

HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Holne Village Hall on Tuesday 2 January 2024 at 7.30pm

Present

Cllrs B Owen (Chair), R Applegarth, T Crook, M Fairman, L Grun & C McLean

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), District Cllr Pannell and Ross Gray (Tree Warden)

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.30pm.

020124.01	Apologies for Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">Rob Steemson (DNPA)
020124.02	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 or requests for dispensation.</p>
020124.03	Open Forum <p>Ross Gray, Tree Warden, advised that he supported the TPO application to be considered at item 7.1.</p> <p>Cllr Crook raised two matters on behalf of a parishioner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Could the contractor close the gate in playpark when they have finished?Can part of the top section of the leat running through playpark not be strimmed to allow the cowslips to emerge? <p>It was agreed that these matters would be taken at item 8.</p>
020124.04	Ratification of Minutes <p>Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5 December 2023. It was agreed unanimously that they be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record of the meeting.</p>
020124.05	Reports <p>5.1 County Council No report</p> <p>5.2 District Council Cllrs Pannell and Hancock sent a report, a copy of which is attached.</p> <p>Cllr Pannell also sent a summary published in the Totnes Times summarising the recommendations of an independent review on how protected sites on Dartmoor can be managed - copy attached.</p> <p>5.3 DNPA Rob Steemson was unable to attend the meeting but sent a written report as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Two new signs have been erected on FP9 to Newbridge, one on FP8 at Gallant Le Bower and one on BW13 at Combestone.Other paths have been surveyed with new signs ordered.

020124.06	<p>Finance and Governance</p> <p>6.1 Payments for Approval The following payments were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDF (DAAT mast electricity) - £47.25 • HMRC (PAYE) - £213 <p>6.2 Members considered the budget and precept for 2024-25. It was noted that the 2024/25 Tax Base has reduced slightly from 138.11 in 2023/24 to 133.36 in 2024/25. This is a reduction of 4.75 (3.4%). A reduction in the council tax base can happen for a number of reasons, for example an increase in the council tax discounts awarded in the parish, exemptions, or help through the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. After discussion, it was agreed to demand a sum of £7370 representing a 3% increase.</p>
020124.07	<p>Planning</p> <p>7.1 New applications/appeals</p> <p>7.1.1 23/0077 - Churchway Cottage, Holne Works to trees protected by TPO (T2003, Beech: Crown reduction by up to 3m)</p> <p>Members agreed to support this application.</p> <p>7.2 Decisions None</p>
020124.08	<p>Playpark</p> <p>Members received and considered a quotation for maintenance of playpark for 2024 from the existing contractor. The quotation is based on the previous specification of one cut per month March - October with two discretionary cuts to be used as required depending on the growing season. It is also based on the revised area to be cut as shown in the map emailed on 31st August. Members noted that continuity of work is very valuable and that increases to reflect the cost of living should also be expected. However, members felt that it would be prudent to obtain other quotations to ensure best value. A decision was therefore deferred until February's meeting.</p> <p>Members discussed the area behind the willow structure. A parishioner has offered to continue to pull the docks out and ensure there are no stinging nettles. Members agreed that in order to provide a safe, shaded area for children to sit, this would have to be done on a regular basis. It was therefore agreed to monitor the area to ensure its ongoing management.</p> <p>It was agreed to leave the half-metre section on the gateway side of the leat (downhill from the clapper bridge) untrimmed to allow the cowslips to emerge. Cllr Crook will update the plan accordingly.</p>
020124.09	<p>Climate and Biodiversity Emergency</p> <p>A representative from Sustainable South Hams will be attending the next meeting of the Parish Council on 6 February. Parishioners interested in improving biodiversity in the parish and taking action on climate change and domestic energy use are encouraged to attend the meeting (which will be advertised on the Holybrook Exchange, in the Parish Link, via posters on the noticeboard and through word of mouth). Refreshments will be provided. It is hoped that, from that meeting, a group will emerge to take this forward.</p>
020124.10	<p>Leats</p> <p>The leat group has been busy keeping the leats flowing though there are ongoing concerns about the leat running through the church yard. Sand, grit and silt is getting caught up in the sump which Cllr Applegarth has been trying to keep clear. It was noted that a leat is blocked under the Highway outside Fairhaven and that the cattle grid at Forestoke is full and needs clearing out. The clerk will report these to Highways.</p>

020124.11	Highways and Footpaths Residents are encouraged to report all potholes: https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/
020124.12	Clerk's or Councillors reports on matters authorised by the Council at previous meetings not otherwise on this agenda Cllr Fairman had observed that the yellow signs regarding camping, motor homes and dogs etc have been taken down. It was agreed to ask Rob Steemson why this was.
020124.13	Chairman's urgent business for action by the clerk if covered by delegated powers or for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting None
020124.14	Correspondence None
020124.15	Date of Next Meeting The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 6 February 2024 at 7.30pm in Holne Village Hall.

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Cllr T Crook
Chair

District Councillors' Report – 2 January 2024

Recycling and Waste Collections

Residents can check their collection dates on our website. The guide on our website should help residents know what to do when disposing of the more tricky items they might have this Christmas.

The garden waste collection service will be suspended for four weeks, from Sunday 17 December. The service will resume on Monday 15 January. We are not able to collect real Christmas trees this year. Residents should take these to their local recycling centre.

Summary of the Policy Statement on Local Authority Funding

A Policy Statement has been issued by the Government on the Local Government Finance Settlement for next year, 2024/25. It is pretty much as we were expecting and in line with the assumptions and financial modelling that was in the last Budget report to the Executive on 30 November 2023.

Support with energy bills

Lower income households could benefit from free energy efficiency upgrades to their homes this winter with our support. Please help spread the word of our Homes Upgrade Grant, available to homeowners with an annual income of less than £31k, who have heating that isn't mains gas and an EPC rating of D,E,F or G. We are working with partners South Dartmoor Community Energy to survey eligible homes across the District and provide energy efficiency measures, personalised to the needs of the property. If you know of any residents who may be eligible for support, please ask them to apply online to SHDC.

Support for families on healthy relationships

As part of our support of the national campaign '16 Days of Action against Domestic Violence', we have recorded a 20 minute 'Let's Talk' about Healthy Relationships for parents and carers of teenagers. This is hosted on our YouTube channel – Lets Talk Devon.

The session provides parents and carers with tips and techniques to support their teenagers in developing healthy relationships and recognising unhealthy ones.

We would be grateful if you could share this link far and wide and follow us on social media and share our posts.

Freeport

Things are moving forward – the government has announced funding for developing the Langan Green Hydrogen Hub. The Hub will be a major milestone in the UK's transition to a low-carbon economy and a key facility for the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport, also helping to deliver net zero goals for Freeport operations overall.

DNPA Report (Cllr Guy Pannell)

From Totnes Times:

Independent review provides recommendations for management of protected sites on Dartmoor and independent review has published its recommendations on how protected sites on Dartmoor can be managed in a way that delivers on legally binding environmental targets whilst supporting food production, public access and cultural and natural heritage.

The review was commissioned by Defra earlier this year in response to stakeholder concerns over proposed changes to winter grazing on Dartmoor. It was chaired by David Fursdon and provides an independent perspective on the management of the moor.

Its recommendations follow more than 150 written submissions and more than 200 conversations across three-and-a-half months with commoners and organisations including Dartmoor National Park Authority and Natural England.

The review makes a series of recommendations for the Government, Natural England, Dartmoor National Park Authority and commoners on subjects such as vision and governance, operations, communication, agri-environment agreements, and grazing and vegetations management. The Government is expected to respond in full in the coming months.

Key recommendations include:

- The creation of an independently chaired Dartmoor Land-Use Management Group to help deliver a land use framework and plan for Dartmoor, improve SSSI conditions, and identify areas for data collection that will feed into the development of protected site management strategies.
- Actions to support vegetation management including conservation grazing by cattle and ponies and controlled burning, alongside exploring the management of sheep over winter months to protect vulnerable heather and dwarf shrubs.
- An overarching agri-environment scheme, or a small number of closely integrated and co-ordinated schemes, that are based on the proposed plan for Dartmoor and support the vision for Landscape Recovery.
- Improved transparency of protected site monitoring and management of these sites in line with proposals in Defra's Nature Recovery Green Paper.
- Increasing Natural England staffing resource and the creation of partnerships to help rebuild trust and confidence on Dartmoor.

Farming Minister Mark Spencer said: "Dartmoor cannot either stand still or retreat into its past, so it is vital that all parties take heed of the review's recommendations so we can effectively support food production, public access and heritage on the moor whilst delivering much-needed improvements for nature.

"I would like to thank David Fursdon and the panel for their work on this important review."

David Fursdon, Chair of the Review, said: "This is a time for those involved with Dartmoor to come together in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss to protect and enhance nature on the Moor.

"Commoners have a vital role to play in delivering the management and grazing that contributes to this, as do those working to re-wet the degraded peatland.

"We are concerned that the processes around monitoring and evaluation of protected sites are too opaque for all of those who are involved in ensuring their success. "We have proposed a series of changes to ways of working for the commoners, Natural England, the RPA and others, including taking decisions with a much greater clarity and transparency based on evidence and collaborative working."

Marian Spain, Chief Executive of Natural England said:

“I welcome this important report and would like to thank David Fursdon, panel members and all who submitted views for their hard work. “We will now work with our colleagues in Defra and the RPA, and our partners on Dartmoor, to consider the recommendations and implement the final decisions in due course.

“We especially look forward to measures that will bring all partners around the table to find collective solutions. This will help us meet our legally binding environmental targets while properly rewarding commoners for conservation grazing, supporting nature-friendly and profitable farm businesses across Dartmoor.”

The review also reiterates the need for careful management of a fresh round of Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) extension negotiations, given one-year extensions will in some cases expire in the first few months of 2024.

The Farming Minister is writing to HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) Agreement Holders on Dartmoor to advise them they will be contacted ahead of the expiry of their agreements.