

HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Holne Village Hall on Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllrs B Owen (Chair), M Fairman, L Grun and C McLean

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), District Cllr Hancock and one member of the public

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.30pm.

031224.01	Apologies for Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Applegarth• Cllr Crook• County Cllr Thomas• District Cllr Pannell• Rob Steemson (DNPA)• Ross Gray (Tree Warden)
031224.02	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>
031224.03	Open Forum <p>No comments.</p>
031224.04	Ratification of Minutes <p>Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5 November 2024. It was agreed that they should be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record of those meetings.</p>
031224.05	Reports <p>5.1 County Council Report Cllr Thomas was unable to attend the meeting but sent a written report (attached).</p> <p>5.2 District Council Report Cllrs Pannell and Hancock sent a written report (copy attached).</p> <p>5.3 DNPA Link Member Report Cllr Pannell circulated an update from DNPA (copy attached).</p> <p>5.4 DNPA Ranger Report Rob Steemson was unable to attend the meeting. In response to matters previously raised:</p> <p>Any water problems in a field at/near Venford will be the responsibility of the landowner. He is aware of an ongoing issue on the common with water on the track to Bench Tor, from the first car park on the right if you are heading towards Hexworthy. There is a leak from a raised section of the leat and some work will be done at some stage. He will be looking at the rotten stile at Saddle Bridge on Friday and will take any appropriate action upon inspection.</p>

	<p>The erosion work on the track to Ringle shutts mine continues and the recent heavy rain has caused some more track damage. This has only highlighted why this work is important to protect and enhance the area.</p> <p>He is arranging for a contractor to undertake some additional work at Gallant Le Bower and, once cleared back, DNPA will look at how it is managed through a combination of volunteer parties, youth rangers and others. It was agreed to ask Rob when volunteers would be needed so that anyone in the parish willing to held can be informed.</p>
<p>031224.06</p>	<p>Finance and Governance</p> <p>6.1 Members approved the following payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDF (DAAT mast: October) - £19.53 • B Owen (Reimbursement for poppy wreath) - £25 • Parish Link (donation) - £60 <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 2024. This equates to 3.9%. The clerk's salary will be backdated accordingly.</p> <p>6.3 Members considered the budget and precept for 2025-26. A final decision will be made in January's meeting. The major consideration was the playpark equipment. It was agreed that members would meet at Playpark before the January meeting in order to come up with an estimate of costs for removing damaged equipment, repairing existing (where possible) and purchasing a new swing. This will make the area functional and safe with new equipment being be introduced over a period of time in the future.</p>
<p>031224.07</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>7.1 New applications/appeals</p> <p>7.1.1 0024/24 & 0025/24 - Glebe House, Holne</p> <p>Consultation on amendments: Repairs, alterations and the erection of a single storey extension</p> <p>After discussion, members agreed to object to this application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overdevelopment - Loss of character of a Listed Building which has historical interest (birthplace of Charles Kingsley) - Concerns that the collective planning applications for this property exceed the 30% rule which limits residential development so that a dwelling can only be expanded by 30% of its original floor area <p>For these reasons, it was also agreed to request that the application is called in and determined by the Development Management Committee.</p> <p>7.2 Decisions:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>031224.08</p>	<p>Playpark</p> <p>8.1 Members considered quotations from three contractors for fencing. Firstly, members agreed that they wished to stick with the current post and rail style. From the quotations received to replace like for like, it was agreed to accept the quotation from Bryan Booty for £3460 + VAT. Members also discussed the removal of unsafe equipment before the fencing is erected. This will be discussed further at the onsite meeting agreed at item 6.3.</p> <p>8.2 Update on Playpark Charity status</p> <p>It was agreed that, whilst the current Trustees of the Playpark Charity wish to step down from their positions, the Charity should continue with new named trustees which may include members of the Parish Council, if necessary. It is thought that this transition will take place at the Annual General Meeting in February/March. The AGM will be advertised inviting members of the public to attend should they wish to be involved.</p>

031224.09	<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>No new matters were raised. The Chair advised that the gate on the Shanty footpath is going to be replaced.</p>
031224.10	<p>Climate and Biodiversity Emergency</p> <p>No report.</p>
031224.11	<p>Defibrillator</p> <p>Members noted that the defibrillator is currently out of use as the battery isn't charging. An electrician has looked at it and it has been agreed that a new battery and pads are required. The cost of this is £285 + VAT. There may also be a fault with the heater which is being investigated. It was suggested that Holne Books may wish to make a donation towards the new battery and pads. The clerk will write to Mike and Gill Cunniam but in the meantime the battery and pads should be ordered to ensure the defibrillator is functioning as quickly as possible.</p>
031224.12	<p>Landmark Tree</p> <p>The Highways Officer has two concerns about the proposed location for the planting of the landmark tree (on the long triangle of grass opposite Tumbly at the junction to Hembury Woods) and has asked if the Parish Council could consider alternative locations. He is concerned about: proximity of overhead cables and proximity to both carriageways meaning the tree could grow over and into the highway and also cause visibility issues for vehicles exiting the junctions. Additionally, there would be a risk of the roots growing under the road surface risking damage to it and any nearby utility apparatus.</p> <p>It was agreed that the tree could be planted in Playpark to the right of the basketball hoop.</p>
031224.13	<p>Leats</p> <p>The leat group reported that there were some issues in the last two weeks, but these were kept on top of by the leat volunteers including proactive measures like clearing out sumps ahead of heavy rainfall. There's still confusion about the route of part of the leats when they go underground. No action is required.</p> <p>The Parish Council wished to formally thank the leat group for their actions during Storm Bert.</p> <p>An issue was highlighted with the leat running through Church Park field. It was noticed in the heavy rainfall that the water in the leat in this field struggled to flow and consequently burst its banks. There is concern that if this continues to happen, the overflow will run into the church and Forge Cottages. There is also a public footpath running through this field which would also be impacted. As it is the landowners responsibility for clearing their leats and ensuring a continuous flow, it was agreed to write to the landowner to ask them to carry out some maintenance to ensure that the leat running through the field is clear so that that it does not burst its banks again during future periods of rainfall.</p>
031224.14	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>None</p>
031224.15	<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>
031224.16	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>It was confirmed that the next meeting is 7 January 2025</p>

County Councillor's Report

An update from County after Storm Bert.

Our flood risk team is working closely with the Environment Agency and District Councils to review the communities and properties in Devon which were flooded during Storm Bert. Strong winds and heavy rain battered Devon last weekend and we received reports that approximately 40 properties suffered internal flooding. The results of the investigation, which will be published in the New Year, will help us identify which properties and areas would most benefit from future resilience measures, in line with other priorities, workload and funding opportunities.

Our initial investigations, which includes feedback from communities, shows that in the communities where we have delivered flood schemes in recent years, such as Ivybridge, Sidmouth, Axminster, Uplyme and Stokeinteignhead, flooding was prevented. The number of flooded properties across the county would certainly have been much higher without these essential flood improvements. In Modbury for instance, approximately 4 million litres of water (4,000 cubic metres) was held behind a specially constructed dam without which many properties would have been flooded. The dam was part of a £1.1million scheme delivered in 2019 and it helps control the flow of water through the drainage system in Modbury town centre by storing excess water behind it and redirecting the flow of water from certain fields.

Councillor Roger Croad, Cabinet Member with responsibility for flood resilience said: “We are committed to implementing measures to reduce flood risk to communities across Devon and we will continue to work to maximise funding to make a real difference to our residents.”

Please make sure you have let me know of any areas where homes were flooded so that we make sure not to miss any homes.

Devolution Latest

The ‘Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority Regulations 2024’, a ‘statutory instrument’ (SI), has been laid in Parliament, paving the way towards the creation of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority. The Regulations will be debated in in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. When they are signed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Angela Rayner MP, under powers delegated by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA) will come into being. The CCA will make decisions about the powers and funding devolved from Whitehall to Devon and Torbay through the deal that was agreed in January this year.

Paul Arnott, Leader of East Devon District Council & Chair of Devon Districts’ Forum, said: “This legislation is an important precursor to the establishment of the Combined County Authority for Devon and Torbay. All the District Councils in Devon will continue to work together and with our partners to ensure that the benefits for local communities arising from the transfer of powers and resources are maximised, **including in relation to the forthcoming Devolution White Paper for England.**”

I have put the last bit in bold as it is probably the most relevant part – devolution is not over just because the CCA is being created, This will very much be the first iteration.

District Councillors' Report

December 2024

Council Funding

The Government has announced that the Rural Services Delivery Grant will be withdrawn in the coming year. This grant compensates authorities in rural areas for the additional cost of delivering services to people living in more thinly populated areas than in large urban conurbations. The full impact of this measure will not be known until the Finance Settlement for Councils is published – around 19th December.. Support will be provided for authorities to help offset the increase in employer National Insurance contributions, but the New Homes Bonus is to be withdrawn after 2025-26. This rewards councils for encouraging development and has been a valuable additional income stream. The maximum District Councils can raise Council Tax for 2025-26 remains at 2.99% or £5, whichever is higher. There will be a Business Rates baseline reset in 2026-27, when the Government will also implement wider reform, including a Fair Funding Review.

A White Paper is expected shortly on **Devolution**, and on the shape of Local Government in the future. Hints that District Councils will be abolished to make way for **Unitary Authorities** are becoming heavier.

Rural Local Authorities unite

Fifty-seven local authorities across England, including South Hams District Council, have united with the Rural Services Network (RSN) to address the unique financial challenges they face and to advocate for equitable funding in the forthcoming Local Government Finance Settlement. In a [joint letter](#) to the Rt Hon Jim McMahon MP, rural councils have come together to emphasise the need for fair resource allocation to sustain essential services in sparsely populated regions and unlock growth and prosperity in rural communities. The letter to the Minister states “Over the years, rural councils have had to increase council tax to balance the books, resulting in council tax in rural areas now being on average 20% higher per head than in urban areas.”

Bathing water classifications

The Environment Agency has released the results of the new classifications for bathing waters in the South Hams. Five new sites in the South Hams were awarded Bathing Water status for the first time earlier this year, so this is the first time that they've received a classification. The new bathing waters and their classifications are as follows:

Name	2024 Classification
Stoke Gabriel, Dart Estuary	Sufficient
Steamer Quay, Dart Estuary	Poor
Dittisham, Dart Estuary	Good
Warfleet Creek, Dart Estuary	Excellent
Coastguards Beach, Erme Estuary	Poor

Bathing Water Regulations Consultation

Due to changes in the way people use and view bathing waters, Defra has launched a consultation that proposes a number of changes to the Bathing Water Regulations. Details are available on the Defra website and the consultation closes on 23 December. The main proposed reforms are as follows:

- Core reform 1: Remove the automatic de-designation provision from the Regulations. Currently, bathing waters are automatically de-designated following five consecutive years of 'poor' classification. This is often too short a time for investments and improvements to be made. De-designations would instead be based on review and recommendation by the EA and NRW.
- Core reform 2: Include the feasibility of improving a site's water quality to at least 'sufficient' as a criterion for final designation. This would avoid poor value for money, by limiting expenditure where water quality improvement is not feasible or proportionate.

- Core reform 3: Remove the fixed dates of the monitored bathing season from the Regulations. Season dates would be moved into guidance allowing the EA and NRW to adapt the dates to better suit local needs in the future.
- Wider reform 1: Clarification and expansion of the definition of 'bathers' to include other water users. 'Bathers' is currently understood by its common meaning as swimmers only. We are seeking views on whether a wider range of water users should be considered, and if so, what other types of users should be included and how their needs can be balanced against current users.
- Wider reform 2: Use of multiple monitoring points at each bathing water site where useful to classify water quality. We are seeking views on whether additional monitoring to capture water quality variation across sites would be beneficial

Disposing of upholstered furniture

From Sunday, only eight of Devon County Council's household waste recycling centres will accept upholstered furniture for disposal. It follows the introduction of new requirements from the Environment Agency which require Devon's recycling centres to have segregated facilities to handle Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (WUDS). WUDS include sofas, sofa beds, armchairs, recliner chairs, upholstered kitchen and dining room chairs, upholstered garden furniture, stools and foot stools, office chairs, futons, bean bags, floor and sofa cushions. In the South Hams, the Ivybridge centre will accept WUDS. However, the other recycling centres in the South Hams will not. We have shared information on the changes on our social media and in our residents' email bulletin.

Electoral Register canvass in progress

Every year we check the electoral register to make sure that any resident who is eligible to vote can do so. For residents who have yet to respond to our request to check who in their household is eligible to vote, they will receive a reminder in the post this week. Please encourage your residents to complete the annual canvass so they can have their say at future elections.

Rough sleeping snapshot

SHDC held our Rough Sleeping Snapshot count on the evening of the 11 November, into the morning of the 12 November. The MHCLG had indicated they were expecting higher counts this year which was in line with our expectations. The number of rough sleepers identified in South Hams was seven, which is an increase from five last year. Whilst we cannot make people access options and support from us, two people will be supported to access accommodation with a neighbouring authority where they have a local connection and referrals have been made already. We will continue to work with the other 5 to source accommodation options. Sadly two refused to engage, although the door remains firmly open.

South Hams Community Awards 2025

The South Hams Community Awards 2025 will open for nominations on Monday 13 January for four weeks. Towns and Parish Councils have also been made aware. Last year nominations could be made for three categories: Young Persons Award (under 18), Community Champion Award (over 18) and Community Organisation Award. This year a fourth category will be available, Green Award – Climate Champion. Further information will be available [on our website](#) when nominations open.

Lots to enjoy locally this Christmas

We have launched our Christmas campaign, encouraging residents to shop and enjoy all things local this festive season. Our [webpage](#) is now live, full of information on what is happening across the South Hams; from Christmas markets and carol singing to craft fairs and late night shopping. You will also find a calendar of events in local publications. On our [webpage](#) you will also find details of the free parking available during the festive season. Please direct your residents to our '[what's happening near you](#)' page for a full programme of activities. You can also share posts on our [Facebook page](#). If you know of an event we can help publicise, please post it on our Facebook page, [events in the South Hams](#).

DNPA Members newsletter



Annual Review highlights Authority success

Work to deliver the National Park Purposes has been captured and highlighted in an annual report.

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) has published its Annual Review: a report which details the work completed during the previous financial year.

Highlights include:

- Establishing the Walkham Valley Landscape Recovery Area
- Ongoing removal of non-native invasive plant species (Himalayan balsam and skunk cabbage) at the Wray Brook at Lustleigh, the River Avon and the West Dart at Princetown, and removal of giant hogweed at four sites.
- Trialling new 'virtual fence' technology at the Hawn and Dendles Nature Reserve to control the movement of grazing animals allowing woodland and trees to regenerate along watercourses and valley sides.
- Completion of six natural flood management schemes across the Bovey, Mardle, Dean Burn and Walkham catchments
- Restoring 261-hectares of peatland at Tavy Head, Great Gnats Head and Burrator with work commencing at Hangingstone Hill.
- Enabling around 40 volunteers to take part in archaeological excavations at 21 locations, giving 1,000+ hours of their time.

Much of this work was carried out in collaboration with others including community groups, government and non-government organisations, landowners, commoners, farmers, and volunteers.

The Annual Review can be read in full at dartmoor.gov.uk

Dartmoor recognised in two prestigious awards

Dartmoor has been recognised for its work to make people feel welcome following success in two major awards. Postbridge Visitor Centre scooped Silver in the Devon Tourism Awards while Community Engagement Ranger Kats Koster-Shadbolt has been nominated for a national award for her work with helping young females build confidence and spent time enjoying Dartmoor's wildest places.

The recognition comes in the year of the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It was an Act which secured access for everyone to open countryside while preserving and enhancing natural beauty; founded on the understanding that connection with nature is essential to the health of people, society and the planet. Postbridge Visitor Centre won silver in the 'Visitor Service of the Year' category at the Devon Tourism Awards, held on 21 November at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Plymouth.

Elsewhere Kat was shortlisted for in the New Perspectives category in the Campaign for National Parks' annual National Park Protector Awards.

The New Perspectives Award celebrates the people, projects or initiatives that champion and inspire diversity and inclusion in National Parks and Kats has been nominated for her 'Girls Do Dartmoor' programme, in which she works with young women to build their communication skills, confidence and break down any perceived barriers to spending time outdoors. Key to this is providing them with tools and knowledge to explore the National Park while helping them take care of themselves while enjoying the outdoors.

This hugely successful programme forms part of Dartmoor Preservation Association's Community Engagement Ranger work which is delivered in partnership with DNPA.

People can show their support for Dartmoor and for Kats by voting for her as the [People's Choice nominee](#). Voting closes on 8 December. The Award ceremony takes place on 11 December in the House of Lords. Visit cnp.org.uk for more information.

Erosion repairs to routes around Haytor Rocks

Haytor Down and the surrounding areas have benefited from erosion repairs, thanks to funding. Work was carried out to help safeguard against surface erosion and repair some of the worst damage caused by rainfall and footfall.

DNPA applied to the British Mountaineering Council's Mend Our Mountains fund with the Haytor Down and Bagtor Down Commoners Association securing a Farming in Protected Landscapes grant.

DNPA Ranger Stuart Hooppell led the work with expertise from DNPA ecologists and the support of Natural England. The project enabled the repair of erosion around the base of Haytor Rocks and walking routes to Saddle Tor and Rippon Tor – popular places on the eastern side of Dartmoor particularly with walkers, riders and climbers.

Plans considered the archaeology and ecology of the area. Works, which utilised local granite, included gentle reprofiling to encourage water to flow away and reduce gullying; larger granite stones were dug in to 'kick' water away with subtle scrapes installed to do the same while deeper erosion was backfilled with growan.

Large granite stones were carefully positioned at certain points to take the momentum out of water and reduce the risk of wash out.

Winter opening hours: National Park visitor centres

Dartmoor's three National Park Visitor Centres are operating winter opening hours – with retail offers in each offering plenty of opportunities for Christmas shopping.

Days and times of opening are:

Princetown: 10am – 3pm Wednesdays – Sundays (closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

Postbridge: 10am – 3pm Saturday – Wednesday (closed Thursday and Fridays)

Haytor: 10am – 3pm Thursday – Sunday (closed Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)