

HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Holne Village Hall on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllr B Owen (Chair), M Fairman and Cllr McLean

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Thomas and eleven members of the public

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.30pm.

011024.01	Apologies for Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr R Applegarth• Cllr Crook• Cllr Grun• District Cllr Pannell• District Cllr Hancock• Rob Steemson (DNPA)
011024.02	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>Cllr Fairman declared an interest in item 8.1.</p>
011024.03	Open Forum <p>Ross Gray asked whether a second 'Animals Crossing' could be purchased and erected so that there is one facing each direction either side of Stoke Lane. He also asked whether the Parish Council had requested that DCC adds the section of road from Chase Gate up to the cattle grid to the surface dressing list. The clerk will follow this up with the Highways Officer formally requesting that it is added to the redressing schedule. Ross also suggested that the Parish Council may consider promoting an 'Adopt a Signpost' scheme whereby residents cut back vegetation around a sign they have adopted and keep them clean.</p> <p>A resident commented on the closure of the highway whilst recent works were being undertaken at Holne Bridge. The road was open when it was supposed to have been closed, and when it was supposed to have been reopened, it was still closed. There was also a clash with Widecombe Fair. Whilst this was resolved, and the road reopened on that day, it should really have been picked up at the planning stage. The clerk will write to Nick Colton and copy in County Cllr Thomas.</p>
011024.04	Ratification of Minutes <p>Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2 July & 3 September 2024. It was agreed that they should be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record of those meetings.</p>
011024.05	Reports <p>5.1 County Council Report Cllr Thomas circulated information regarding a live consultations local transport, cycling and walking and encouraged residents to respond. The consultations will run until 30 November.</p>

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/consultations/devon-and-torbay-local-transport-plan-4/>

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/consultations/countywide-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-lcwip/#:~:text=We%20want%20to%20know%20your,more%20about%20the%20Countywide%20LCWIP>

5.2 District Council Report
Cllrs Pannell and Hancock sent a written report (copy attached).

5.3 DNPA Link Member Report
Cllr Pannell circulated an update from DNPA (copy attached).

5.4 DNPA Ranger Report
Rob Steemson was unable to attend but advised that he has been representing DNPA and working closely with the other landowners on Holne moor to get a FiPL bid together to repair the Ringleshutts track. The bid was successful and is now enabling the Commoners Association to undertake the agreed works which started two weeks ago. He is required to oversee the project on behalf of all landowners.

With regard to Gallant Le Bower which was raised last month, he advised that last year he put in a report with regard to the state of Gallant le Bower with many suggestions relating to the trees, vegetation growth and reinstating the little circular path through the site. He then met an ecologist with whom the responsibility sits to take a closer look via his report. Due to funding, the main priority was to make safe all the dangerous trees. He suggested that the Parish Council follows this and writes formally to DNPA's Director of Conservation & Communities, Richard Drysdale setting out its concerns and suggestions so he can take a closer look. It was agreed that the clerk should do this.

011024.06 Playpark
The Chair opened the meeting up to members of the public to comment on matters relating to playpark. She advised, however, that given that Cllr Fairman had declared an interest in this item, the meeting was not quorate and therefore the Parish Council would not be able to make any decisions this evening but would take matters forward to the next meeting (*except under item 13 below*).

She invited a frank discussion on the future of playpark.

6.1 To note a recent accident in Playpark and to review health and safety measures to ensure the safety of its users

The Chair acknowledged that there had been an accident in Playpark on 17 September involving a child of the parish who had been injured whilst playing in the grass and whose face was pierced by something sharp which necessitated him having to have surgery. In terms of health and safety, the Parish Council has its own public liability insurance and it also subscribes to SHDC's insurance and inspection scheme whereby the equipment is regularly inspected and a report sent to the Parish Council for action. The rest of the field does not come into their jurisdiction but it is something which could be enquired about. The Parish Council is aware that the gates and fencing around the equipment are in need of attention. The intention was to carry out this work as volunteers but it may be that, to expedite this, a contractor may need to be employed.

Other potential hazards in the playpark, which may need further consideration, include a wasps nest, the leat and molehills. There was a suggestion that signage might be put up advising that users are doing so at their own risk. Advice from the insurers may also need to be sought on how to manage those risks.

A point was made that children should be able to visit the playpark and be safe. The actual cause of the accident was unknown, however, something sharp had punctured the child's cheek.

	<p>It was clarified that members of the Playpark Committee were not responsible for the maintenance of playpark.</p> <p>The Parish Council was informed that the incident had been reported to the police.</p> <p>The general concensus in the meeting was that a fence around the equipment is preferred.</p> <p>It was also felt that there should be a clear distinction between play park and wild area. The Chair advised that the Parish Council had been trying to accommodate both. However, it seems as though this may not be suitable. There was clear support for professional contractors to be carrying out any work in playpark and not volunteers.</p> <p>The dead hedge should either be removed or fenced off as there is potential for children to climb it.</p> <p>6.2 To discuss the future of the Playpark and welcome ideas and suggestions from members of the Playpark Committee</p> <p>Members of the Playpark were in attendance to discuss whether there was a need to have a Playpark Committee functioning as a Charity as they are keen to step down from their roles. There was still a question over whether the Charity would be a useful vehicle to obtain grants.</p> <p>The Committee members are still keen to continue to organise events for the children and be part of the discussion on replacement/new equipment.</p> <p>The Committee ran a survey for families on social media and people from up to 10 miles away regularly use Playpark and love the equipment. In the future, many would like to see a mini assault course or a dirt track. Whilst the preference is for wooden equipment, they are aware that this does not last as long. A resident observed that the equipment in Ashburton was a mixture of wood and metal.</p>
<p>011024.07</p>	<p>Finance and Governance</p> <p>The following items were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDF (DAAT mast: August) - £22.05 • G Partridge - Playpark grass cutting (7 cuts) - £770 • SHDC - Annual insurance and inspection fee for Playpark - £282 • HMRC (PAYE 2nd Q) - £189
<p>011024.07</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>7.1 New applications/appeals</p> <p>7.1.1 0363/24 – Ringleshute’s Track, Holne Common Works to track (Prior Notification application)</p> <p>Members agreed to support these works.</p> <p>7.2 Decisions</p> <p>7.2.1 0346/24 - Higher Mill Leat Farm, Holne Prior Notification application for an Agricultural Storage Building</p> <p>Members noted that DNPA has determined that Prior Approval is not required.</p> <p>7.2.2 0295/24 - Fairhaven, Holne Single storey rear extension, installation of photo voltaic panels, alterations to fenestration and replacement garage</p> <p>Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional consent.</p>

011024.08	<p>Highways and Footpaths <i>Residents are encouraged to report all potholes:</i> https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/</p> <p>8.1 Members received a proposal from Dean Prior Parish Council to share the cost of a mobile Vehicle Activated Sign. It was agreed that the Parish Council did not want to incur such expense at this time.</p> <p>8.2 The Highways Officer is aware that two of the marker posts opposite Tithe Barn have fallen into the leat and that part of the road has collapsed. It is now with the Highways Network Response Team to provide replacements.</p> <p>The clerk will contact the Highways Officer again regarding whether better warning could be given before the Vicarage Cross/Bearwood junction.</p>
011024.09	<p>Climate and Biodiversity Emergency There was nothing to report. An invitation has been received to attend a Sustainable South Hams briefing on 11 October.</p>
011024.10	<p>Leats The leats are being patrolled regularly and are currently flowing well.</p>
011024.11	<p>Service of Remembrance and Poppy Wreath The Chair will collect the wreath from Buckfastleigh on 2 November and will represent the Parish Council at this year's Service of Remembrance on 10 November in Holne.</p>
011024.12	<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 The safety of all users of playpark is paramount and, as the meeting at item 6 was inquorate, the Chair took the following urgent actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close Playpark in order to carry out some maintenance work to minimise any current potential hazards. This will include mowing the wild area, removing the dead hedge and repairing/replacing the fence and gates around the play equipment. Signs to be put up at all entrances and gates to be locked. • Notify relevant parties that all future work is to be carried out by an employed contractor with no further work to be carried out by members of the community unless directly instructed by the Parish Council
011024.13	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>12.1 Members received an email from the mother of the injured child (see item 6.1). A response advising her of the urgent actions being taken by the Parish Council was agreed.</p> <p>12.2 A resident advised that some residents have had some problems with their refuse collection over the past few weeks. She wrote to the District Councillor and questioned why paper and bottles were in the same box and why large pieces of cardboard could not be collected by the refuse collectors. The District Council would be happy to come out and talk to the parish about domestic refuse collection if this is of interest. Members of the Parish Council did not think this was necessary.</p>
011024.14	<p>Date of Next Meeting It was confirmed that the next meeting is 5 November 2024.</p>

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Cllr Owen (Chair)

District Councillors' Report October 2024

Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system Consultation response from South Hams District Council, 24/09/2024.

South Hams and West Devon Councils welcome the opportunity to work with government to create a planning system that can deliver the homes that we need, and to ensure that the development system creates equitable and climate resilient places. However, the key changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and Standard method being proposed by the government are not considered to be a suitable response to the key housing and climate challenges we are all trying to address. In the broadest terms, the aspirational annual figure for housing delivery is not based upon any objectively tested evidence, and disregards key performance indicators that would suggest a different set of policy interventions are required. In the last ten years the planning system has granted over 1 million planning permissions that have yet to be implemented. The current planning system has identified sufficient land to meet future housing needs for the near future, but without the ability to enforce implementation, the supply of housing will always fall short of need, as developers wait for optimum market conditions before they build out planning permissions - and optimum market conditions relies upon scarcity of product. The proposed housing figures for our specific area are considered to be inappropriate and undeliverable. Members of our Councils attended NPPF roadshows hosted by the Planning Advisory Service, where the proposed standard method was described as an 'unconstrained assessment of the minimum number of homes needed in an area'. If the government is going to rely upon such a crude methodology, the NPPF needs to include sufficient flexibility for local authorities to apply constraints and spatial context to their housing numbers. Our area for example benefits from some of the most well-known and visited landscapes in the country. We have a national park, two designated National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and a World Heritage Site, as well as countless SSSIs and national and local nature reserves. The natural beauty of our area contributes to a thriving tourism economy, from which a significant proportion of our communities' benefit. However, for all that the tourism sector contributes to our local economy, it also creates broader issues that we are struggling to address. We have lost a significant proportion of our housing stock, particularly private rented housing, to tourism accommodation. The higher number of visitors we get each year exposes our housing stock to a larger number of potential buyers, most of which have higher disposable incomes than local people earning local wages. The tourism sector also

creates a reliance upon seasonal, lower-paid and less secure employment than other sectors. All of which leads to unaffordable homes and relatively low wages. Despite our spatial constraints and sensitive landscapes, we have continued to deliver a consistent supply of new homes that exceeds our projected change in household growth. It is therefore inexplicable that we should be expected to deliver a huge uplift in housing numbers that is predicated on a housing stock that comprises a large number of dwellings that are not even used as homes (second homes of 15% of the whole in some areas). It would also appear that our housing figures have been subject to further uplift due to the affordability challenges that we face. Without restricting who we are building new homes for, the only beneficiaries of delivering such a huge uplift in housing numbers will be inward migrants and volume housebuilders. If the government is minded to pursue the proposed standard method for calculating housing need, it is recommended that the following changes to the wider planning and housing systems to ensure that new homes benefit those in housing need;

- Greater ability for local councils to acquire land and build their own homes
- Remove the right to buy for new affordable homes
- Require developers to deliver a significant proportion of discount open market homes that can only be owned and occupied by people with a demonstrable long-term connection to the local area
- Apply the 'golden rule' to all greenfield land (not just greenbelt) when considering viability matters, capping the land value in viability considerations to no more than three times the value of the previous land use.
- Greater financial incentives to unlock brownfield land
- Local authorities with both landscape and affordability constraints must have the flexibility to reduce their housing needs figures to reflect challenges of delivery
- Developers must be penalised for the non-implementation of planning permissions on sites allocated in local plans
- Capping the amount of tourism accommodation that can operate in areas of high demand, to ensure enough homes remain to meet the needs of local communities
- Freedom to apply primary residency restrictions where applicable by the LPA Finally, it is worth considering alternative options that can stimulate economic growth, not least if the existing housing stock can be better utilised to

create the homes that we need, both in terms of meeting future housing needs and improving the health and wellbeing of the nation. An enhanced national programme of housing retrofit and incentives for 'right-sizing' would improve both the quality and efficiency of our housing stock and make better use of under-utilised space by better correlating household size and dwelling size. There are already three million more dwellings in England than households, and of these, 9 million homes have at least two permanently empty bedrooms. Household sizes continue to decrease as the average age increases. The government is strongly urged to reform the planning system to deliver qualitative, rather than quantitative outcomes.

In short, the planning system is not the problem. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are already identifying sufficient land and granting enough planning permissions to meet projected housing needs, but the homes are not being built.

LCWIP consultation

Our public consultation on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is now live.

We're asking residents to tell us about cycling, wheeling and walking opportunities across the District.

The consultation launched on Wednesday and will run until 11 October.

We'll be holding in-person consultation events at the following venues:

Tuesday 24 September

10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. - Dartmouth Guildhall, Clifton Room

Wednesday 25 September

10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. - Kingsbridge Market Hall

Tuesday 1 October

10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Totnes Civic Hall

2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Ivybridge Watermark Centre, Beeson Suite

Please encourage your residents to take part in the online consultation at: <https://activetravelshwd.commonplace.is/>
You can also [read our press release](#) on the website.

Digital phone public drop-in sessions

As you will be aware, we have been told the copper phone network is being switched off and replaced with digital technology. This is because it is old and becoming harder and more expensive to maintain.

The phone network in the UK is owned by BT and will be retired by January 2027. This means other providers that use BT's network must follow the same timescale.

Other companies with their own networks such as Virgin Media plan to follow a similar timescale.

Over the coming months BT is targeting the SW region to help people switch over to digital phones. For many of us this will not be an issue, but it could cause anxiety for people with poor mobile signal and poor broadband.

BT are running a series of public drop in events this year [which are listed on their website](#). Please be aware that there will be other providers who will offer digital phone services which residents may also wish to explore.

Here are a selection of BT events being held across the county, including in the South Hams:

Plymouth - 24th September, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m

Central Library, 167-171 Armada Way, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 1HZ

Exeter - 26th September, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m

Mercure Rougemount Hotel, Queen Street, Exeter, EX4 3SP

Kingsbridge - 30th October, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m

Library, Ilbert Road, Kingsbridge, TQ7 1EB

Tavistock 13th November, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m

Tavistock Library, The Quay, Plymouth Road, Tavistock, PL19 8AB

Ivybridge 19th November, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m

Ivybridge Library, Erme Court, Leonards Way, Ivybridge, PL21 0SZ

Please help share this information about the events with your constituents and signpost them for more information at <https://www.bt.com/broadband/digital-voice>

District Council Resolutions: 26th September 2024

26 September 2024	Notice of Motions	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. agrees, as a matter of principle, that it is the Council's view that all the extra revenue raised by 200% Council Tax on Second Homes should be allocated to housing;2. lobbies Devon County Council and seeks assurances that, in line with the above principle, all the money raised within the South Hams for use to benefit those residents and businesses most affected by the impacts of those second homes; and3. asks all South Hams County Councillors, as well as those standing in the 2025 election, to vote against any budget that does not allocate second home tax money to housing. <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>This Council RESOLVES to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. condemn the proposal to remove the Winter Fuel Payment from pensioners who do not claim Pension Credit or are on other benefits, recognising the disproportionate impact this will have on our most vulnerable residents, particularly those in our rural communities; and2. commit to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ask for funding for a local advertising and outreach campaign to raise awareness about Pension Credit and other benefits, targeting pensioners who may be eligible but are not currently claiming.
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DNPA Link Member Report

1. The Darwalls' appeal over the Appeal Court ruling in favour of backpack camping on Common Land will be heard in the Supreme Court on Tuesday 8th October. Judgement is likely to be reserved until a later date.
2. DNPA has supported National Parks England response to the Government's consultations on proposed planning reforms. It broadly welcomes them but has reservations particularly over the method for identifying housing need, which is assessed by Local Authority areas, with no distinction made for areas within National Parks and National Landscapes (former AONBs). The response also addresses the need for more affordable and social housing.

The Government has also raised the possibility of raising planning application fees to cover the cost of the authority's work on these and, wait for it, says:

Q91: If we proceed to increase householder fees to meet cost recovery, we have estimated that to meet cost-recovery, the householder application fee should be increased to £528. Do you agree with this estimate? DNPA does agree with this estimate.

I expect an interesting response from the public if the Government decides to proceed with this...

This is the summary of the National Parks England response:

Introduction

1. National Parks England supports the policy-making process by co-ordinating the views of the English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority and is governed by the Chairs of these authorities. Our response represents the collective view of officers who are working within the policies established by the National Park Authorities and Broads Authority and follows internal consultation amongst officers. Individual authorities may submit separate comments, which will draw on the specific issues for their particular areas.
2. The National Parks Circular (2010) recognises that, "...the town and country planning system is a key instrument in the achievement of Park purposes. Planning legislation has a major impact on the form and location of development, is a vital tool for managing the impact of development on landscape and biodiversity and a key part of conserving and enhancing cultural heritage, including the built heritage in Park settlements." For these reasons Government has made National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority the sole planning authorities for their areas under section 4A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This joint response is submitted on behalf of the English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority, who collectively are the planning authorities for just under 10% of the land area of England and whose administrative areas are home to over 300,000 residents.

Summary

- It is noted that the key elements of national planning policy relating to National Parks and the Broads – including the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development in protected landscapes (paragraph 11 and footnote 7 of the NPPF); the protection afforded to National Parks and the Broads through their statutory purposes (paragraph 182); and the tests that major development is required to meet within National Parks and the Broads to be supported (paragraph 183) – are unaltered by the proposed revisions to the NPPF (July 2024). This is supported by National Parks England and recognises the special status of our nationally protected landscapes. The revisions to the NPPF provide an opportunity to directly reference the strengthened 'duty to seek to further' the statutory purposes of National Parks and the Broads introduced through Section 245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023.

- The new proposed standard method for assessing housing need does not identify housing need figures for National Parks and the Broads, only local authority areas, and this is supported in principle. However, it is unclear from the consultation how National Parks and the Broads are to be treated in terms of identifying the 'policy off' housing need as the starting point for the planmaking process. The Government should provide further clarity for National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority (as well as our constituent local authorities) through updates to either the National Planning Policy Framework itself or the accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance resource.
- The proposed transitional arrangements for local plan-making appear reasonable. Local planning authorities – including National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority - were responding to the revisions made to the NPPF in December 2023 and the system would benefit from a period of stability to enable plans to be brought forward. If plans are required to pause, restart or go back to an earlier stage.