

Date: 8th April 2024	Venue & Time: Thurlestone Parish Hall, 19.30 hrs	
<u>Present:</u> Cllr Gill Stone (in the Chair) Cllr Mike Hodges Cllr Nigel Hadaway Cllr Adam Ryan Carter Cllr David Smyth	<u>In Attendance:</u> SHDC Cllr Mark Long SHDC Cllr Sam Dennis Helen Leather (Parish Clerk) Parishioners/guests: 26	<u>Apologies:</u> Cllr Rosa Lewis Cllr Eric Palmer DCC Cllr Rufus Gilbert

1. Welcome and Introduction

Vice Chair Cllr Gill Stone welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting, and explained this was a meeting for the parish and a chance for parishioners to hear what has been happening in the parish over the past year and to raise any questions or issues they have concerns about.

Cllr Stone apologised that Cllr Lewis, Chair, was unable to attend the meeting, and also County Councillor Rufus Gilbert had sent apologies but had provided a written report.

2. Minutes of 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

The Minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting were agreed and signed by Vice Chair Cllr Stone.

3. Annual County Council Report from Cllr Rufus Gilbert:

Cllr Stone read out Cllr Gilbert's report:

General Roads.

- Devon has 8500 miles of roads and 426 Parish Councils
- To put Devon's roads back to something reasonable would require about £1.2 billion
- Wettest year for 130 years and the system can't cope and was not designed to do so under these conditions.
- Highways will do their best to catch up in the summer
- Please keep reporting the potholes/flooding etc www.new.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem

Devolution.

- This is progressing well and for further information please visit: www.devonandtorbaydeal.org.uk

Diy Waste And Recycling.

- For information please visit: www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling

Mobile Libraries.

- Sadly this service has had to be discontinued due to lack of patronage and costs.
- No static libraries have been closed.
- Please contact your local library for information on books delivery

Locality Funding.

- Most of my parishes have been given some funding, which I hope was found to be helpful.

General.

- I have attended to many varied enquiries and matters of concern across all my sixteen parishes and towns.
- Not least being SWW road closure in Modbury this year.

4. Annual District Councillor Report – Cllr Sam Dennis and Cllr Mark Long

The South Hams has a population of 88,600 people living in its towns, villages and rural communities. The population has increased by 6.6% in the last ten years but it remains amongst the lowest 10% for density across England – that's 0.7 people per football-pitch-sized piece of land!

More than half (53%) the residents are in employment, just under a third (31.7%) are retired and almost three quarters (70.5%) own their homes outright or with a mortgage. Across the South Hams the average house price is £447,000 and 8.2% (1 in 25) of our homes are second homes, obviously in areas of this Ward it is considerably higher both in terms of average price and percentage of second homes.

The year began with elections held at District, Parish and Town Council. The elections saw Cllr Mark Long being re-elected and Councillor Samantha Dennis elected to serve as the two District Councillors for Salcombe and Thurlestone Ward. At the same time seeing many changes of District Councillors across the South Hams with a new Liberal Democrat majority administration running the Council for the next four years.

At first meeting of the new Council in May, Cllr Julian Brazil was named as Leader of South Hams District Council for the next four years and announced "We intend to be an inclusive Council and not worry about people's political allegiances; we're interested in people who want to work for their communities. We will be stronger together and therefore we will be asking all councillors, from all parties to work with us to deliver what our communities want."

The weekend after the local elections also saw Coronation celebrations held across the area, congratulations to all the organisers.

A new Council Plan has been worked on since May reflecting the priorities of the new administration, Residents, Town and Parish Councils were consulted.

At the Full Council meeting last month the new Council Plan was approved that will cover the period for 2024-2028 and the delivery plan for the coming year to 2025.

Also at that meeting reconfirmed was the premium (up to 200% council tax) for second homes, this will come into effect from 1st April 2025. It is the intention of the District Council that all the premium raised from this will be ringfenced for affordable and social

housing, the District Council is pressing Devon County Council to look at doing the same for what they will receive from this premium.

The South Hams has the only Freeport in the South West, in partnership with Plymouth City Council and Devon County Council. Collectively the councils have secured £25m of government seed funding and a 25-year economic development programme that will hopefully secure £350m of inward investment and high skilled jobs for years to come.

The award of well over a million pounds of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) means the Council currently has an ambitious programme of research and change to support our economy which will see projects for agricultural diversification, agritech, regenerative farming advances and decarbonisation of the marine sector in the South Hams, along with studies to encourage active travel and a Local Walking and Cycling Plan.

The Joint Local Plan has provided the policy framework to ensure that we have continued to deliver and indeed exceed our national housing delivery targets. Nevertheless, the challenge of delivering local affordable housing remains. One of many statutory services that law mandates the Council must provide is a homeless strategy for homelessness prevention. In January the average number of households in temporary accommodation was 42. While low compared to other areas in Devon, there is an increasing trend. The availability of housing in the area is resulting in them not successfully securing accommodation before they become homeless. We have seen no reduction in the cost of private rented accommodation with rental rates remaining high resulting in a high reliance on social housing to meet local housing need.

The Council has set a target of reducing organisational carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030. One innovative way we are leading positive change is by harnessing the power of our Joint Local Plan, future development must now consider embodied energy, construction materials and the carbon footprint of demolition as part of the planning balance – we are stretching and testing the powers of the planning system and going further than building regulations.

Following implementation of a Planning Improvement Plan, 100% of major planning applications are now determined within the 13 week timeframe or with an agreed extension of time. The success of the plan can be seen through the overall improvement in planning performance and an improving relationship with agents, developers, partners, and importantly the Parish and Town Councils. Hopefully you will have noticed some improvement in the speed of planning decisions being taken as there is a more stable planning team supported by a range of innovative recruitment initiatives, although fully resourcing planning remains a problem not just for us, but for most councils. A new Planning IT system went live in November improving the online capabilities and the mapping system. Planning activity in general continues to be very busy in the ward, but it is excellent news that all the parishes now have neighbourhood plans in place, with a number now looking at modifications or preparing for full reviews. The first revision of the Joint Local Plan has been delayed awaiting clarity and implementation of proposed national planning reforms.

Cllr Dennis and Cllr Long were part of a Council Task and Finish Group (chaired by Cllr Dennis) that reviewed Planning Enforcement, looking at existing policies, handling of complaints and the resources required for the service, this has led to a new Plan and processes coming forward, we are pleased to already see the number of enforcement cases open finally decreasing in number, reflecting an improvement in performance.

Your District Councillors have both a Sustainable Localities Fund and this coming year a new Climate Change and Biodiversity Fund - £2,000 each year per fund to support projects in the local communities. We have used the Localities Funds this past year to support the Energy Fair in Kingsbridge, works to improve Hangar Marsh North Sands, install new heating at Malbrough Village Hall, install new windows and lighting in West Alvington Village Hall, Coronation mementos for children in the Parishes, contribute towards the Christmas lights in Salcombe, a temporary stage for Kingsbridge Fair Week, the park and ride bus for Salcombe CrabFest, and a beacon that will be lit in Salcombe on June 6th to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, as well as a number of replacement benches around the area.

We could not have an annual report without talking about waste and recycling. Since bringing the recycling and waste service back in-house in October 2022 following the major problems experienced, the service has stabilised after a considerable amount of work. However, we were still delivering three different types of recycling and waste collections to residents. Some still with clear and blue sacks and no food waste collection, some comingled with no food waste collection, and some on the full recycling service collection.

In November 2023 the Council made the final changes to the remaining 24,000+ households to a full weekly kerbside recycling service, so that all residents across the South Hams can recycle the same materials, including food waste and glass, at the kerbside.

This meant every household across the District was affected by the changes in one way or another. For some, it meant a change in their collection day. For others, it meant a change to how they present their recycling and waste on the kerbside.

After procuring new vehicles and making major changes to the Council waste depots, rerouting and rescheduling almost all the waste and recycling collections for residents across the District, this was all completed successfully only 6 weeks before Christmas, traditionally one of the busiest times of the year for the service.

As well as the waste and recycling collections - street sweeping, toilet cleaning, waste bin emptying and fly tipping are all part of the service that has come back in-house. Work is ongoing to improve all the services. The Brown bin garden waste subscription service has been running for a year and has had a good take up among residents.

We will continue to attend the monthly Parish and Town Council meetings to update on District Council activities and respond to questions.

5. Annual Parish Council Report by Cllr Rosa Lewis

Cllr Gill Stone read out the report in the absence of Cllr Lewis:

Many apologies that I cannot be there this evening. I want to start first by thanking all the people who have attended the Open Forum during the past year, your questions and comments are invaluable, it also keeps us on our toes! It is our Parishioners that voted for us and our responsibility to represent you where we are able to. When some new members joined this PC, I was one of them, the outgoing Chair said we had to learn what we can and cannot do, we continue to challenge this where we can. Please keep bringing your issues to us so we may work with our County and District councillors where appropriate.

Secondly our appreciation to County Councillor Rufus Gilbert, who sadly is not here this evening, we hope to see him soon. Our appreciation also to District Councillors Mark Long and Samantha Dennis who continue to give their support and advice covering many areas that affect us all, a big thank you to you. We can see the result of the early changes since the hand over.

What have we done this year?

Formed a new Council following the 2 tranches of resignations over the past 2 years. We were not alone after the last elections when Julian Brazil was voted in there was a vast turn over of Parish Councillors. We now have a full council of 7, my colleagues are proactive and picking up the reins.

Planning lead Gill Stone

We receive a disproportionate amount of applications given the size of our Parish. It takes up more time than we are happy with, but is essential that we continue to ensure these applications fulfil the Neighbourhood Plan that we all contributed to, it is a recognised statute document.

We grapple, not unlike many Coastal areas, to redress the balance of housing stock, sustainable communities are top of the agenda. We appreciate the changes that are being made to address the problem and help us in this complex area.

Environment Mike Hodges

Mike is in the early stages of this role, but is proving how increasingly important this area as we all experience the results of climate change.

District Cllr Sam Dennis and he have had meetings with SW water attempting to hold them to account to put right all that is wrong with sewerage outflows.

Parish maintenance Eric Palmer

Since the beginning of the big rains in November Eric has had his work cut out, many hours grappling with blocked culverts, drains, damaged roads. We also thank Julian Lee who works alongside Eric helping to keep the Parish looking spruce.

Police liaison David Smythe

David has been liaising with the Police, brilliantly we have the first Police Hub meeting on 11th April at the Parish Hall. I hope it will be well attended, we are coming up to the busy period in our area when illegal parking goes unattended, War Memorial green last season, yellow lines ignored farmers gates blocked not to mention speeding. Then the Dog poo litter has to get a mention.

School Liaison Nigel Haddaway

Once again early days for this role, the school has also had a lot of changes that are bedding in, we hope to be able to offer support where appropriate.

Adan Carter TPO and reluctant environmentalist

We all enjoy Adam's Articles in the Village Voice. And appreciate the work he does protecting our precious trees.

This report would not be complete without mentioning ROADS and POTHOLEs - suffice to say without droning on we have been lobbying for action.

Yes we have had more rain than ever before in one month. This will not be the last time, it is set to worsen, with climate change. Plans need to be put in place for the future, without an infrastructure there is no economy.

Thank you to everyone for their support and input over the past year. We will continue to serve our parishioners interests as best we can over the next year.

6. Open Forum and general discussion of Parish Affairs

Review Parish Church Year 2023/24 – Cllr Mike Hodges

The biggest change in 2023/24 was that our rector Daniel Hartley has moved back to Sheffield in October and we are now looking for a new Priest.

However, the Parish church continues to provide a variety of services welcoming all to worship every Sunday throughout the year. We are fortunate to have an organist and choir enabling high quality sung worship. We provide a range of family-oriented services at festivals, Christmas and Easter being particularly popular (standing room only), but also Sea Sunday at the Surf Life Saving building in Bantham, Rogation (asking for God's blessing on agriculture) at a farm, Harvest festival, etc. A group from church is now leading collected worship once every two weeks in our primary school.

Did you know, that for those not able to attend a Sunday service for whatever reason we have a very high quality on-line Youtube service every week (see the Parish Website). We are also now reintroducing home communion for those unable to make it out to church.

Beyond services, there are regular weekly and monthly community events in the church meeting room, morning coffee, meals, films etc. The meeting room is also registered in the Warm Spaces scheme.

During the winter months there is a weekly home group meeting, where Christians from the parish meet for bible study, prayer and support, and once a month for a shared meal.

All the activities are advertised on the Thurlestone Parish Web site, in the Village Voice and special services and events on the Parish Facebook Noticeboard.

We are very fortunate in Thurlestone that “The Friends of Thurlestone Church” support repairs to the fabric of the church, which has resulted in the Church Building being maintained to a very high standard. During 2023/24 the flagpole fixings have been upgraded to stainless steel to withstand our very salty air. We also have a very dedicated team caring for the church yard, which is kept to a very high standard.

Notable Events and Happenings in 2023/24

We had a fantastic turn out from the village at the coronation week, “Big Help Out” spring clean, with every part of the church being cleaned (even up the tower), and a number of small repairs completed.

We were blessed with great weather, and loads of help from the village with stalls at our summer BBQ on the Green which was a sell-out raising a much needed £1200 towards church running costs.

A new church clock minute hand (the old one blew off in a storm) was put in place by a ropes team prussiking up the tower (did you see the video at the Parish Hall films night) and has just been removed in the same way along with the hour hand for further repairs.

Did you know your church was Carbon Neutral? A new venture this year has been our living church yard project a collaboration between the Church, the Parish Council sponsored Sustainability Group and the Village School. School children come down on a Thursday afternoon and have done a nature survey, planted daffodils and primroses, built bug houses, planted a biblical herb garden, and once the weather improves will plant two Mulberry Trees to celebrate the Jubilee and Coronation.

Parish Hall Review – Karen Barker

A questionnaire was distributed to the parish at the end of 2022, where we asked everybody what they wanted to see at the hall and the general thoughts on the hall. As a result, during 2023, we carried out a lot of improvements to the hall and tried out a number of new types of events. Improvements to the hall included buying new tablecloths for use in the hall, which are a lot more modern than the original ones and brighten things up nicely. We refreshed the curtains we've introduced new planting around the hall and we also introduced some new lighting and infrared heating, specifically in the Yeo room. Outside, we purchased some new benches and

some plants near the doorway to cheer up the outside. And during 2024 we're looking to install new front doors and carry out repair works to the entrance to the car park where the gravel keeps getting scattered into the road and we hope to get this area tarmacked.

Our events in 2023 were kicked off with our very first "What's on in our Parish" – an opportunity for everyone to come along to see what groups and interests were available both at the hall, but also after around the parish.

Besides the normal classes that run every week, we have also introduced increasingly popular pub nights. We had the Sea Shanty's here one evening raising funds for the RNLI. We also had a string quartet "Divertimento" here and we had a couple of showings of "The land of the five beaches" film and it was great to see so many people attend.

2024 is looking to be just as busy and varied as 2023, alongside the usual classes we purchased a pickleball set and pickleball is proving to be incredibly popular, so if anyone would like to take part do come along and have a go at it.

On the 27th of April, we have our very first disco with a live DJ. So put on your dancing shoes and come along and enjoy a bit of disco. 9th of June is the open gardens with tea and cake.

In August, we've got our annual family fun event. In October, we've got a live band and a murder mystery in November.

More information on all of the events coming up will be in The Village Voice, on our social media pages and on posters dotted around the parish.

A member of the public asked Cllr Sam Dennis a question about funds for agriculture diversification? How can they be accessed? How can you find out more?

Cllr Dennis responded that there was a page on the district council website or contact her by email. <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/your-council/budgets-and-finance/budgets-and-spending/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/agri-tech-grant>.

A member of the public explained that she lived in the parish and was a parent of children at Thurlestone school. She explained that the school playground equipment had recently been condemned and wanted to know if there was any way the Parish Council could be involved with repairs and new equipment. Cllr Stone responded that the matter would be discussed in the Council Meeting that was to follow.

19.53 The meeting Closed

Signed as a true record:

Print Name & Date: