

HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Holne Village Hall on Tuesday 5 April 2022 at 7.30pm

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Present

Cllr Owen (Chair), R Applegarth, J Bellamy, T Crook, M Fairman and C McLean

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Thomas, Ross Gray (Tree Warden) and one member of the public

The meeting was opened by Cllr Owen at 7.30pm.

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| 050422.01 | Apologies for Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District Cllr Smerdon• District Cllr Pannell |
| 050422.02 | Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation <p>Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.</p> |
| 050422.03 | Open Forum <p>Ross Gray asked whether the village were going to plant a Jubilee tree. The Chair advised that the church is going to plant a tree but she didn't have any further details. Ross also wanted to clarify an observation he had made in the last meeting about the public highway near Holne Bridge where signage has been erected indicating that it is a 'private road, no parking'. He wished to clarify that his issue was with 'private road' (not 'no parking') as this is a public highway. The clerk advised that Highways has been informed of the signage and they have written to the landowner asking for them to be removed. Highways will consider what to do to help if a parking problem arises as the signs being taken down. Ross also commented that a finger post at this location pointing up this public road which said 'public footpath' has gone missing and the sign further up the road (round the corner) which said 'Public Footpath to Gallant Le Bower' is no longer there. It was agreed that these would be reported to Highways/DNPA.</p> |
| 050422.04 | County Councillor, District Councillors' and DNPA Reports <p>District Cllrs Smerdon and Pannell submitted a written report (attached).</p> <p>Cllr Smerdon also submitted a DNPA report (attached).</p> <p>County Cllr Thomas submitted a written report (attached).</p> |
| 050422.05 | Ratification of Minutes <p>Members approved and signed the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1 March 2022.</p> |

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| 050422.06 | <p>Finance and Governance</p> <p>6.1 Payments for Approval</p> <p>The following payments were approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Birbeck - £550 – Playpark grasscutting • EDF - £52.50 – Lighting mast supply • HMRC - £162.20 – PAYE <p>6.2 Members noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on the new rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2021. The new rates have a 1.75% increase applied. The clerk’s salary will be backdated accordingly.</p> |
| 050422.07 | <p>Planning</p> <p>7.1 New applications/appeals</p> <p>None</p> <p>7.2 Decisions</p> <p>None</p> |
| 050422.08 | <p>Highways and Footpaths</p> <p>8.1 Members received an update from DCC’s Highways Officer as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He will have a look at the leat/culvert running under the Highway at Waterleat. If the blockage is under the highway then it would be for DCC to clear. Members suspected that the blockage may be further up which would be up to the landowner to resolve. • Broken tarmac and potholes Holne side of Cumberstone - works were reported as completed on 23-24 March. With regards to the gateways of Priddon and Forestone Farm, he will check to see what can be done. • Undercutting at Mill Leat - works were reported as completed to a standard so the road could be re-opened although I haven’t got dates when they were finished the road was open last time I passed. • The defect potholes behind Bakers Park were filled (three) and once we start the patching request process again I can request up to 50sqm per half a kilometre length of road so I will make a request for a bigger patch to be done. • Parking behind Bakers Park - there was a misunderstanding on the contractor’s behalf as they had two orders from me one for local ditching which was completed and one for earthworks to level for parking which they will need to return to complete with a more suitable gang. I have been informed that there may be a belief locally that we will be tarmacking the parking bays that were requested but to confirm that was not the intention - the order was only for earthworks as per the alternative plan supplied. |
| 050422.09 | <p>Playpark</p> <p>The AGM was held last month. The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer have resigned and have been replaced by new members. They had a discussion about the role of the Playpark Group and it was agreed that all decisions relating to the management and maintenance of Playpark will come back to the Parish Council. The Group will continue with events etc. It was agreed that there is a grey area about who is looking after the wildlife area and this needs clarification. Going forwards, meetings will be held quarterly.</p> <p>Cllr Bellamy reported that Earthwrights have been working on and off for a week and a half. The work they have done so far is looking good.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the moles and the information and advice received from the Devon Wildlife Trust was noted. It was agreed that Cllr Applegarth will chain harrow and roll the field in a non-intrusive way. It will also help the grass and wildflowers.</p> |

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| 050422.10 | <p>Leats</p> <p>Members received and noted letters from the PCC regarding the churchyard leat and its proposed actions. Members agreed that the actions were a positive step forward. It was noted, however, that it should be clear that the Whats App group which has been set up to address any emergency leat issues is a group of volunteers in the community and is not a Parish Council led group. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed to respond to the PCC stating that the Parish Council looks forward to hearing the results of the inspection of the churchyard leat. It was also agreed that it would repeat an article which was last published in the Parish Link in 2020 advising landowners of their riparian responsibilities.</p> <p>One of the letters also referred to the planting of a tree to commemorate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. It was agreed to refer the PCC to The Queen's Canopy (www.queensgreencanopy.org). Ross Gray would also be happy to offer advice.</p> |
| 050422.12 | <p>Annual Parish Meeting</p> <p>The dates of May's meeting were agreed as follows:</p> <p>Annual Parish Meeting – 24 May at 7.00pm Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – 24 May at 7.30pm</p> <p>It was agreed that there will be no formal meeting in June but Councillors will have a walkabout of the village.</p> |
| 050422.13 | <p>Clerk's or Councillors reports on matters authorised by the Council at previous meetings not otherwise on this agenda</p> <p>None</p> |
| 050422.14 | <p>Chair's urgent business for action by the clerk if covered by delegated powers or for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting</p> <p>None</p> |
| 050422.15 | <p>Correspondence</p> <p>None</p> |
| 050422.16 | <p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The date of the next Parish Council meeting would be Tuesday 24 May 2022 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.</p> |

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Cllr B Owen
Chair

Parish report from your District Councillors

May 2nd 2022

Council Tax Energy Rebate



Just over 9,000 households who live in Council Tax bands A to D and who paid by Direct Debit on 1 April have now been paid their £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate by South Hams District Council. Despite guidance issued to councils stating that payments should be made by the deadline of 30 September, South Hams District Council knew that their residents needed this extra help as soon as possible.

Staff worked rapidly to set up the systems to those already registered by direct debit, so they could be paid as early as possible. Whereas some councils nationwide have told their residents that they won't receive payment until as late as the September deadline. To date, the Council has issued just over 9,000 payments, which was paid to residents' bank accounts last week.

Those with different direct debit payment dates throughout April will receive similar payments soon. An application form is live on the Council's website, for those who do not pay by Direct Debit, and these will be processed from May.

Solar Panels on South Hams Leisure Centres

In a meeting on 7 April, the Council's Executive Committee heard about the steady progress being made by the organisation since the approval of its Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy in December 2020. The goals set in this strategy include reducing the Council's own carbon footprint to net-zero by 2030 and increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% in 2025.

To back up the organisation-wide efforts to lower carbon emissions, the Executive Committee approved plans to loan Fusion Leisure £500,000 for the installation of solar panels at all four District Council leisure centres. A study on greenhouse gas emissions caused by Council activity was commissioned last year. It showed that the biggest proportion of the organisation's emissions relate to its activities from leased assets, franchising and outsourcing. That includes the four leisure centres.

The installation of the panels will reduce the carbon emissions of the centres by 131 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_e), equivalent to the annual energy emissions of 38 homes. Predictably, the emissions study also found that the reduction in staff travel caused by the pandemic led to a big saving in CO₂ released into the atmosphere; a saving of 234 tCO_e was made, the equivalent of powering 66 homes for a year.

Many Council staff continue to work remotely, which continues to reduce emissions significantly. To capitalise on these gains made, however, an electric vehicle project is about to begin shifting the Council's fleet of vehicles over to electric power. The project has the potential to save around 160 tCOe per year - the equivalent emissions of 45 homes.

Ukrainian Refugees



It's been a busy time leading the district support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. We are doing all we can to ensure that we rapidly undertake the accommodation checks and are now also undertaking more visits to Ukrainians that have arrived, in order to get some essential financial support to them, and this has been done this week. The total number of host properties successfully matched with Ukrainian guests so far is 52 in South Hams (and the team are also supporting another 34 in

West Devon).

There is of course a time lag in the data being received by the Council from Government. We anticipate the actual number to be higher than this. To date we have undertaken 79% of the accommodation checks we've been notified of; so far we have been informed of 23 Ukrainian guests actually arriving in the South Hams through the scheme.

For each guest arriving through the scheme, the government will provide funding to Councils of £10,500. We are pushing Devon County Council to understand how much of it they will 'top-slice' and therefore how much we have available to fund wrap-around support.

We do however now need to focus on what the longer term wrap-around support looks like. With that in mind, in the past week we have:-

- Arranged a drop in briefing session for Town and Parish Councils to ask any questions on the scheme or to share any steps they are taking to support Ukrainians on a locality basis.
- Worked with Team Devon to develop a series of webinars for Hosts and Sponsors over the coming month. Sophie Cobbledick from our Housing Team continues to play a lead role on the Team Devon work strand.
- Finalised plans with the CVS to deliver signposting, linking up translators to hosts / community groups / other organisations supporting our Ukrainian guests, supporting us in facilitating regular webinars with hosts and guests
- Formally launched the Fusion Leisure Homes for Ukraine free membership offering
- Gone live with our simple online form to enable hosts to sign up to receive their £350 monthly welcome payment.

Anyone wanting to become a sponsor must be able to offer a minimum of six months' accommodation. This can be anything from a spare room to an empty home. They will be eligible for a £350 payment per month, per address. This will not impact benefits or single person Council Tax discounts. Refugees old enough to work are able to claim Universal Credit and those of pension age can receive Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. Anyone offering support that is not accommodation or finance can email the council at supportforukraine@swdevon.gov.uk

Additionally, the Government has published a guide for Ukrainian guests, which includes advice on a whole range of topics including how to access benefits, finding work, etc. This will be available in Ukrainian. The guide can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk>

A recently launched website - www.devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine - is the single point for

information in Devon.

Waste Update



Significant disruption to the garden waste collections continue due to staff shortages. These are mainly due to illness and the difficulty in recruiting workers. The waste and recycling collections are fully resourced and are operating as we would wish. FCC are unable to carry out any recovery of the garden waste as recovery of black bins and recycling is being prioritised.



If a resident's bin is not collected on their scheduled day, we are advising residents to keep their brown bin out until 5pm the following day and if it isn't collected, then to take their bin in and present on their next collection day.

Officers continue to work closely with FCC to ensure as many collections are made as possible, but in order to ensure we can hold FCC to account contractually please encourage all residents to report their missed collection online.



We do not yet know when those areas which have not switched to the box recycling system will do so.

New Household Support Fund



Details are starting to emerge of the government's intentions on this. Last year the funding, which gets allocated to upper tier authorities, had very little guidance. This year the government have stated that 33% of the funding should be spent on supporting children, 33% on pensioners, with the remainder allocated based on local need.

While we are still awaiting final funding allocations, initial Team Devon discussions are proposing that DCC use the children's element as they did last year, to provide additional free school meals and the suggestion is that a one-off payment is made to those of pensionable age in receipt of Council tax support i.e. already in receipt of a benefit. Across Devon that equates to some 19,000 individuals and would result in a payment of around £85.

STEP ON ...



This new scheme will help local people get a foot on the housing ladder. Anyone renting a social housing property can apply for a £5,000 Step On grant to help them with their deposit to buy a shared ownership home. It is designed to encourage families to move on, freeing up socially rented homes.

www.southhams.gov.uk/step-on

Additional Funding for the Council



We have been successful in a funding bid to DCC / Public Health on behalf of all Devon Districts for funding to support further outbreak management. District Councils will be continuing promotion of infection, prevention and control measures within workplace settings to limit outbreaks of infection and knock on effects of impacts on local communities. The Council will receive £55,000 and the funding is required to support public health activities directly related to the COVID-19 response, such as testing, non-financial support for self-isolation, support to particular groups (CEV (clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals, rough sleepers), communications and engagement, and compliance and enforcement.

To help guide applications, examples of the types of project the fund will consider supporting are:

- Digital skills and inclusion projects
- Social inclusion and connectedness projects
- Mental health interventions
- Employability skills
- Projects increasing community access to outside space
- Inter-generational support projects
- Befriending services
- Innovative solutions to combating loneliness.

101 call handling and reporting to the police



Following concerns being raised by Councillors over 101 police call handling and reporting to the police, the local commander for that department has issued the following message for Members: *We encourage the public and our partners to report crime, intelligence, ASB and incident of concern and we understand the frustrations individuals experience, when they feel let down by the service.*

As a force we acknowledge performance is a long way from that we desire and offer our apologies.

Below is a list of activity being progressed looking to improve how we response to calls for service;

- *£2M investment in more staff during 2022/23 - which given recruitment and training will be implemented by Christmas, not before*
- *Investment in a new switchboard*
- *Investment in a new telephony software platform*
- *Investment in a new website*
- *Seeking more investment in 23/24 and 24/25 for additional staff, to bring our performance up to the level we desire*

Devon stands with Ukraine

Devon's local authorities are supporting local residents who want to provide sanctuary to the Ukrainian refugees who have been forced to flee their homes.

[A new website now hosts the latest guidance and information](#) as it becomes available.

[Visit devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine](https://devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine) for further information

We are now receiving the latest information from the government on the Devon sponsors who have registered, and are carrying out DBS checks on the sponsor families. And Devon's district authorities are using a common approach to assess each sponsor's accommodation, which will help better assess any potential safeguarding risks.

This initial phase of the Homes for Ukraine scheme is designed to supplement the Ukraine Family Visa for people in the UK to support friends and colleagues. We are now seeing several hundred people in Devon being matched and, following permission to travel, we will start to see those families arrive in Devon.

As you will appreciate the situation is evolving quickly, with updated guidance coming through from government daily, but all Team Devon partners are working together to develop a rapid response.

Anyone who is interested in offering accommodation can register their interest via the government website [Homes for Ukraine – Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukraine](#). The link also contains some frequently asked questions (FAQs) for would-be accommodation providers (sponsors).

Those wishing to offer donations on the ground are advised to make financial contributions, particularly to the [Disasters Emergency Committee](#).

Everything you need to know about the spring booster in Devon

[Spring COVID-19 booster jabs](#) have started to be offered to people in Devon at greatest risk of COVID-19 infection, many of whom had their first booster six months ago. The groups eligible for the spring booster are:

- people aged 75 years and older
- residents in a care home for older adults
- people aged 12 years old and over who have a weakened immune system

The best time to have the spring booster is around six months after the previous booster, although the minimum interval is three months. You can find your nearest walk-in clinic on [the NHS site finder website](#) or book an appointment via the [National Booking System](#).

Check visitor arrangements at hospitals and care homes

Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Devon some hospitals and care homes have taken the difficult decision to restrict visitors in order to protect vulnerable patients, residents and staff.

If you are planning to visit someone in hospital or in a care home, please ring ahead or check their website to find out about visitor arrangements.

Holiday food support continues for Easter

Supermarket vouchers worth £570,000 have been sent to families of 19,000 children in Devon to help them buy food over the upcoming Easter holidays.

This comes from the government's one-off 'household support fund', which was given to councils to distribute. Over the last year £4.7 million has provided nearly 140,000 supermarket vouchers for families who qualify for free school meals; so their children don't go hungry over the school holidays.

DNPA Report – Cllr Smerdon

National Park Grant Funding

Our formal grant letter regarding National Park Grant for 2022/23 was received on 1 April 2022 (ie after the start of the new financial year). It confirmed what has previously reported – a flat cash settlement for 2022/23 which means the same amount as per 2021/22 which was the same as for 2020/21. The figures for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are indicative (also flat cash). Our grant letter states that in 2022/23 we are to “*use grant funding to support implementation of the Government’s response to the Landscapes Review, particularly:*

- **Nature and Climate** – *increasing the role of our protected landscapes in delivering nature-based solutions to help address the twin biodiversity and climate crises.*
- **People and Place** – *improving access to our protected landscapes for all parts of society and supporting the communities that live and work there”.*

The timing is interesting as we have already set our priorities for 2022/23, our business plan and budget. Whilst this focus is not surprising cultural heritage is, again, a missing dimension – it was largely missed in the Landscapes Review and the subsequent Government response. There is a growing gap between Government expectations and the reality of what we can deliver with ever reducing resources. It is with envy that we note that the Welsh National Parks got a 10% increase in core funding in 2021/22 and the Scottish National Parks have received another almost 5% increase in their grant....

Staff sickness

We have a number of staff off sick (some with Covid) at present and particular pressures in planning administration and business support. We only have 1 fit member of the planning admin team (normally 3) and one is a new starter and thus not yet fully trained. Other planning staff are assisting but this has knock on implications for their work programmes. One of the absences may be long-term so we are looking at options for external support.

We also have a particular pressure in business support, where two key staff are currently off sick and other colleagues are staffing reception and answering the main phone line. Again, this has knock on implications. We would appreciate your patience while this pressure is on.

Response to the Landscapes Review

The Authority has submitted its response to the Government’s consultation on the Landscapes Review last week:

<https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/about-us/who-we-are/landscapes-review>

Our response includes a ‘supporting statement’ which addresses some of the wider issues which were not covered by specific questions in the consultation. We understand that Defra are appointing consultants to analyse the responses – over 9,000 at the beginning of last week (i.e. before the consultation closed on 9 April). We are not yet clear on the timescale for a public response to the consultation or to when we will get further details on the National Landscape Partnership. What we do know is that National Parks Partnerships have been offered circa £1m per annum for three years to attract private finance for the benefit of the English AONBs as well as the existing 15 National Park members and that Defra have circa £1m per annum set aside for the new National Landscapes Partnership.

We have started the process of briefing key stakeholders on our response – we engaged with many during the consultation to ensure they were aware of the opportunity to comment. We will be drafting

a specific briefing for our local MPs on what we see as a growing 'reality gap' between the Government's vision and the resources we receive to deliver this vision.

Rangers to trial body-worn video cameras

Dartmoor Rangers are to trial the use of body worn video cameras in a bid to deter anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations to introduce their use were unanimously approved by Dartmoor National Park Authority at its February meeting and they'll start wearing them once they've completed training. Rangers will trial them for 24 months with a review after 18 months to evaluate their effectiveness. The primary aim of their use is to further protect their health, safety and welfare by reducing the risk of incidents of verbal and physical abuse towards them but, if necessary and appropriate to do so, could provide evidence to support legal action.

The body worn video cameras will provide transparent and clear accounts of interactions between Rangers and members of the public. The camera, worn attached to Rangers' uniform, will be clearly identifiable and will capture moving images and audio. Alongside the Authority's existing health and safety policies it will give them an extra layer of protection when they are at work.

Their use is incident-specific. Rangers will turn the devices on in situations where they believe they may be subject to physical or verbal abuse or where someone is perceived as being threatening/aggressive towards them. They will always clearly announce they are turning on the device so people know they're being filmed.

The estimated total cost of the cameras for the 24-month period is £8,019.

National Park Visitor Centres scoop gold in tourism awards

Dartmoor's National Park Visitor Centres scooped Gold in the Devon Tourism Awards 2021/22.

The Authority was among 67 finalists revealed in 24 categories an online ceremony on Thursday 10 March. The centres scooped gold in the 'visitor information service of the year' category and now go through to the regional awards ceremony on April 7 at Sandy Park, Exeter.

The three National Park Visitor Centres, at Haytor, Postbridge and Princetown, are staffed by friendly and knowledgeable advisers and each centre is stocked with maps, books, guides and leaflets, as well as gifts and products from the Dartmoor Range.