

THURLESTONE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Date: 3rd April 2023		Venue & Time: Thurlestone Parish Hall, 19.30 hrs
Present: Cllr Sue Crowther Cllr Paul Gunning Cllr Rosa Lewis Cllr Jill Munn (Chairman) Cllr Adam Ryan-Carter Cllr Gill Stone Cllr Sian Williams	In Attendance: Kathy Harrod (Parish Clerk) SHDC Cllr Mark Long SHDC Cllr Judy Pearce DCC Cllr Rufus Gilbert Parishioners/guests 21	Apologies:

REF 2023/24 MINUTES

001 Welcome & Apologies

002 County Councillor Report – Cllr Rufus Gilbert

Well, 2022/23 has been another very challenging year for local authorities and government...

- 1) The housing of our Ukrainian guests and getting their children in to school, on top of assisting the Afghans and Hongkongers has been challenging and continues to be so for DCC.
- 2) Covid-19 The winter did not see another major outbreak and the flu also seemed not to have been a major problem.
- 3) Avian Influenza. This has proved challenging on top of the human virus and influenza.
- 4) Coronation celebration road closure party applications have predominantly been going well.
- 5) Scams are still proving a terrible blight and effecting some people horribly across Devon.
- 6) Highways. We had made headway in catching up with potholes and clearing drainage gullies, but the winter rains and frosts have set things back a bit. We are starting to catch up again.
- 7) We now have a new Chief Executive and head of Children's services which should prove beneficial for all and not least the DCC budget.
- 8) This has been the most difficult DCC budget to set in memory. At one point it looked to be the end of Devon County Council
- 9) Devolution deal for Devon to include Plymouth and Torbay at Level 2 has been agreed by the Levelling UP Minister subject to a final business case being agreed by all parties along with parliamentary approval. This will assist in providing improved housing, public transport, and investment opportunities.

LOCAL ISSUES:

- 1) Buckland to Bantham road is for dressing this year.
- 2) I attended with Adam a meeting with PC Cllrs at the village hall recently.
- 3) Locality applications I supported for Thurlestone:
 - a) Thurlestone Jubilee celebrations £150.00
 - b) Village resident application for Parkrun £348.00
 - c) South Hams Arts Trail.....£200.00

003 South Hams District Council Report: Cllr Judy Pearce

This municipal year has been marked by the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. Many of us attended the Proclamation of the new King at Follaton House in September. The Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June were enjoyed by many residents in most of the parishes in the Ward.

As we emerged from the worst of Covid, the cost-of-living crisis started to bite, following Russia's invasion of the Ukraine and the problems caused by interrupted gas supplies to Europe which saw energy prices and consequent inflation rocket. This has not been an easy year for many residents, and South Hams has set up and administered

a number of schemes to help residents who find themselves financially challenged. A complete list of current schemes is always available on the council website. We have also reviewed the arrangements for council tax discounts and revised the policy on additional occasional one-off help for residents with council tax payments. Nearly two hundred Ukrainian guests have come to live with local households in the district on the six month scheme. Some are still with their original hosts and some have moved on. The SHDC housing team have been active in finding new accommodation. The children have settled well into local schools. Recently the Chairman of the Council organised a day for all the guests to meet up at the Watermark in Ivybridge. It was a huge success, especially for the children, who really enjoyed meeting so many other Ukrainian children, often for the first time. Many adults have found work and are making good progress with learning English if they were not fluent already, but understandably many long to go home.

The District Council continues to deliver on its Corporate Strategy 'Better Lives for All.' This has set a programme of actions which members wanted to see and was unanimously endorsed by them. There are diverse projects from climate change, conservation area appraisal reviews, helping villages deliver neighbourhood plans, to better service delivery and customer satisfaction and the building of the first council houses in the district for two generations, at St Anns Chapel. The recent award of well over a million pounds of UKSPF funding will see exciting projects for regenerative farming advances and decarbonisation of the marine sector in the South Hams, along with studies to encourage active travel. The setting up of the Freeport between Plymouth City Council and the South Hams on joint sites is another tremendous opportunity for the district.

Hopefully you will have noticed some improvement in the speed of planning decisions being taken as there are a number of new planners working for the authority, although fully resourcing the team remains a problem not just for us, but for most councils. A few applications are still caught up in the backlog, usually because they are awaiting additional information. In late spring 2022 the Council adopted a new Charter with applicants. This promises quicker decisions by the council in return for less ongoing negotiations from the applicants/agents during the life of an application – in other words applicants would have to withdraw if there are problems and come back in when they were resolved. We are starting to consider the first revision of the Joint Local Plan, but it may get delayed by the outcome of the proposed national planning reforms and the enacting of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. 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, even if minor modifications in Salcombe and South Milton seem to be taking an eternity to happen.

In the Ward the Council's most significant projects have been the construction of the new harbour workshop and five new employment units in Salcombe. Both are at Batson Creek. The employment units are now let to local marine businesses and are due to be handed over imminently. There is some delay to the completion of the workshop, and it will probably not be possible to move in until the end of the summer. Construction and manpower shortages on the part of the contractor have caused the late delivery of this project. The public EV charging points are now operational on the Creek car park in Salcombe.

Housing continues to be one of the major problems in the ward as even with more houses gaining permission such as the site at the top of Salcombe behind the garage, and the second phase of Alston Gate in Malborough at last being started, the number of properties becoming second homes or short term lets continues to outnumber any new houses built. Over the year evidence for owners wishing to keep their short term lets on business rates has had to be presented for them to qualify from 1st April 2023, and second homeowners will have to pay an extra 100% council tax from 1st April 2025, since it unlikely the legislation will be passed in time for this to happen earlier. Meanwhile the number of private longer-term rentals has been squeezed and rents continue to go up. Local Housing Allowance has not been adjusted since 2018 and is now totally inadequate to help meet the rents being charged. Urgent reform of the whole housing market is required and a Housing Commission is being set up by Exeter University at the instigation of all the Devon local authorities to look into the problem and make recommendations for change.

Climate change and the net zero ambition continues to occupy us. The Council has commissioned a report to find out exactly the best way of tackling its own carbon reduction problems both at Follaton House and in the

workforce. It is likely that locality officers and grounds maintenance teams will have electric vehicles during the next Council term, but electric or alternative fuel for waste collection vehicles is probably further off. That is why the Council's offer of funding to help set up local composting schemes is a good bet. Some parishes have started engaging on this to deliver locally, now that the council's brown bin service is optional. It is good to see that several parishes have established groups to work locally on climate change and carbon reduction projects. A new Emergency climate Emergency Planning Statement has come into force and affects all planning applications submitted since the beginning of December 2022. It will make demolition and rebuilding much harder to justify, and there are much stricter rules on thermal efficiency and local energy generation, installation of EV charging points etc.

Meanwhile the elections are creeping up on us faster than we know. I have decided after a term as Leader of the Council in very difficult circumstances of the pandemic, a change of Chief Executive, inflation and ever-increasing budgetary pressures, to stand down. It is time for someone else to take over, both at the helm and in the ward. I shall though be keeping an interested eye on how things go from here. It has been a real pleasure and a privilege working with you all over the past nine years and getting to know so many residents all over the Ward and the District.

Cllr Long: The new bin service has stabilised and targets are being met – the current target is for a maximum of 80 missed bins per 10,000 collections. When FCC had the service the missed collections were in the region of 4,000.

Parishioner feedback:

A parishioner raised that the work being done on Airbnb and the second homes in the area is absolutely critical, a recent program covering the issues that Cornwall is having to deal with highlight what we could expect in Devon if the situation here starts to mirror their problems. Cllr Pearce advised that the percentage of second homes in Devon is far higher than that of Cornwall with a concentration of them along the coast. It is deconstructing communities and causing a critical situation with housing stock, particularly affordable housing stock. Places such as Hope Cove have over 75% second homes/holiday homes and there just aren't enough people left to keep these communities going.

Salcombe parking – businesses have nowhere to park, meaning people can easily expect to pay £70 per month on parking fees. When the cost of living is as high as it is the impact on local businesses and their staff is very significant. The lack of parking has also become problematic issue for the customers of the businesses. This is further impacted by the permits issued by DCC to the construction workers and associated industries.

004 Thurlestone Parish Council Report – Chairman, Cllr Jill Munn

This year has certainly been a year of change, last year four of our most experienced Councillors decided for various reasons to retire – forcing an election. In May we were joined by four new councillors. They had to learn very quickly what you can and can't do as a councillor!

In June, the parish celebrated the Queens Platinum Jubilee, the parish threw a good old fashioned street party with a modern twist, including entertainment for the children followed by live music and dancing. It was a fabulous day with a good time being had by all.

Sadly, only a few weeks later we all received the news that HM Queen Elizabeth II had passed away.

Our Chief Party organiser, Jack Rhymes, now has some well advanced plans in place to celebrate the Coronation of our new King, Charles III. Hopefully the sun will shine and it will be another great day for the parish to remember – thanks Jack.

We have had constructive meetings with Level Water, the organisers of the Swoosh. This year there should not be a recurrence of last year's traffic problems.

THURLESTONE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

All costs in respect of the public toilets are paid by Thurlestone Parish Council from our precept. We need to be mindful of the rising costs including cleaning and repairs as we currently spend a large percentage of our income on these facilities.

The environment group have formed and have now planted the first wild meadow - we hope this is the first of many. With nature in decline we must all do our best to support nature and the environment.

Special thanks to all our unsung heroes who freely give their time, quietly working on behalf of the Parish to keep things looking good and in working order. This includes the Telephone Box Committee, the Parish Hall group, Paul Martin, the team who look after the website, everyone involved with Village Voice, the people looking after the churchyard and to Mike Stickland for his time given to the Parish Paths – Mike has recently moved away, we wish him well. My sincere apologies if I've missed anyone off!

I would like to give a big thank you to Councillor Judy Pearce, Councillor Mark Long and Councillor Rufus Gilbert for all the help and support, it has been very much appreciated.

005 Open Forum & General Discussion:

No further points were raised.

006 Close of Meeting: At 20.02hrs the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Signed as a true record: _____

Print Name & Date: _____

Agenda Items and Updates; where possible please submit to the Clerk one week prior to the meeting to ensure time for inclusion, circulation, and study. If a Council Member is unable to attend a meeting it would be appreciated if they could submit a brief précis of progress on their actions, if applicable, (to the Clerk for distribution) together with their apologies.

Distribution List: Cllrs Crowther, Gunning, Lewis, Munn, Ryan Carter, Stone & Williams. **For Information to:** County Cllr R Gilbert, Dist. Cllr Judy Pearce, Dist. Cllr Mark Long, Thurlestone Parish Website: <https://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk/>