

Thurlestone Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 7th December 2020 at 7:30pm

There was an open forum of 15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting to allow members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Council or other items which affect the Parish. The following matters were raised:

Three residents drew attention to the impact of the development at Whimbrels Edge. Neighbours all realised that the plots would be developed but they are very upset about the size of the properties, the position of the buildings within the plots and the planned materials for the properties, which they feel have an industrial feel which is not in keeping with the area or with the other houses.

A community Facebook page has been set up called Thurlestone Things and it is for members of the Parish to raise concerns, post information and exchange goods and services. All are welcome to join and it is linked with other very local groups.

The Parish Hall remains closed for the time being.

Present: Councillors Rhymes (Chair), Munn, Crowther, Williams, Marshall

Apologies: Councillor Mitchelmore

In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Gilbert, District Councillors Pearce and Long and 10 members of the public

1. To receive apologies.

It was resolved to accept the apologies from Councillor Mitchelmore.

2. To receive any amendments necessary to Members' Registers of Interests.

There were no amendments.

3. To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 2nd November 2020. The Minutes will be signed once the Coronavirus restrictions allow.

It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes.

4. To consider any matters arising from the Minutes, including:

The following matters arose:

The PC responded to questions from the public forum as follows:

Bantham Estate Office and West Buckland Barn planning applications

These are two very different proposals and not all the points raised apply equally to both. One application is for an Estate office to be located close to the Estate's centre of operations (beach/car park and quay) and adjoining the settlement; the other is for the change of use of a barn to a holiday let and a new agricultural/estate store to be located in the open countryside on a lane where development proposals are not permitted and with no safe means of access.

The Bantham Estate is an important employer in the parish and the Neighbourhood Plan encourages and supports local business. However, whilst the Estate already has alternative under-utilised premises for storing farm and estate items, it does not have suitable existing premises close to the centre of its operations that can be used as an Estate office.

There is no inconsistency so far as the Neighbourhood Plan is concerned and the parish council is not 'out of kilter' with the DCC Landscape Officer and South Devon AONB Unit Manager. These consultees have requested more information in order to assess the potential visual impact of the proposed office in its landscape context. It will then be down to SHDC planners to decide the planning application.

Please refer to the Parish Council submissions on both applications on the LPA website for more detail and relevant policy references.

How councillors make decisions on planning applications

Councillors will read the application documents and may also visit the application site and speak to neighbours and residents. Before making their decision whether to support or object to an application, they will receive detailed advice from the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee as to whether the proposal complies with policies in the NP, the JLP and other relevant material considerations (where appropriate), such as, the National Planning Policy Framework, S Devon AONB Management Plan and JLP Supplementary Planning Document. Each planning application will be dealt with separately and Councillors must act impartially and without bias. It is the individual Councillor's responsibility to decide what view to take on an application before them. The PC is a statutory consultee, but it is the local planning authority, SHDC, who will make the final decision.

BT Phone kiosk in Bantham

Cllr Crowther has been in contact with BT again about the phone kiosk in Bantham. They have confirmed they own the kiosk but they have a wayleave agreement with Bantham Estate because it's on the shop forecourt which the Estate owns. BT will therefore only replace the door if the Estate either agrees to adopt the box itself or they provide written permission for the PC to adopt the kiosk. Councillors thanked the Estate for its support.

Cobbled Road repairs

To receive an update about plans to repair the cobbled road in Thurlestone. A socially-distanced site meeting took place at the cobbled road. The road is sinking and councillors talked about making it wider and working out where cars can park to improve the setting and access. The PC is in the process of getting quotations for the work and recognises that it will be a relatively expensive job. Cllr Crowther volunteered to get the property documents sorted out. She has done an initial search and several registered titles have come up. We will need to know the boundaries and if there are any rights over the lane before repairs can be carried out.

5. To comment on the following planning applications:

3762/20/CLP Certificate of lawfulness for proposed oak frame sunroom extension
The Barn, Buckland Park Farm Bantham TQ7 3AB

This is a legal decision about whether or not they need to apply for planning permission for the sunroom. The PC does not therefore need to respond to this application.

3195/20/FUL Extension to existing balcony
4 Furzey Close Thurlestone TQ7 3NP

The Parish Council supported the application. Councillors considered that the proposed extension to the existing first floor balcony on the South elevation of the property is subordinate in scale and form to the existing dwelling (NP Policy TP7.2.i) and will not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties (NP Policy TP1.1); that the style, scale and character of the extended balcony, with a new frameless glass balustrade, is proportionate and appropriate to the sensitive location of the property within the Conservation Area of Thurlestone village (NP Policy TP1.2); and that there will be no impact upon the character and quality of the natural environment and South Devon AONB (NP Policies TP1.5 and TP22.1).

2710/20/ARM READVERTISEMENT (Revised Plans Received) Approval of reserved matters for erection of two detached dwellings with associated driveways and landscaping following outline approval reference WX/1193
Plots 1 and 2, Whimbrels Edge, Thurlestone

The Parish Council objected to this application. Councillors noted that some of their earlier concerns had been addressed but considered that there was a fundamental, overarching problem with the revised design of the proposed development. They felt that there had been no attempt to visually integrate the new architectural design into the existing development on Whimbrels Edge and the landscape setting; on the contrary, the new design was unsympathetic and more suited to a business or retail park mainly due to the extensive and inappropriate use of dark-coloured standing seam cladding on the roofs and walls of both dwellings which would have a dominant, overbearing and oppressive impact on neighbouring properties (contrary to NP Policies TP1.1 and TP1.2). This was particularly apparent on the NW elevation of Plot 1 and the NW and SE elevations of Plot 2 and compounded by the height and orientation of the properties which were out of keeping with the original design ethos upon which permission was granted for the Whimbrels Edge development on a sensitive edge of settlement location within the South Devon AONB (55/0624/02/RM) (contrary to NP Policies TP1.2 and TP1.5).

- To note the following PC response which was submitted in November:

3385/20/LBC Householder application for construction of boundary wall
Cob Cottage, West Buckland, TQ7 3AF

Thurlestone Parish Council supports this application. Councillors considered the proposed boundary wall would help to create privacy between Cob Cottage and its neighbour, Buckland Heights, and would not have an unacceptable impact on its amenity nor on the street scene generally (NP Policy TP1.1); that the design and materials used are locally distinctive, being local natural stone and lime mortar, which are proportionate and appropriate to the location (NP Policy TP1.2); and that the proposal will not impact on the historic environment, the Grade II listed building (Cob Cottage). They requested, however, that details of the materials used are subject to approval to protect the historic character of the listed building and its setting.

This was noted.

- To note that an appeal has been made to the Secretary of State in respect of The Chase, Warren Road, Thurlestone. The appeal follows the refusal of planning permission by SHDC.

This was noted.

6. To receive an update on community led housing.

At the last meeting Cllr Crowther referred to a meeting that she and Cllr Williams had with SHDC community housing officers and project engineers on site. The infrastructure costs have now been produced and the house prices are not very different from those they have already provided. She is therefore waiting to hear the next steps from SHDC before going back to the 6 households again. Jess Wellens of the Community Housing Group has been getting more clarification from Help to Buy South and Cllr Crowther will be enquiring about the mortgage providers and circulate details to prospective purchasers.

7. To consider a request from the Aune Conservation Association about establishing a Code of Conduct for the use of the estuary.

Cllr Williams attended the AEF meeting which she said was very interesting and very well attended. They talked about the steady increase in use especially this summer. Aveton Gifford in particular has had significant problems with the numbers of people turning up there trying to launch craft from the AG car park – on one summer morning this year 50 people were trying to launch at 7am. Local business owners, of which she is one, send people to the estuary and she feels that there are things that she and other businesses can do to help this by providing simple guidelines to their guests. Methods of communication for doing this were discussed and it was agreed that using social media to get the messages out there could be helpful. She has already sent in some suggestions to the AEF.

Cllr Rhymes asked for a request for ideas and feedback to be placed on the parish website and in the next edition of the Village Voice.

It was noted that the Bantham Swoosh has been cancelled next year in response to concerns over the Covid situation and because the organisers cannot be sure if the event can be held in 2021.

8. To receive reports from District and County Councillors and to ask any questions arising.

County Councillor Gilbert

The main street in Thurlestone will be resurfaced on 22nd February and the road will be closed.

There is a big push on helping vulnerable people to avoid being scammed and he asked the PC to draw attention to information about this.

Statistics show that, in Devon, there are 32% less car journeys being made than in the same month last year.

Speeding in the villages – there is a possibility of the PC purchasing a VAS sign for Bantham, as they have done in nearby villages. They cost about £1500 each and the PC can install one without DCC cooperation, though this does mean that the data we get from them would not be legal data and the police cannot act on it. He recommended that the PC speaks to Malborough PC about how theirs has worked.

District Councillor Pearce

Tier 2 is very difficult for the hospitality venues as it is very restrictive. SHDC has two different grants which are being paid out at the moment in order to help: the Local Restriction Support Grant and the Additional Restriction Grant.

The LRS is for people who pay business rates so the Parish Hall is eligible. Nearly 2000 applications have been received and almost £1m paid out. A large number of self-catering accommodation units have applied successfully.

The ARG applies to those who don't pay business rates but have a business that has been severely impacted by the second lockdown. This can be difficult to prove but people are encouraged to apply if they think they are eligible.

This could help places like pubs who were doing takeaways, for example. In general, these grants are more complicated than the grants during the first lockdown because the rules are more complex.

News on the vaccine – they are hoping to open a mass vaccination site somewhere outside Exeter within easy reach of communications.

Devon County Council free school meals scheme is being rolled out over the holidays.

A Discretionary Hardship Grants fund is now also available.

Quayside Leisure Centre has opened again.

SHDC replied to the Planning White Paper and it is understood that the response has made quite an impact and been recognised as one of the best responses nationally.

SHDC has now employed 5 extra Covid Compliance Officers who will be making sure that businesses and customers are complying with Covid regulations.

The next Census will take place in March 2021 and more details will follow.

SHDC car parking charges will go up 4% across the area and that will then be the only rise for the next 4 years. In Kingsbridge, car parking prices will not go up at all except for a couple of instances on the Quay which are designed to catch visitors rather than residents. Car parking permit charges are also going up by 5%.

A new Playing Pitch Strategy is being drawn up now and feedback is sought.

Traffic from the new development at the hotel and increasing traffic within the village has been discussed and Cllr Pearce made the point that SHDC planning officers cannot object to a development on traffic grounds if DCC Highways has approved it.

District Councillor Long

To date, £1,122,380 has been paid out to businesses in the South Hams for the November lockdown. This is still half of what the Council would have expected to pay out so they are actively contacting businesses to make sure they are all applying if they are eligible.

The new enforcement officers have no powers to enforce social distancing or wearing of masks but to respond to concerns that are raised about particular businesses and to work with them to rectify things. They will work with Environmental Health.

9. To receive updates about general Parish matters, including:

- **Benches.** Cllr Williams has prepared a list of the Bantham benches and Cllrs Crowther and Marshall have between them produced the Thurlestone list. West Buckland has only one bench which is already a NP undesignated heritage asset. Once the lists are complete, the details will be put on the website and the PC will prioritise what needs doing. For the moment, only the one bench overlooking the Yarmer is beyond repair and could be replaced with a single plank on granite base, for example.
- **AONB Partnership Forum.** Cllr Crowther was hoping to be able to tell the PC how the AONB Unit had responded to the Government's White Paper but it's not in the public domain yet. The Government intends to make several new AONBs and there are concerns about how the Unit can address the increasing number of planning applications. At the meeting, the point was made by one amenity group representative that if the AONB Unit keeps saying 'no' to development, South Devon is going to be a 'millionaire's paradise' and that there needs to be a balance so local people can afford to live and stay here.
- **Highways and traffic issues**
Cllr Williams has been talking to people about the congestion and traffic throughout the summer and the issue has grown and grown. She has spoken to a number of residents in the last few weeks who expressed concerns about speeding motorists, one of which resulted in a crash. People are really desperate for a speed limit and traffic calming measures. She mentioned that a Speed Task Force had been set up at DCC in 2019 to push for a 20mph speed limit, which it would be good to be involved with. Anyone who has any concerns about this issue is asked to contact County Councillor Gilbert individually to get support for this. She has also spoken to many people about the hotel development and construction traffic. The hotel does not have a construction management plan so this needs to be looked at. A variety of ideas have been suggested for improving traffic in the villages, including: one-way systems, temporary one way systems, carving out the passing bays to make them bigger, and creating passing bays in West Buckland. This work is ongoing.

10. Accounts

- To note the bank account balance of £26,801.79 to date 27th November 2020.
This was noted.
- To note the latest Budget Chart and to discuss the ideas put forward at the Community Budget Meeting for precept 2021/22.
This was noted.
One of the items suggested at the meeting was to install a boardwalk on Footpath 4 where it becomes very boggy. The Bantham Estate has now put down some hardcore to remedy this and the PC thanked them for their help.
A suggestion was made about a PC contribution towards the repair of the two figureheads on Coronation Boathouse.
A discussion was had at the Community Budget Meeting about replacing the NAS system in the Parish Hall. Councillors agreed that this could be funded in the current financial year and approval was given for the purchase of the new equipment.
- To approve the following payments:

Helen Nathanson	Parish Clerk	£478.80
	Printing	£3.49
	Zoom Pro-licence for November	£7.20
Sue Crowther	NP Expenses	£62.86
Kit Marshall	Phone box Christmas Decs	£60.66
Kingsbridge RBL	Remembrance Wreath	£18.50
All Saint's Church	Community Grant – Grass Cutting	£300

FoTS	Community Grant – Christmas Illuminations	£100
Total		£1031.51

The payments were approved.

11. To note the date of the next Council Meeting on Monday 4th January 2021.

This was noted and a date was set for a separate Budget Meeting on Monday 18th January at 7.30pm.

Councillor Jack Rhymes
Chair

Supporting Document for Item 7

Dear Parish Clerks

I write as Chairman of the Avon Estuary Forum (AEF). At our Zoom meeting on 17th November, some very important issues were raised around the steadily increasing recreational use of the estuary. Some of this increase involves commercial organisations wishing to take advantage of the idyllic environment for organised walks, outdoor swims, canoe/ kayak/paddle board outings or training sessions. Additional public but non-commercial interest has been stimulated (especially during the Covid-19 lockdowns) by an outpouring from social media about the delights and benefits of recreational activity in this erstwhile serene and tranquil setting by those who have tried it for themselves.

Whilst this increased interest is welcome in many ways, it does raise some obvious concerns, including: limited parking; restricted access to the water; safety; biosecurity; potential environmental damage; disturbance of wildlife; increased noise; overcrowding; etc. The estuary is a Marine Conservation Zone within the South Devon AONB, of course.

As a consequence of our AEF discussion, it has been suggested that our local communities and other stakeholders should agree, produce and publicise a Code of Conduct, similar to those of other estuarine locations. A great deal of guidance already exists in the form of SHDC byelaws, inshore fishing restrictions, Duchy of Cornwall policy, etc. If your parish council has any ideas about what should be included in such a Code, please send them to me; my contact details are provided below. I'd be happy to pull the ideas together for further discussion amongst AEF attendees. It's vital that any code should be based on a widespread consensus.

The Aune Conservation Association has some funds that could be deployed to help with this project, as required.

Regards

Stuart Watts
Chairman of the Aune Conservation Association

Supporting Document for Item 10

Ideas from the Community Budget Meeting

Installing a boardwalk along the marshy section of the footpath behind The Sloop in Bantham, to make it passable during the wet months	Replacing the NAS back up drive which sits in the Parish Hall and which provides a back-up service to all users of the Parish website
Replacing the pads in the Buckland phone box defibrillator, which is maintained by volunteers	Refurbishment of the benches around the coastal path
Producing a leaflet which explains and encourages wildlife friendly gardening	Providing a play area or bike track for children/young people
Providing more parking in the villages.	Provision of allotments in Thurlestone village
Tidying up the area by the public toilets	Repairing and refurbishing the Cobbled Road by the War Memorial
Creating an off-road footpath between Buckland and Bantham	Signs for the beaches to encourage people to keep them clean and tidy

THURLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL 2020-21 - ANNUAL BUDGET

	2020-21 Budget			2021-22 Budget		Notes
	Total	Actual	Projected	Total	c/f	
INCOME						
Precept	£25,000.00	£24,849.00	£25,000.00			
Parish Paths Grant	£200.00		£200.00			
Council Tax Relief Grant	£151.00	£151.00	£151.00			Grant finishes 2020/21
Locality Grants		£259.98	£259.98			Covid Grant awarded 2020
Interest Received	£1.00	£0.46	£1.00			
Total Income	£25,352.00	£25,260.44	£25,611.98			
EXPENDITURE						
Administration						
Staff Costs	£4,200.00	£3,363.10	£4,979.52			
Hall Hire/Zoom	£400.00	£111.96	£147.96			
Training	£400.00	£90.00	£150.00			
Travel	£300.00	£16.20	£40.00			
Printing and Stationery	£300.00	£203.52	£300.00			
Insurance	£400.00	£372.20	£372.20			Annual Insurance Premium
DALC Subscription	£220.00	£205.05	£205.05			
Elections	£956.89	£956.89	£956.89			No elections planned for 2021/22
Audit	£500.00	£200.00	£200.00			
Website	£300.00	£134.49	£134.49			
Neighbourhood Plan	£600.00	£382.96	£600.00			Administrative costs
Loan Repayments	£6,215.00	£6,215.10	£6,215.00			Public Works Loan - Parish Hall
Total	£14,791.89	£12,251.47	£14,301.11			

Open Space						
Open Space Maintenance		£59.75				Bedding plants for village sign
Grass Cutting	£1,400.00	£1,320.00	£1,650.00			
Island View Play Area	£1,500.00		£1,500.00			Set aside for legal work to register PC ownership
Total	£2,900.00	£1,379.75	£3,150.00			
Assets						
Street Furniture	£300.00	£25.50	£300.00			General repairs to benches, signposts etc
Heritage Assets	£616.00	£247.37	£616.00			Phone box repairs
Public Toilets	£4,200.00	£216.00	£2,000.00			No cost for cleaning this year - c/f £4,200 to 2021/22
DAAT Landing Site		£105.06	£150.00			Cost of electricity to site
General Repairs and Maintenance	£3,000.00					
Repairs to Cobbled Road						
Total	£8,116.00	£593.93	£3,066.00			
Community Grants	£300.00	£312.20	£312.20			St Mary's Church, Covid Helpline
Total Expenditure	£26,107.89	£14,537.35	£20,829.31			
Total Budget Income	£25,352.00	£25,260.44	£25,611.98			
Total Budget Expenditure	£755.89	-£10,723.09	-£4,782.67			