

2017

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 26th April 2017 at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall. Refreshments were served at 7pm prior to the meeting.

Present were Chairman Cllr P Lenehan, Cllrs G Hawkins, J.Clark, L.Harris, D Higgs, T.Samson & the Clerk as well as 18 members of the public.

1. Apologies were received from Cllr S Mealing, Chris Jervis and Arnie James.

2. Minutes of the last meeting (27.04.2016) were distributed and signed as a true and correct record. This was proposed by Cllr Hawkins and seconded by Cllr Higgs.

3. Guest Speaker- Simon Card, a speaker for the Devon Air Ambulance Trust, gave a very informative talk which was backed up with a slide show.

The trust currently owns and operates 2 helicopters which can reach 50% of locations in Devon within 5 minutes of taking to the air, with remaining locations accessible within 20 minutes. Every year the Charity needs to raise £5.5 million to run the service which is wholly independent of Government and Lottery funding allowing the service and Charity to make more operational decisions without the need for third party involvement. The Exeter based Air Ambulance responds to 3 to 4 calls a day on average flying 10 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is hoped to introduce night flying across the whole County by developing a network of pre-surveyed floodlit community landing sites which would enable them to bring a life-saving service into the heart of communities when it is dark. At present there are only 30 night landing sites available while many more are being surveyed at present.

In 2016, 47% of the calls attended were Medical, 50% Trauma and 3% were Hospital transfers.

A very useful DAAT App has been developed which allows mobile phone users to call the emergency services from remote locations without a signal, ideal for walkers, dog walkers and riders. The App then gives the Emergency Service a grid reference and it also operates an SOS flashlight from the mobile handset. The Chairman thanked Simon for his very interesting talk.

4. Chairman's Annual Report – as read by Cllr Lenehan.

This time last year I spoke about our first year as Councillors, when it seemed like an initiation of fire and was a huge learning curve for all of us except Gerry who had served on the previous council so she was (and still is!) the voice of experience. I'm pleased to say that in our second year we have found our stride and have settled into the role. I will now talk you through our activities of the last twelve months, starting with our first major project of 2016 when we started fundraising for a Defibrillator following the very inspiring talk from our Guest Speaker at last year's APM from the British Heart Foundation (BHF). Whilst Tom Samson began the painstaking research into the many machines available to us Sybil Mealing and I formed a steering group with Chris Jervis, Marilyn Klepacz and Liz Hoar to organise our first (and as it turned out, our only) fundraising event.

Which was a garden party in the beautiful grounds of Talaton House to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday in June. Over 300 residents supported this ticketed event which raised £586 for the defibrillator fund

We had a terrific amount of help on the day from more than 50 people who helped to set up, serve and clear away including a spectacular birthday cake made by Peppi Shaw. It truly was a community event in every sense, where everyone worked and joined together in celebration.

In response to a plea from the Parish Council we received very generous donations from village organisations and individuals meaning that we had exceeded our target after just one event. Tom's hard work in researching our options had paid off allowing us to proceed with the purchase and installation of not one but TWO defibrillators in the village. The next stage was training residents in life saving resuscitation techniques and how to access and use the defibrillators. On 22 October, Tom, Gerry and I delivered three training sessions for 37 residents

The training dummies were borrowed from Clyst Vale Academy courtesy of Paul & Judith Colin and together with the training dvd's from the BHF and the manufacturer of our defibrillator (Zoll) we delivered a professional standard of hands-on training which included mouth to mouth resuscitation and chest compressions on the training dummy and putting a real person into the recovery position. Now that we have acquired our own set of training dummies we will repeat the training sessions at regular intervals.

Our second major project of the year was Talaton Broadband Committee (TBC) whose aim is to bring a new broadband structure into the village delivering superfast speeds. In response to our appeal for a digital champion for Talaton, Graham Rooms and Bob Abraham set up the TBC and we assigned Don to join them as the Parish Council representative. Graham and Bob have done a phenomenal amount of work in researching the options that are most suitable for Talaton, narrowing down the options to one supplier (Voneus) who gave a public presentation to the village on 9 September. Following a last-minute flurry of activity on behalf of the TBC and Talaton PC at the end of September we managed to gain enough subscriptions to secure a contract with Voneus. Installation work commenced but going live has been stalled by BT Openreach. Our sincere thanks to the members of TBC for their professionalism in instigating this project and their tenacity in moving it forward. The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) have replaced their Britain in Bloom award with a new competition entitled "Our Outdoors" which focuses on the community as well as the environment. I am delighted to say that Talaton achieved a "highly commended" award for its application in 2016. In December, the Parish Council approved the purchase of new external lights to decorate the Parish Hall. As usual we also provided the village Christmas tree outside the shop. At our Grant Giving Evening on 7 December we made the following awards: -

£250 to the Tale Valley Trust toward their conservation work

£150 to the Lighting up Talaton Group for additional external lights on the Parish Hall

£100 to Tale Valley Choir for the purchase of custom made staging blocks

Renovating the telephone kiosk turned out to be more of a major project than we had anticipated but thanks to John for his hard work it's now looking splendid again. Talaton PC isn't just about major projects; there is the everyday work that each councillor does to keep the parish safe, clean and attractive. Without us to report the potholes, or to arrange for the verges to be cut and ditches to be cleared, or carry out litter picks and even to wash the road signs where would Talaton be? In 2016 we held 12 meetings (one more than is usual because we had 2 in December) and a further 3 to consider planning applications. We host a drop-in session every two months on a Saturday morning which, I'm pleased to say, are very well attended by the public. All councillors have attended meetings at the Knowle on a range of matters throughout the year and in particular, Linda has attended several on the subject of hospital closures and the impact on local health services. Most recently, we had the full day appeal hearing for the proposed development on the land adjacent to Weeks Farm. My thanks to all councillors for their diligence in performing their duties. Special thanks are due to our clerk, Denise without whom we simply could not function.

5. Police Report – The report for the year listed 5 cases of Criminal damage to vehicles; 1 case of driving a motor vehicle when alcohol level above limit; 1 case of assaulting a person thereby occasioning them actual bodily harm; 1 case of verbal threats from a withheld number; 1 case of theft by finding; and 10 crimes relating to Escot Park Beautiful Days.

6 Reports from Village and Local organisations followed

a. Feniton School Report was given by Malcom Armstrong, Foundation Governor.

Feniton C of E Primary School is a school that parents, students, Staff and governors can be proud of. During the last academic year the children achieved a good standard of passes at key stage 1 and 2 in the SATs assessments. Equally, all children in all years recorded progress that was at or above the national average.

We live in exciting times. As a number of councillors are aware, Feniton Primary School is a member of the Otter Valley Federation. This means that it is closely associated with the primary school situated in Tipton St John. This school is in the process of developing a strategy that will enable it to move its location. This event will lead to both managerial and educational opportunities for the students and staff at both schools.

Incidentally, Tipton St John recently received a visit from an Ofsted inspector who reported that TSJ is a 'Good School'

Within the school the senior staff, together with the enthusiastic teaching staff, are seeking ways of improving standards of attainment. The curriculum is being supported with additional resources aimed at enhancing the teaching of Maths, Science, PE and RE. This, together with robust attention to the needs of disadvantaged children and children who exhibit individual talents will deliver a good solid grounding to any and all pupils at Feniton Primary School.

The school faces a number of challenges during the coming year in terms of numbers and financial pressures. Month on month the school receives applications from children's parents who wish to have their sons and daughters attend the school. Unfortunately not all of these applications are successful due to limited places. Government cuts in funding are being managed by the staff and governors but these influences have to be addressed when looking at the long term development of the school.

Again, it should be stressed that Feniton Primary School is effective and efficient in providing an exemplary level of education and learning experience within a community that is both aware and supportive. With this thought in mind it is hoped that local authorities will continue to support the school and take positive steps to assist with future developments.

b. Parish Hall Managers Committee report was given by Tony Hoare.

The Parish Hall Committee comprises eleven trustees with Arnie James as our Chairman. I took over the role of Treasurer on the committee from Pete Deacon in September last year.

Finances:

We are in a relatively sound financial position with total funds of £9,200, an income of circa £8,600 per annum and general running and maintenance costs of around £5,800 per annum. However, there is no room for complacency as funds are always required to improve the facilities and, in addition, this net income can be quickly used up on larger maintenance work, for example on the re-tiling of the committee room roof reported last year. To provide a buffer, we have managed to transfer £4,000 from the current account to top up the reserve deposit account as a provision towards possible urgent maintenance or repair work, for example, replacing the boiler on the central heating system should it terminally fail.

Income:

The income to maintain the hall comes mainly from three sources:

- Fund raising events organised by the committee provides around 47%.
- Hall hire raises approximately 45%
- 100 club net proceeds provide the remaining 7%.

Events:

During the past twelve months, a diverse range of events have contributed to our income. The provision of Parish Hall promoted performance events, ably and enthusiastically led by Tom and Frances Samson, has brought to the village performances by 'Moscow Drug Club' and 'Semi Toned' - which must have set the record for the fastest ever ticket sales. These events, combined with a performance by Talaton's rocker, Phil Deacon, have provided the core of Talaton generated performances and associated income. In addition Villages in Action performances from 'Heads Will Roll' and 'Mambo Jambo' have contributed to our funds. Beyond these events additional revenue has been generated from an evening featuring 'The Bar Stewards of Val Doonican' and two performances of The Talaton Revue. Local events such as Village Day, Open Garden's teas and the How D'Ye Do, not forgetting the Great British Breakfast charity event (a particular favourite of mine) organised by Linsey Trimmer have further filled the hall coffers. Indeed, it has been a year when there has been something for everyone.

Tom's ViA report will refer to the loss of this resource, which has been the backbone of our programming during the last three years. Without ViA, it may be more difficult to maintain such a wide and varied programme but steps are being taken to continue to find ways to continue to programme future performances that will help us to continue to both entertain and raise funds at the same time. Only time will tell how this may impact on the range of entertainment provided and this does present some risk to our finances.

Hall Hire:

Hall hire is managed by Phil Deacon and, as noted previously, this does raise close to half of our income. In addition to private hire for parties, weddings etc., there are regular bookings for a range of activities including the Art Group, Zumba, Pilates plus from local groups such as the Produce Association, Community Theatre 4 All, the Church Council and, of course, the Parish Council. The hall is also used as a Polling Station, so we will get some useful and unexpected additional income in June.

The 100 Club:

The 100 Club provides around £600 per annum in income and is ably managed by Steve Spratt. My understanding is that this is fully subscribed to with a small waiting list. Although only providing around 7% of our total income, this is practically guaranteed.

Christmas Decorations:

A lot of effort was put into decorating the hall, both internally and externally, for the Christmas season. The external lights were purchased in conjunction with the Parish Council, who very generously donated £437, combined with the lights bought by the shop and I think that you will agree that these very much helped to light up Talaton at Christmas. The hall was also beautifully decorated inside and this was a community effort with a number of people involved in making the decorations and ensuring the Hall looked festive for the How d'ye do and other December events. A big thank you must go to all who assisted.

Facilities:

We reported last year that we were considering purchasing some cafe style tables to provide greater flexibility in seating arrangements, specifically to facilitate cabaret style evening events. I am pleased to report that a set of

twelve tables was purchased in January via the Parish Council. These have proved to be a great success and the enhanced ambiance and easier access that these provide at events has assisted bar profits.

Looking forwards:

We also reported last year that the committee was also looking at applying for another Big Lottery Grant to pay for an extension. This has been on my 'to do' list since I took over as Treasurer and once our ideas are finalized, my intention is to progress with the grant application after I retire at the end of May, the first task being to compile a list of funding bodies.

The hall would not function without help, so in conclusion, the committee would like to express our thanks to all the organisations and individuals within the village who continue to support us.

c. Talaton Village Shop Report was given by Liz Hoare

Serving the community is always at the heart of everything the shop does and this means keeping up with the changing needs of our community. At the same time, we need to maximise our profits, which we can then plough back into improving the provision we make for all our customers.

As in every other year, changes have taken place which will enable us to improve the service we give and I am going to briefly outline the main ones.

The main changes have, perhaps, affected the back office most of all. Marilyn Klepacz has updated the bookkeeping system and Steve Spratt has kindly joined us to help with the additional work entailed.

A new till has been purchased and all volunteers needed to learn how to use it – this was quickly achieved as a result of Trish's famous 'training sessions', but also due in no little part to the efforts and determination of all the staff.

The VAT rating has been changed and most of you will have noticed us muttering "white button" or "yellow button" as we serve you. It is hoped that a change from paying a flat rate of 4% on all our sales, to the new system of paying 0% on foods (which, after all, make up most of the goods on sale in the shop), will lead to an increase in our profits.

Back office equipment was outdated and has been replaced by a new laptop and printer. Our stock books have now all been entered on the computer, thanks to the help of Jo Spencer and Francesca – a huge task, for which we are very grateful and which will make weekly ordering far more efficient.

Martin Mitchell and Marilyn Klepacz have carried out extensive research in making all these changes to develop the financial running of the shop.

Nevertheless, and despite all efforts, the shop's profits still depend on Beautiful Days – and, of course, everyone involved in running the shop stall there. It is a huge undertaking, masterminded by Trish, but great fun for those who take part. Last year's profits were the best ever, aided in part by the good weather and careful planning, which meant that very little stock was left over.

Some new community-focused initiatives have also been introduced.

Christmas tree lights were purchased and the lighting of the Christmas tree was a popular event, which brought people together to give a fitting start to the Christmas season. A draw decided who would switch on the lights, and this, too, provided a little extra excitement. The Christmas Fayre was also well supported- locally made goods were on sale, together with a special range of Christmas foods and other goodies.

By kind permission of Dusty Woodley, one of the two new defibrillators, purchased by the village, has now been installed on the side wall of the shop, where it can be easily accessed by anyone in need.

Other changes, less noticeable, but nevertheless important in maintaining the continuity of our stock, have been amongst our suppliers, all of which have enabled us to continue providing a range of goods.

We were all saddened by Mr Willmott's retirement, but felt the need to continue to supply newspapers as a service to our customers – hence the new system of orders, which we hope is helpful.

The Food Bank, now organised by Sue Harwood, continues to operate successfully.

Of course, none of these things could take place without the hard work of those who make them happen – our Chairman, Lady Anne, our brilliant manager, Trish, Val Blake, who manages all the rotas and ensures the shop is always staffed, and Martin Mitchell and Marilyn Klepacz who steer the finances.

However, no ship can sail successfully without a crew, and it is our loyal and hardworking volunteers who ensure that the shop remains open, not forgetting the Booker boys, who ensure there is stock on the shelves to sell. They all deserve a huge thank you.

It truly is a community enterprise and although everyone works very hard, we do have fun too – so if anyone would like to join our merry band, they would be made very welcome. We are always looking for volunteers. And we do have a Christmas party and a summer lunch party as a bit of a reward!

d. Parochial Church Council report was given by Charlie Hutchings.

We are blessed to have Chris Martin as our vicar and Sheila Walker as assistant curate who continue the work of the church in the four villages of Talaton, Whimple, Clyst St Lawrence and Clyst Hydon. Between them, they ensure there is a service in Talaton four Sundays a month. Mark Kerlake is joining the benefice as a curate later this year and so you may well see him at services as he continues his training.

Services:

In addition to regular services, there have again been special services throughout the year, many of which have proved popular with the wider village community as well as regulars. We held a Mothering Sunday Family service, a Good Friday reflective service, a St James the Great Patronal Songs of Praise Service (more about that later), a Harvest Family service, Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas Carol service. There were also Mission Community-wide services commemorating Advent Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Plough Sunday and Rogationtide. Additionally, the church hosted the village BBQ and various breakfasts in the hall.

We are fortunate to have music at all services and the bell ringing team ring once month. We were also involved with Tom Samson's production of Godspell in Whimple. Local charities benefit from carol singing and the church supports a number of local, national and international charities.

Safeguarding:

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) continues to take Safeguarding seriously, as part of our pastoral care for one another, and has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Financial Review:

The total spent by the church was £25,832 or £71 a day, to keep the church going. Included in that figure was repairs to the altar frontals and we are very grateful for the donation from the Parish Council. It is the continuing hard work of a large number of people in the village (not just churchgoers) who make these events such a success – this year we will be marking St James's day on Sunday 23rd July with a short service and will be inviting everyone who helps in any way to look after the church to join us and for refreshments afterwards.

Conclusion:

The church building & churchyard is in excellent condition and enjoyed by many – not just for church services.

d. Village Day Committee report was given by Lyndsey Trimmer.

Many thanks to everyone for their continuous support of village day. It is a great opportunity for all the organisations in our amazing village to raise some funds but more importantly for the community to come together.

Last year's event raised £690 & having started the year with £1805 in the bank we finished with a closing balance of £435. Our expenses were £2060 much of this due to purchasing two large gazebos!

Ottery Food Festival has clashed with us for the last couple of years & because of this we have definitely been quieter.

There were rumours going around that there was to be no village day this year. I'm sure everyone will be pleased to hear that this is not the case & for 2017 it will be on June 10th. This also means that there's a weekend free after Open Gardens.

New members have joined the Village Day Team & we will be bringing a variety of stalls including crafts, edible treats, games & sideshows as well as the ever popular dog show. We will also be holding a grand draw with some fantastic prizes with the chance to win three course meal with wine for two at The Pig at Combe & a case of wine plus other exciting prizes. So well worth buying a ticket or two!

As always the fun continues into the evening with Morris Dancing, BBQ & live music in the pub car park.

We hope to see you there, fingers crossed for good weather.

e. Produce Association report was given by Pam Weston.

The committee have met 6 times.

We have had another good year with our very successful and popular stalls at Village Day and the How D'ye Do, thanks to everyone who contributed to them.

In June 35 of us visited the lovely National Trust property of Cotehele for our annual outing. Last minute changes by the National Trust restricted access to much of the estate for some, which was a great pity, but we were treated to some lovely live music, interesting heritage stalls and a good collection of vintage vehicles. Our Annual Show in August was a great success thanks to Lesley, our new show secretary, the work of the committee and above all to those who exhibited.

In October, thanks to Nickie, we were treated to another visit by Jim Buttress. He came to do a signing for his new book, The People's Gardener. This was a lovely relaxed and very enjoyable coffee morning with a difference. Listening to his endless anecdotes put a smile on everybody's face. Jim now allows us to add his gardening hints to our monthly page in the Calendar.

Finally on 29th October The Talaton Inn hosted our Pumpkin Competition. Though there were fewer entries this year, it was a case of quality not quantity. There were some amazingly beautiful carvings and some clever

humour in two of the children's exhibits. Maria and her Mum did us proud and helped to make this a really lovely family evening.

Activities in the pipe line: The plant stall on Village Day followed by this summer's outing is a visit to Kingston Lacy on Saturday 24th June. The Annual Produce Show on the first Saturday in August September 22nd a talk by Mish Kennaway entitled 'Escot, The Fall and Rise of a Country Estate', followed in late October by the Pumpkin Competition. Happy gardening!

f. Talaton Clay Shoot Club report was given by Martin Mitchell.

The Talaton Clay Shoot has once again had an excellent year.

When the Club was restarted some 6 years ago, we set a maximum membership of 20 people. That was the number we assessed could comfortably shoot on a Saturday morning without anyone having to wait too long to shoot or our running out of time. However, during the past year we were faced with a significant demand from local prospective new members. A decision was taken on the hoof, by Gordon, our Chairman, and me, not to turn local people away. We now have a membership of 24. This includes our first lady member and several junior members. On those mornings where we have a full turn out, we avoid delays by having two people shooting at the same time. That sound a bit hairy but it in fact works very well and completely safely. To explain. Each person shoots from an open fronted steel mesh cage. This prevents whoever is shooting from inadvertently pointing their gun anywhere which is unsafe and in particular not at the other person shooting at the same time.

With regard to safety I would like to emphasise that shooting is conducted to the exacting standards of the national body, the British Clay Pigeon Shooting association. It is interesting to compare the name of our Club with that of the national body. We merely refer to clays and not clay pigeons. For those who haven't seen a clay, it is a flat, saucer sized, round disk. It does not resemble a pigeon in the slightest. The term pigeon harks back to the good old days when live pigeons or doves were released from traps and shot before they could get out of range. Very sporting indeed!

Each year we hold two prize competitions, "Top Gun" and a handicap event. The amount of handicap is determined from the scores in the top gun competition. For the first time ever the same person one both the top gun and handicap prizes. Well done Laurence Wood a new member and newcomer to the village. The prizes were presented at our annual dinner in the Talaton Inn. This was held in January rather than our usual Christmas dinner owing to Jan's motorbike accident. I have to say the Talaton Inn did us proud. I could get quite used to Christmas dinner in late January.

On the social side, Andrea Down aided by family, has continued, from time to time, to do a BBQ for us on shoot mornings. Not just bangs but also bangers at our shoot!

Finally, I'd like to put on record our thanks and appreciation to Dave Wright for continuing to allow us to shoot in his field.

g. Talaton Panto report was given by Trish Lenehan.

For the last 2 years a revue has been put on in place of the Panto. This year's production was the Paradise Club which was performed on 2 evenings. We were blown away by your fantastic comments and praise for our efforts. The atmosphere in the hall was enhanced by the new bistro tables which had arrived in time for the production and coincidentally the Bar takings were up! The Panto Group raised £700 for the Hall from the 2 shows. The Panto will be back next year with a new script.

h. One Hundred Years Gone report from Richard & Leslie Powell was read by Don Higgs

Work has continued under the guise of the One Hundred Years Gone group to mark the on-going centenary of the Great War

In time for the anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme, 100 packets of poppy seeds were distributed around the village through the Village Shop. There were few reports of whether the seeds came up although Lady Anne allowed a photograph of her display to be printed in the Calendar.

Research material was contributed to Tom Samson's fantastic play and to a project on Australian airmen, which is due for publication later this year in the Journal of the Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians.

Later this year, I will again invite parishioners to share their family's history in the Great War and I remain happy to undertake free private research into the stories of those who served, whether connected to the village 100 years ago or connected to current residents.

No public events are planned for this year. Next year will mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice and the group is expected to cease its activities by the beginning of November 2018. It seems increasingly unlikely that there will be sufficient funds available to provide Peace Mugs; however, with funds of around £500, I hope that a suitable alternative will be found.

i. Villages in Action report from Tom and Frances Samson.

The season 2016/17 has been our fullest and most successful to date. The year began and ended with two Parish Hall promoted charity events. In September local sportsman David Follett spoke, upliftingly, to a very appreciative audience about the challenges he faces as a paraplegic Badminton player and his hopes of representing Great Britain at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. This event raised just over £230 for David's two charities with £150 being donated to 'Canine Partners' and a further £82 to 'Devon Raquetees'. The season was completed on April 8th with two local youth bands 'Mr First Name' and, 'Tunisian Bear' providing a wonderful evening's entertainment, performing to a packed hall and in the process raising £300 for the charity Care International.

Between these two charity evenings Talaton played host to a wide range of performances that were both 'Villages in Action' events and our own promoted artists. 'Villages in Action' evenings included performances given by London based 'Told by an Idiot Theatre Company' with a highly comic, very over the top piece entitled 'Heads Will Roll' and a musical evening with the duo 'Mambo Jambo'. These performances were then complemented by a mixed programme of amateur and professional music that included an outstanding evening with the professional, Bristol based, 'Moscow Drug Club', as well as an evening with local amateurs 'The Austerity Quartet', supported by Talaton's very own 'The Hypertension Twins'. In addition we were also privileged to be able to host a performance by 'Semi-Toned', winners of this year's BBC2's "The Choir", ably supported by our very own Tale Valley Choir. This must rate as our most successful promotion to date, with a packed hall of just over 100 and tickets selling out within half an hour of going on sale! Little did we realize just how popular this event would be when we booked "Semi-Toned" the previous April, before they had become so well know through their television appearances!

Although not part of the Parish Hall Performing Arts programme, village entertainment was further complemented by three performances of Community Theatre 4All's production of 'In Remembrance of a Lost Generation' (to which I will refer to in that report) and two performances of the 'Talaton Review'. In total this is an impressive range of entertainment for a small village.

Next year our events will have to happen without the 'Villages in Action' rural touring programme at the core of our (and many other villages) activities. In this time of austerity 'ViA' has, in recent years, through no fault of its own, suffered every greater reductions of grant support from The Arts Council of Great Britain, Devon County Council and Local District Councils. A situation has now been reached where, due to an ever-increasing funding gap, ViA has been forced to cease its work while still solvent, make its staff redundant and close its office in Crediton.

Despite this set back as a village we will continue to work hard to programme performing arts entertainment into our hall. Due to a different structuring of rural arts provision in Cornwall that county has managed, at least for the present, to retain its rural touring scheme and I, along with other promoters, have been invited to attend their next programme launch on April 27th. The aim of this invitation is to give Devon villages the opportunity of booking performers the week before or the week after they tour Cornwall. Further to this new resource, ViA has, a final act, called a meeting of village promoters in early May, with the aim of building a network of venues able to work together. The hope is that village promoters working together will be able to create small viable tour schedules that will continue to attract professional musicians and actors into our halls. I, along with one other promoter have been asked to speak at this meeting, as here in Talaton we are seen as a ViA venue that has become highly successful in promoting their own programming. Through a range of strategies, together with other villages, we aim to keep the flag of rural touring flying here in Devon.

So looking ahead, despite the problems associated with the loss of 'Villages in Action' I do feel confident that we can promote a strong programme of professional events next year and beyond. We are already well into the process of planning and booking performers for next year and we hope to be in a position to publish next season's entertainment in the July issue of the Calendar.

k. Community Theatre 4All report from Tom Samson.

Following on from the theatre group's first performance of 'Godspell', in March of last year, the company then performed a locally and nationally based historical, First World War, drama entitled 'In Remembrance of a Lost Generation'. The piece was written by myself, and drew extensively upon Richard Powell's local research and records from the Whimble Heritage Centre. This material, combined with the writings and recollections of those who lived and died in the war formed the basis of the story line. Songs of the period and well-known First World War poetry were then woven into the action. The audience was, thus presented with events of the time told from the point of view of the residents and soldiers of Talaton, Whimble and Escot, many of whom laid down their lives during the conflict. The play was directed by myself, with Emma Palmer (Director of the Tale Valley choir) as the Musical Director.

Three performances were given in Talaton, with two evening performances and one matinee. These were on the 11th and 12th November 2017, to coincide with Remembrance Day. The drama, which was strongly rooted in the

events of The Battle of the Somme, had a fitting a final performance in the Victory Hall in Whimple on the 19th November – exactly 100 years, to the day, since fighting along the Somme had ended.

The drama, which was seen by almost almost 250 people over the four performances, drew wide critical acclaim and frequent, strong, emotional responses from the audience, many of whom were moved to stunned silence at the end of the performance.

Audience comments included: - *“What an amazing production. I found the change of mood between the two halves incredibly striking and moving. It was inspired”*.

And *“The play was a very fitting memorial to the local soldiers of Talaton, Whimple and Escot, so ably portrayed by everyone. I didn't realise how much material had been discovered. Their stories made it so vivid.”*

Since ‘In Remembrance of a Lost Generation’ the company has continued to go from strength to strength and is now deep into rehearsals for an open air production of William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Nights Dream” which is due for performance on the afternoons of Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th October at 2.00pm. Performances will be given in the grounds of St James the Great on the open grass area between the graveyard and the car park. Future plans for further projects are well developed and will be announced in the programme for “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”.

The Chairman thanked Tom and Frances for bringing the productions to the village.

10. Open Forum Lyndsey Trimmer, who has been raising funds for the Force Charity for 10 years, reminded everyone that tickets are still available for the Force party to be held on the 20th May in the Hall.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm