

## County Councillor's Report for \Otterton APM 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017

I have now had the privilege of serving this village as your County Councillor for 24 years. On some days it seems that this time has slipped away; on others it seems a long time ago since I was first elected. However, during that time I was also your District Councillor for 8 years and it was good to be able to combine the two roles. However as I took over the Leadership at Devon CC I had to give up EDDC as there are simply not enough hours in one day.

Boundaries change and I was first elected to represent a Division which stretched from Budleigh Salterton in the West to a large part of Sidmouth town in the East including the villages, like Otterton in between. Twelve years later the Boundary Commission deducted Sidmouth from the Division but added the villages of Aylesbeare and Woodbury Salterton. This year the number crunchers have engaged in further sport, removing all the villages with the exception of East Budleigh with Bicton and creating the new Otter Valley Division.

I am standing for election in the new Exmouth/Budleigh Coastal Division as I aware that there are several unfinished matters of business with which I would still to be involved. One of these is opening of the Health and Well-Being Hub at Budleigh Hospital. I have been involved in this dream for 4 years, although there were times when it seemed like a never-ending nightmare. It was with great joy that I heard that the contracts had actually been signed and that work was in progress. Like so many of you I want to see this project become a huge success. It is an opportunity to see the integration of social care and health providing a seamless service from cradle to grave, fighting the loneliness of those who at present are housebound and of supporting children and young families. I am also delighted that we have managed to retain the beds at Exmouth Hospital but we need to fight to retain and expand other services so that there is a valuable link between the two hospitals. We can now use the mini-bus you helped to provide through the Parishes Together Fund for its originally intended purpose.

Years ago I was the instigated of cleaning the brook. Highways would only undertake this work to prevent flooding and not for any cosmetic purposes. In those days Otterton entered the Best Kept Village competition. So I suggested that a team of volunteers put on our wellies and rubber gloves and had a working party. It was great fun and showed a good team spirit which is a valuable asset that the residents of this village truly have. I was pleased to be involved with the village shop, which has been a great success. I was also pleased to help the village

hall renew its roof, so that we could all keep dry on evenings a little less inclement than tonight.

I managed to donate a little County money towards the church roof repairs and I am really pleased that this project is about to start tomorrow when the scaffold arrives, even if it does mean delaying the resurfacing of Church Hill.

This, of course, brings me to the subjects of potholes, blessed things! However, most of the roads in Otterton are now in fairly good nick, and compared to quite a lot of other areas we have a lot to be grateful to Devon CC for in this area of management. By working together we rescued the bus service to the village and even got a new shelter.

I will continue as a Governor of the school, currently as Chairman and I have every intention of seeing the school become an outstanding one in the near future. When I was first elected 24 years ago two of my election pledges were to protect Otterton and East Budleigh village schools. They were not federated in those days. Otterton had 19 children and Drake's, East Budleigh 23. It has been good to see them grow both in size and performance in recent years and it good that Otterton School has such an active PTA.

In 24 years I have seen a procession of both Chairmen and Clerks at Otterton Parish Council. Each have been very helpful to a councillor who does not live in the village but needs observant eyes and ears for what is going on. You have also been blessed with a diligent team of councillors over those years who really have the needs of Otterton at heart. I would like to thank them and the clerks, past and present for all their help and support. I would also like to support Bryony for the excellent work she has carried out in preserving our Public Rights of Way.

It will seem strange not to be representing this village but through my connections in the Raleigh Mission Community and the School I will be staying in contact. I wish you all the best for the future