

HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Holne Village Hall on Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 7.30pm

Present

Cllr B Owen (Chairman), R Applegarth, T Crook & M Fairman

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk) and District Cllr Pannell

The meeting was opened by Cllr Owen at 7.30pm

061222.01	Apologies for Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Bellamy• Cllr McLean• County Cllr Thomas• District Cllr Smerdon• Ross Gray
061222.02	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>
061222.03	Open Forum <p>No comments.</p>
061222.04	County & District Councillors' Reports <p>District Councillors' report was circulated to members (copy attached).</p> <p>County Cllr Thomas circulated the latest edition of the County Council members' bulletin.</p> <p>Cllr Smerdon circulated a report from DNPA.</p>
061222.05	Ratification of Minutes <p>Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1 November 2022. It was agreed unanimously that they be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.</p>
061222.06	Finance and Governance <p>6.1 Payments for Approval None</p> <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 2022. Clerk's salary will be backdated accordingly.</p> <p>6.3 Members considered the budget and precept for 2023-24. A final decision will be made in January's meeting.</p>

061222.07	<p>Planning</p> <p>7.1 New applications/appeals None</p> <p>7.2 Decisions</p> <p>7.2.1 0381/22 – Langaford Cottage, Buckfastleigh Replacement of conservatory with garden room and replacement of flat-roofed utility area with small lean-to utility</p> <p>Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning permission.</p>
061222.08	<p>Free Landmark Tree</p> <p>Members received the offer of a free Landmark Tree from the Saving Devon’s Treescapes project (available species: oak, field maple, silver birch, crab apple, cherry, whitebeam, rowan, small leaved lime). After discussion, it was agreed to decline the offer as no suitable location could be identified.</p>
061222.09	<p>Holne Woodland Management Plan</p> <p>A copy was received and comments were invited. It was agreed to ask Ross Gray to comment directly on behalf of the parish.</p>
061222.10	<p>Highways and Footpaths</p> <p>It was noted that the cattle grid gate has been repaired.</p> <p>Cllr Fairman advised that he has cut back the vegetation at the end of Church Path.</p>
061222.11	<p>Playpark</p> <p>There was a very successful treasure hunt.</p> <p>With regard to the wildflower management plan, it was agreed to ask Sarah Pank for a copy of the plan in time for January’s meeting. There is no need for this to be approved by the Playpark Committee as maintenance is the responsibility of the Parish Council.</p>
061222.12	<p>Devon Air Ambulance Lighting Mast</p> <p>Cllr Applegarth is planning to speak to the new landing site manager about solar battery.</p>
061222.13	<p>Leats</p> <p>There were no issues reported.</p>
061222.14	<p>Clerk’s or Councillors reports on matters authorised by the Council at previous meetings not otherwise on this agenda</p> <p>None</p>
061222.15	<p>Chairman’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>
061222.16	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>None</p>
061222.17	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on 3 January 2023 at 7.30pm.</p>

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Cllr B Owen
Chairman

District Councillors' Report

DECEMBER 2022

Supported Housing Improvement Programme

SHDC has been successful in our joint bid with Devon County and West Devon to the Government's Supported Housing Improvements Programme. This is exciting news for both Councils as we will receive just over £300,000 over the next three years. Together we have played an important role nationally in highlighting the current system of supported exempt accommodation and the level of public funding that ends up in the pockets of unscrupulous providers, putting profit before people. The funding will bring together a task force of specialist benefit officers, an inspection regime and county commissioners to ensure that we continue to safeguard our most vulnerable residents.

Cost-of-Living - Community Grants Deadline

South Hams are launching two funds to enable communities to respond locally as part of our Cost-of-Living Response plan. The deadline for the community grants is 16 December. These are the two grants which are a part of our Cost-of-Living Response Plan:

Grant Fund 1 - A total of £25,000 available for schemes directly responding to cost of living - operating of warm hubs, provision of warm meals to vulnerable residents etc. Grants can be up to a maximum of £1,000.

Grant Fund 2 - A total of £25,000 available for schemes that will support wider Health and Wellbeing - both physical and mental. We will look favourably on applications trying something a little different and so, groups can apply for up to £2,500 from this fund.

You can find out more at: www.southhams.gov.uk/winter-fund

Support for households

Slow cookers, cookbooks, electric blankets: - just some of the ways SHDC will distribute some of the £187,000 Of government funding allocated to them by Devon County Council. This latest fund must be used to support households in the most need and particularly those who may not be eligible for other support the government has recently made available. South Hams will focus on supporting those who may be just above income thresholds, meaning they do not qualify for other support.

This funding has to be spent by March 2023, and we wanted to devise a range of different ways to help families. We didn't just want to provide the funds, but by providing things like slow cookers and electric blankets we can help the residents save money and reduce their costs for a longer period of time. The Executive has proposed to use the funds in the following ways:

- Making payments of £650 to working age households receiving council tax reduction and not receiving passported benefits on 1 December 2022.
- Making payments of £300 to households receiving council tax disabled band reduction on 1 December 2022. It is estimated that we will be able to support 234 households who are likely to have additional energy costs due to disabilities.
- Providing funding of £10,000 to help partners provide slow cookers and cookbooks, electric blankets, warm clothing and sleeping bags to individuals and households identified as being in need.
- Using the remainder of the funding to offer an open application process to provide support to low-income households and others in financial need.

South Hams District Council says that the key to distributing this money is to get it out to those most in need as quickly as possible and the Council has a proven track record in this area.

Motorhomes pilot successful

12-month pilot scheme allowing self-contained motorhomes to stay at nominated South Hams' car parks has been Permanently adopted. The pilot scheme, which began in June 2021, trialled five sites for self-contained motorhomes in the following car parks:

- Longmarsh Car Park, Totnes
- Leonards Road Car Park, Ivybridge
- Poundwell Meadow Car Park, Modbury
- Park & Ride Car Park, Dartmouth
- Cattlemarket Car Park, Kingsbridge

Having reviewed the pilot, it has been agreed to permanently allow overnight sleeping for a two-night consecutive stop with no return within 48 hours within these car parks. The scheme is restricted to motorhomes with on-board facilities including a toilet. The stays will continue to be charged at an overnight fee of £10 from 6 p.m. until 9 a.m.

Audit and Recycling

- The Council has been given a clean bill of health by external auditors, Grant Thornton LLP, who intend to issue an unqualified opinion on the Council's Accounts. The Council's clean audit means it will be one of the first few Councils in Devon to have its Annual Accounts and Audit ready to be signed off. Grant Thornton made specific reference to the high quality of the work and accounting records by the Council's finance team.

- The waste and recycling service in the South Hams continues to see a significant improvement in performance since the service successfully came back in-house on 3 October. The Council is now completing all collection rounds as currently scheduled and reduced the number of reported missed collections by around 75%. The move is likely to result in the council incurring additional costs of several million pounds in the next few years as a consequence of the mutual termination of the contract with FCC. A major review of all collection rounds is currently taking place, the plan being to move all residents currently on recycling bags to the new boxes by next Spring.
- Around 3000 residents have already signed up for the brown bin collection service. The new service, at a cost of £49 per bin, starts in March, Residents have until 22nd January to sign up. Go on the SHDC website or call 01803 861234
- Residents unable to gain information from the council online or via smartphone, or who need extra support, can now ask for a home visit. Your District Councillors can request this. We just need the person's name, address and phone number.

DNPA Report

Final draft of revised Byelaws

Following extensive work evaluating over 4,000 consultation responses, the final draft of the revised Byelaws has been considered at a special Authority meeting on 11 November 2022. [Authority Report - November 2022 'Minded to make' amendments \(PDF\)](#).

Work has been informed by legal advice, evidence, impact and sustainability assessments alongside detailed responses from statutory consultees and extensive public feedback.

The report to Authority sets the legal background, work carried out so far, the 'minded to make' modifications and next steps.

The current set of [byelaws](#) relating to [access land](#) on Dartmoor were adopted in 1989 and are therefore over 30 years old.

What happens next?

In line with the byelaw-making process, we will now consult with statutory consultees and key interest groups, as well as considering any further comments.

Although there is no statutory requirement for another formal public consultation, we welcome comments on this final draft.

Email: byelaws@dartmoor.gov.uk

A final version of the revised byelaws will be presented to Members at an Authority meeting in early 2023. If approved, they will then be Sealed and advertised for 6 weeks, as per the DEFRA guidance, before being sent to DEFRA for final approval. This can take between 3-6 months.

Wild Camping Byelaw

Due to a separate High Court challenge on people's right to wild camp, the Authority will not look to make any amendment to the current camping byelaw until legal action is concluded and the outcome considered. Therefore, the byelaw remains as it is.

The legal action will be heard in the High Court in London next week.

Farmers continue to work for Dartmoor with protected landscapes funding

Restoring habitats and endangered species, conserving historic farm features, and helping farm businesses – these are just a few examples of how farmers are using protected landscapes funding to enhance Dartmoor.

It is one year since the launch of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and already more than £500,000 has been awarded to Dartmoor farmers and land agents.

So far, funding has been granted to more than fifty applications with an estimated eighty-five more in various stages of development. FiPL is a Defra-funded programme, delivered locally, which offers funding support to farmers and land managers in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Grant funding allows them to carry out one-off projects that benefit the protected landscape.

In the first 12 months, farmers on Dartmoor have:

- Planted and enhanced of 690metres of hedgerows

- 220 hectares (ha) of habitat improvement for biodiversity including priority species such as the lapwing and curlew
- Carried out archaeological surveys to map historic features with recommendations for conservation and community participation
- Created 12 ha of woodland
- Launched soil quality projects
- Restored dry stone walls and stone faced bank
- Removed non-native invasive plant species.

Summary of projects is on the [DNPA website](#) alongside information on how Dartmoor farmers can apply.

DNPA Funding issues

The Authority faces a significant financial challenge over the next few years. The current Medium Term Financial Plan indicates that we face a deficit of circa £500,000 over the period 2022/23 – 2024/25. This deficit is increasing because of inflationary pressure.

Our core grant from Defra has not increased in real terms since 2008/09. We receive £3.8m. If the grant had kept pace with inflation it would be worth in excess of £7m.

CEO Kevin Bishop and Authority Chair Pamela Woods are contacting Devon MPS to ask for their help in addressing this situation. In the meantime urgent consideration is being given to how the Authority can respond to this challenge.