will be held.

What we will be doing is continuing our focus on work with the Parish Council in the development and completion of the Neighbourhood Plan. We believe that this is a key policy document that Braunton Parish needs, so as to ensure that development is as the residents want and not just imposed by the Local Plan and opportunistic developers.

In terms of specific activities, in addition to progressing the Neighbourhood Plan, we will work over the next 12 months on the following:

- Planning Applications – responding to applications that have both positive and negative implications for our neighbourhood
- Grow membership and encourage active participation in our activities
- Air Quality Monitoring - Use of data to inform / challenge Council Officials in respect of their progress to implement air quality improvement actions and adherence to the Air Quality SPD
- Continue to work with other local organisations - CARA, Yelland Action Group, Taw/Torridge Forum, Heanton Punchardon Parish Council and Braunton Parish Council.
- Fundraising - for campaigns such as Wildflower planting, plants for the Village Green, trees and maintenance of the air quality monitor system.
- Community events – Still to be determined

Steering Group

The following comments are addressed specifically to my colleagues on the Steering Group. Everything that has been achieved in in the past 12 months has only been possible because of the commitment given by the members of Love Braunton Steering Group. Between them they make fundraising happen, organised planting, monitor and respond to planning applications, make and distribute the LB

merchandise, do the housekeeping, and keep in touch with residents through their own networks. I thank each and every one of them for their invaluable contribution to Love Braunton.

In closing this report, I thank the wider community, including the local retailers of our merchandise, for the ongoing support which you give to Love Braunton.

TH thanked SP for all her efforts – a comment agreed by all present.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT: Tracy Ham

The Love Braunton accounts were audited by an independent auditor in February 2021 for the financial year 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

These accounts record:

Total income for the year £1,562

Total expenditure £780

Net Income for the year £782

The Net Currents assets at 31.12.20 were £2,949 which comprised of:

NatWest Bank account £2,421

Stock £436

Cash in hand £92

Copies of the final accounts are available on request.

Due to social restrictions last year, we were unable to raise funds through our usual channels of village fair stalls, quizzes and meetings. However, we did receive an amazing total of £319.30 from merchandise sales, mainly card sales through Fine Foods of Braunton, and other merchandise sold through Sles and The Good Stores. We would like to greatly thank them all for supporting us in this way.

I would also like to thank Jan for all her hard work across the year in designing, printing, packaging and distributing the cards for sale.

The other main income for the year was for our latest fund-raising campaign for Wild-flower verges in the village. For this we received a grand total of £1,243 from the Co-op Community Fund and we would like to thank the Co-op and its shoppers for this generous donation. Other donations for this campaign came from advertisements on Braunton Community Chat's Facebook page.

The total spend on wild-flowers seeds was £532, leaving funds of £851 still to be spent.

Expenditure for the group was minimal (a total of £238), the largest costs being for merchandise £74 and the website hosting £67.

We also still have £493 in our Village Green fund held over from 2019 but, due to restrictions, the plans for this expenditure had to be put on hold.

So, out of the £2,421 in the bank account at 31.12.20, Love Braunton had £1,077 available funds, with restricted funds of £851 for Wild-flowers and £493 for the Village Green.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us both collect and spend the funds in 2020.

5. ELECTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE ROLES:

All existing members happy to remain in role:

Chair – Sue Prosper
Vice-Chair/Treasurer – Tracy Ham
Secretary - Wendy Plowman

Merchandise - Jan Gent
Social Activities – Lorna Child

TH proposed that all stay in their roles. JG seconded it. All agreed.

6. ELECTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

TH proposed that Sean Ross join the committee. JG seconded it. Unanimous vote for him to join.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE: Sue Prosper

SP gave an overview of the neighbourhood plan – what it is and where we are with it. Love Braunton steering group members, SR, CH and SP are activity working on this with members of the Parish council.

Using slides SP gave a snap shot of the neighbourhood plan. All documentation has to be evidence based and prepared positively. SP explained what a neighbourhood plan can and cannot do (see slides which are on Love Braunton website). Any work done on the plan has to go out to consultation by the community before it is then independently examined and has to pass legal tests. Then the plan has to go to the Parish for a referendum vote – if the vote for approval is 50% +1, it is adopted and it becomes law and has to be adhered to in all future planning applications.

An initial consultation was taken across the Parish in 2017 and based on the feedback at that time, four themes were identified as areas of concern for residents – environment both natural and built, economy (we have a lot of self-employed residents and a lot of reliance on tourism/retail) and housing. SP, CH and SR are working on these areas with a planning consultant paid for with funding from 'Locality' a group that promotes the production of neighbourhood plans across England. Though in the early stages the intention is that they have something to go out to the residents for further consultations – proposed for mid-June but this is subject to up-to-date Covid rules.

SP stated that if any other residents wished to help, they would be very welcome.
Any questions – please email Love Braunton.

8. LAUNCH OF LOVE BRAUNTON WEBSITE – Tracy Ham

TH gave a brief background on the creation of the new website. In 2016 a Love Braunton member created Love Braunton's first website for free on WordPress. It was mainly used so that PDF documents could be shared easily amongst members. However, it hasn't been used in years.

It is currently clear that Braunton and its surrounding area is now becoming an area where a lot of new developments are being considered and Love Braunton felt that the whole community would need to get involved – so a better website was needed to reach all interested parties.

A sub-committee was created spearheaded by TH. Costs were looked into and it was decided that it would be cheaper if we created it ourselves. TH has some knowledge as she has set up her own business site. JG drafted a document of how we wanted it to look and provided photos of the village. TH built the site, WP, LC and JG provided copy and SP wrote the opening page.

TH then shared the new site with the meeting giving an overview of each page and contributor – Home (SP), Our village (WP), Local Life (LC), Activities (JG). There is also a page devoted to Air Quality, which has our annual reports about the findings from the Monitors, as well as links to the real-time data from OpenSource which anyone can access, and the Council's latest Supplementary Planning Document for Air Quality.

The Documents page shows details of planning applications currently being looked at by Love Braunton - Chivenor and Velator. It also gives details of other groups planning issues - C.A.R.A. Some pages have relevant links to other community groups.

The website also gives information on our constitution and when all our meetings are – making sure we are transparent in all our actions.

There is a website link on our Facebook page and from this link we have had 389 views already in a month.

TH thanked the members of the sub-committee for all their help and support. JG officially thanked TH for all the hours she has put in to create the website.

Website and email are now live.

9. OPEN DISCUSSION:

a. Air Quality – update from Greg Ham, read by Sean Ross **Love Braunton Air Quality Summary For 2020**

Love Braunton measures particulate matter at a number of locations across the village.

The highest levels in 2020 were recorded along Wrafton Road, Pill Gardens – close to South Street (The Pill Gardens sensor is a not a Love Braunton sensor – but is being reported because data produced is useful to paint an overall picture of air quality in Braunton), and Heanton Street.

None of these areas are currently monitored by the local council as part of the Air Quality Action Plan.

Wrafton Road exceeded the limits set by WHO. Pill Gardens equalled these limits and Heanton Street was just below the limit, however the sensor was only working for 6 months in the year, and may well be above the limits.

It has been broadcast by the media and the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership that air pollutions have dropped due to the Government measures taken for covid-19. If this is so, then it is very likely that Braunton has a larger air quality issue than is indicated by this report.

Most exceedances occurred in Winter, late Autumn and Easter weekend and during lockdowns. This indicates that traffic is not the source of high levels in the cooler times of year.

Easter weekend had numerous high readings, however the record-breaking sunny weather, infers that it would not be caused by home heating.

The high summer readings were most likely caused by traffic.

In conclusion, the air quality in Braunton is not simply traffic based. There are other sources that are contributors at different times of the year.

We do not know what these sources are but the likely suspects are:

- House heating systems and open fires
- Burning off of garden waste
- BBQs
- Pollution brought in from weather patterns from other parts of the world

I propose that we notify the council of our findings so that they can take the necessary consideration and actions.

A copy of the full report and the link to the supporting data is available on our website.

Greg Ham

SP added that during discussions on types of policy for the neighbourhood plan one that specifically addresses pollution – air quality, water quality and emissions is actively being considered for policy.

SP also stated that the data is from only the first year of information and could potentially become a base line, particularly as the District Council didn't take any readings in 2020 from the diffusion tubes due to the pandemic and manpower issues.

b. WILDFLOWERS – Lorna Childs

Wildflower Verges

We have been working with Life on the Verge and with support from the Parish Council, we were about to begin working on a prominent verge in March 2020 as this is the optimum month for seed planting.

Obviously, everyone knows what happened next!

However, having had consent from Devon County Council and with the help of the Parish gardeners, we proceeded to sow the verge, known as Velator Way, in October. This is the whole verge travelling towards Tesco from the roundabout up to and including the wider section at the bottom opposite Quay Café.

Due to the restrictions of only gathering with 6 people, sadly we were unable to engage with the public to help. The Love Braunton team worked very hard to prepare the ground and thousands of mixed wildflower seeds have been successfully sown. We will all keep our fingers crossed and look forward to a fantastic summer show of flowers. We have some lovely little signs saying "We are Feeding the Bees", kindly donated by Yes Sign Company, to replace the original ones which disappeared, never to be seen again, despite an appeal to the community. We will put the new ones up when we can to show people that it isn't a neglected verge!

As we had further seed available, we have also prepared and planted wildflowers in the section of ground between the Countryside Centre and the Surf Museum, so watch these spaces!

Due to generous donations from the public and the Co-Op scheme, we now have further funding to continue with more verges. We are currently looking at suitable sites and we are planning to sow more seeds in March and April.

Each year the amount of flowers should increase with the natural self-seeding.

We are looking forward to creating a lasting legacy for the village, which will help the environment and the wildlife to thrive as well as having something beautiful to admire.

Village Green Enhancements

We are continuing to work with the Parish Council to provide planters with sustainable planting for the Village Green area, which will hopefully be in place this summer

It is important for us to support our local businesses and to hopefully bring some beauty to the Village Green for the enjoyment of all.

Future Fund-Raising Events

Following on from our previous annual Quiz nights in November, we had planned to hold more in July and November, but long with all the other fundraising events planned, these are postponed indefinitely.

We look forward to times ahead when we can once more get together and enjoy more sociable events.

Thanks to the excellent merchandise and beautiful local cards produced by Jan, we are continuing to raise some funds and these are all available at Fine Foods Deli so please have a look.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported any of our fundraising and community events, and a special mention to Braunton Community Chat who have supported all our campaigns.

10. AOB

SP gave a quick update on the CARA appeal court case against Parkdean on 3rd March – fighting poorly written planning permission given to the Holiday Park on how many/where they can put new caravans.

Chivenor – application for 59 houses refused. But the 96 houses application has been agreed in principle subject to Highways – Love Braunton has heard informally that the conditions have been resolved by having a pelican crossing there and a contribution to traffic lights in the centre of Braunton. We believe that there may be a problem around the number of affordable houses – it had been supported by the Housing Officer on the basis that it would be 50% not the 30% that appears to have been accepted by Planning Officer. We are also aware that Heanton Parish Council have put in an application to Devon Highways to ask for Heanton Lane to be made one-way – down from the village existing onto the A361 only.

Velator – seems to be suspended at the moment. Environment Agency say they have no objection although if it was a new application now that wouldn't give it permission. Love Braunton have taken the matter up with the District Councillors, who in turn have written to the case officer – Bob Pedlar. Still waiting for an update. It is believed the developer is having difficulties on developing on the site. If it goes ahead there will be twenty-four dwellings (site opposite the Quay Café) and as they have to be built to avoid flood damage, they will be raised by about 6 m. SP pushes for the community to help by writing to the council.

A member of the public thanked Love Braunton for arranging on line attendance.

TH thanked everyone for coming and formally closed the meeting at 12 pm.