

## Thurlestone Parish Council

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7:30pm</b></p>
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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:

A member of the public spoke again about the Thurlestone Hotel planning application. He noted that SHDC had held a Development Management Committee Meeting regarding another large, local application at which the officer decision was overturned by the Committee so he could not see why it did not happen with the hotel. He felt that justice had not been done with this application. He had read the AONB consultation report on the Bantham Estate office application with interest and it echoed the points that he had made. He hoped that this report would not be ignored. There had been a lot of objections to this application and he thought that it was not relevant that many of those came from people outside of the parish. He said that he was confident that justice would be done and the full process applied.

Another resident commented that he had also read the AONB report on the Estate Office and was heartened by the fact that another authority supported his comments. He said that he was still unhappy that the PC rebuffed them and hoped that SHDC would take them into account.

The Bantham phone box door had been taken for repair by BT and would be returned in due course.

Residents in West Buckland contacted Cllr Williams about the number and frequency of domestic bonfires in recent months which they said were causing a nuisance in the village. This was noted and residents were asked to be more considerate.

An officer from Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) gave an overview of Saving Devon's Treescapes, a project to plant 250,000 trees across Devon in order to mitigate the impact of Ash Dieback, which is expected to affect 90% of trees in the county. South Devon is expected to be particularly badly hit and is therefore a priority area for replanting with 50% of the project's resources allocated here. This is a 5 year project and trees will be planted outside of woodland areas so they are keen to speak with landowners to find sites, including hedgerows.

DWT can provide landowner advisory visits and are also keen to speak to schools. Trees will be provided free of cost and grown locally.

Local tree wardens have been contacted and DWT is keen to work with them.

No new ash trees will be planted because of the disease so they will be replaced with other native species.

The Chair thanked DWT for attending and it was agreed that this would be put on the agenda in November to be discussed in more detail and with other environmental issues.

*The meeting convened.*

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

Apologies: Councillors Mitchelmore and Hurrell

In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Gilbert, District Councillors Long and Pearce, 8 members of the public

**1. To receive apologies.**

It was resolved to accept the apologies.

**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 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The Minutes will be signed once the Coronavirus restrictions allow.**

It was resolved to confirm and sign the minutes.

**4. To consider any matters arising from the Minutes.**

The following matters arose:

Item 4

The installation of road safety mirrors at Aune Cross is ongoing.

Item 5

DALC Planning webinar – Cllr Crowther attended and is preparing a response to the Government White Paper on Planning for the Future and its implications for neighbourhood plans.

Item 7

Cycling on the coast path – the SW Coast Path association has been contacted and they will look into it, though they did say that this is not usually a problem but has been so this year because of the high numbers of visitors.

Road resurfacing through Thurlestone village is programmed for January 2021

No parking signs up by the war memorial – it was agreed that the Clerk would order a new No Parking sign for the PC which Cllr Rhymes will install.

Item 10

Remote meetings – the current guidelines are that parish councils should continue to meet remotely and it was agreed that this would therefore continue.

**5. To comment on the following planning applications:**

**2679/20/FUL** Thurlestone Hotel - Replacement and extension of the balcony on the 3rd floor and replacement of the balcony on the 2nd floor on the south elevation.

The Parish Council supported the application.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals relating to local tourist-related businesses, including hotels, provided proposals meet the plan's general development principles and are proportionate in scale and extent to the existing premises (NP policies TP8 and TP9). Councillors considered that this proposal will have no impact on residential amenity (NP Policy TP1.1) and that the style, scale and character of the replacement balconies are proportionate and appropriate, reflecting the design of the hotel's existing balconies and using matching materials (NP policy TP1.2).

**2786/20/FUL** West Buckland Barn (Bantham Estate) - Change of use of barn to C3 holiday let and erection of new agricultural/estate store

For the avoidance of doubt, the Parish Council has not been consulted regarding the proposals and need for the development, contrary to para 4.107 of the Planning Statement.

Thurlestone Parish Council OBJECTS to this application.

1. Change of use of barn to C3 holiday let. The Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan supports the change of use of farm and rural buildings to create new opportunities for commercial purposes, provided a holiday occupancy condition is imposed (NP Policies TP8 & TP15). Councillors did not consider, however, that it had been demonstrated that the premises were no longer required for agricultural purposes, particularly as it is proposed (in the same application) to erect a new barn for agricultural/estate use on the adjoining field. They also considered that the amount of fenestration on the East elevation of the building and the extent of the proposed garden/domestic curtilage are neither appropriate nor proportionate within the South Devon AONB and in terms of their impact on the AONB (contrary to NP Policies TP1.2, TP1.4 & TP1.5).

2. New agricultural/estate store. The Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan also supports the development of more storage space for local commercial uses (**NP Policies TP8 & TP14**), however, the Estate already has a number of potential alternative premises that appear to be under-utilised which Councillors considered they could continue to use, instead of developing a green field in a prominent and sensitive location within the AONB. More specifically: (1) the proposed consolidation of the storage of estate vehicles and machinery into a single building on the lane between Bantham and Buckland is where development proposals are not permitted (**NP Policy TP2**); (2) the premises are not of a small scale and extent (33 x 12m) proportionate to the rural and coastal character of the locality, with 5 galvanised steel roller shutter doors and stone cladding, plus hardcore surfaced yard (35 x 15m) and resculpted earth bund (contrary to **NP Policy TP14**); (3) the proposed uses are likely to exacerbate existing traffic problems, particularly during the peak summer season, and would have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity (**NP Policy TP1.1**); (4) the site does not provide a safe means of access in a lane well used by pedestrians (**NP Policy TP1.7**); and (5) the style, scale and character of the proposal is not proportionate and appropriate in this particularly sensitive location within the South Devon AONB and would not conserve and enhance its natural beauty, interrupting some of its protected views (contrary to **NP Policies TP1.2, TP1.4, TP1.5 & TP22.1** (including **Fig 1**). Further, the existing unsightly stockpiled materials that have appeared over the last couple of years and the unkempt access are not a material planning consideration and it is also unclear how much farm equipment needs to be stored in the new barn. Clearly, any vehicles used in connection with pheasant rearing for the shoot, the storage of work boats and beach cleaning equipment (and/or Gastrobuses) would not qualify for Part 6 Class A permitted development rights.

3. Permissive path. The proposed path provides a short-cut to the village shop for the holiday let and new agricultural/estate store, but does not link the 3 settlements or provide greater access to the coast and countryside (**NP Policy TP17**).

**2609/20/FUL** The Thatches, Thurlestone - Replacement detached garage/store

Thurlestone Parish Council OBJECTS to this application.

The existing building is located outside the Thurlestone settlement boundary and within the AONB, the Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast, all of which have a high degree of protection. Councillors were concerned that the replacement of the existing building may facilitate further

development in the area, and more specifically: (1) the scale and extent of the proposed building with a footprint of 55 sqm, compared to the existing 20.8 sqm, amounts to a 164% increase that is not appropriate and proportionate in its location (**NP Policy TP1 .2**); (2) there are 6 new rooflights that would impact on light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, the intrinsically dark landscapes and the natural environment (**NP Policy TP1.4**); (3) the proposal fails to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the South Devon AONB and has not demonstrated that its impact on the AONB has been assessed (**NP Policy TP1.5**); (4) the proposal involves demolishing a characterful 1930s building that is part of the historic environment of the area, including the removal of a thatched roof stated to be in good condition (**NP Policy TP1.6**); and (5) the replacement building may be converted to habitable accommodation and occupied by an independent household (**NP Policy TP7.2ii**).

**2710/20/ARM** Development Site off Leonards Close (Whimbrels Edge), Thurlestone - Approval of reserved matters for erection of two detached dwellings with associated driveways and landscaping

The Parish Council objected to the application and it was agreed that the comments would not be submitted until councillors had allowed more time for residents to submit their comments.

**6. To receive an update on community led housing.**

Councillor Crowther had received a call from SHDC about the Homes England grant, which has now been announced. It seems that the grant focuses on mainstream affordable housing – affordable rental and shared ownership – rather than discounted housing like our own. She will be reviewing the documentation they have sent her to see if the Bantham site is able to qualify. We must ensure the properties on the site remain affordable in perpetuity and cannot be sold off as market housing as it is a rural exception site. SHDC are looking into this particular point too. They have recently obtained planning permission for the sites at St Ann’s Chapel and South Brent, but those sites are part-market housing. She will also be speaking to SHDC’s Affordable Housing specialist to see if there are other possible sources of funding.

**7. To discuss setting up a Working Group to look at how tourism businesses could work together to improve traffic flows in and out of the parish during the summer.**

Councillor Williams had spoken to lots of people about traffic problems in Bantham and West Buckland and dozens of residents described the misery it caused for the summer season, with delays in local journeys of up to 3 hours. There is a worry that next year might be the same, with an unacceptable impact on commuting to work and access for emergency vehicles.

The problem was partly caused by sheer volume of traffic but was also down to bad driving techniques. Many people in the area rely on tourism but they would like to do something to educate visitors and discuss ideas for how to improve things, such as one way systems; park and ride; temporary signage; better information on business websites, road widening; more passing bays etc Cllr Rhymes thanked her for all the work she had done on this. It was agreed to set up a Working Group to work with the community and look into this in more detail.

The Working Group will be Councillors Williams, Rhymes and Hurrell and they will invite members of the local business community. Terms of Reference will be drafted and approved remotely so they the WG can get started.

**8. To discuss correspondence from Thurlestone Golf Club about issues this summer caused by wild camping on Broadsands Beach.**

An email had been received from the Golf Club about the problems caused by wild campers on Broadsands Beach. Councillors were supportive of the need to do something about the increased numbers of people camping and parking illegally but felt strongly that they would prefer not to have too many signs around. They asked that the Club consult them before installing any signs.

**9.** To discuss the winter closing routine for the Thurlestone public toilets and to agree a future cleaning and inspection routine.

Councillors agreed that, although they would like the toilets to remain open over the winter, the cost is already high and it would be too much to pay for the extra months of cleaning. The closing dates of 1<sup>st</sup> November to 28<sup>th</sup> February were therefore agreed and a sign will be put up to inform people that they will be closing.

The Golf Club had previously offered a financial contribution towards the cleaning which the PC had not yet requested. This was discussed and councillors agreed that it would not be right to ask them at present.

Cllrs expressed thanks to SHDC for their support this year and noted the quote of £4377 + VAT to continue the arrangement with SHDC contractors for 2021. It was pointed out that the cost of operating the toilets for the summer season this year amounted to almost 25% of the total parish precept. In view of this high percentage it was agreed to ask SHDC if they would give further support and Cllr Pearce said she would take this up with the appropriate department.

**10.** To note the reports from District and County Councillors and to ask any questions arising.

County Councillor Gilbert reported that recycling had increased during Covid, the greatest increase being glass which has seen an enormous increase!

He said that he would be happy to join in with the Tourism Working Group. The same issue of traffic and high visitor numbers had been seen across the South West and people had suffered badly in nearby areas. He thought that it would be difficult to find solutions but was happy to help wherever the County can because the problem is unlikely to go away.

District Councillor Pearce

SHDC has reopened the leisure centres. Usage is not high and their continued opening will depend on people using them otherwise it may not be possible because of the cost - they need throughput and income.

The interim SHDC budget shows a deficit of £1.3m for end of year but things may not be looking so bad for next year.

SHDC has submitted a strong objection to the Government planning consultation on housing numbers. The main objection was the large increase in proposed housing numbers which is based on a model which says that houses are cheaper in larger developments. This is not possible in the South Hams because of space and topography.

The Planning White Paper does not contain enough detail and is vague about Neighbourhood Plans. Devon MPs have been pushing back and don't seem to be supporting it so the hope is that there will be support in Westminster. One of the things it does seem to be doing is directing housing to rural areas and northern cities are complaining that they are not being given enough housing to build. So there is a lot to look at.

The new waste collection rounds start this week.

The Council Tax Support Grant to towns and parishes is now withdrawn.

District Councillor Long emphasised his support for the Saving Devon's Treescapes Project and said how important it was for parishes to contribute to this wherever they can by speaking to landowners.

**11. To receive updates about general Parish matters, including:**

An update about the Friends of Thurlestone Church

Councillor Williams attended a socially distanced meeting. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the Friends. They have not been able to hold fundraising events this year and there has been a decrease in the numbers of Friends and trustees recently. Donations have contributed in excess of £100,000 in the last few years to the church fund which is now being used to repair the tower roof at a cost of about £25,000 and will be used to repair the remaining windows at a cost of up to £27,000. The Chairman of the Friends asked people to join as a Friend or trustee and give time or money if they can. They are trying to improve their presence on the parish website and Cllr Williams is going to help them with their social media presence.

An update from the Parish Hall Committee.

Chris White gave an update. The Committee had a meeting in the Hall last week to finalise the risk assessment for reopening. They will meet again next week to confirm it and will then publish it for users who want to come back and use the Hall again. They hope to get it open this month.

Cobbled Road

Cllr Mitchelmore raised concerns (via Cllr Munn) about the big hole at the end of the path by the cobbled road. The Chair agreed and said that it was time to make a permanent repair rather than continually patching it up. This will be placed on the agenda in November and a site meeting will be arranged to discuss what needs to be done.

Dog bins

These have not been emptied despite being reported by several people. Cllr Pearce agreed to follow this up as she had been assured that they would be done.

**12. Accounts**

- To note the bank account balance of £31,494.13 to date 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

This was noted.

- To note the Income and Expenditure to date 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

This was noted. One of the reasons the budget is looking healthy is because lots of projects have not taken place this year for Covid reasons. There is likely to be a saving of between £5-8k this year which will be earmarked for specific projects. Councillors discussed the concept of community budgeting and agreed that they would like to work with residents to decide on priorities for the 2021/22 budget. It was therefore agreed to hold a Community Budget Meeting on Monday November 16<sup>th</sup> for councillors to speak with members of the public about what they would like to see in the parish. If possible, this meeting will be held in person but, if not, it will be a remote meeting. It will be advertised on the parish noticeboards as well as online to ensure that as many people as possible get to hear about it.

- To discuss the Annual Budget chart, which shows expenditure against the budget to date.

This was noted.

- To approve the following payments:

Helen Nathanson	Parish Clerk pay	£478.80
	Stationery and printing	£11.47
	Zoom Pro-licence for September	£7.20
Kit Marshall	Thurlestone Phone Box repairs	£61.56
Jettadrain	Inspect both toilets for blockage and repair	£216.00
Sue Crowther	NP Committee Printing & Stationery	£38.39
<b>Total</b>		<b>£813.42</b>

The payments were approved. It was also noted that a payment made on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 had mistakenly been omitted from the July agenda- £20.87 to Paul Martin for equipment to repair the Thurlestone phone box. This was given retrospective approval.

**13.** To note the following information for residents:

Devon and Cornwall Police Commissioner's Newsletter gives up to date information about police work in the area and has a link to this year's Annual Report. You can sign up to the newsletter here: <https://www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/>

Devon County Council Coronavirus Information provides all the up to date information and guidance about the Coronavirus in Devon and can be found here: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/>

These were noted.

**14.** To note the date of the next Council Meeting which will be held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm.

This was noted and the meeting ended at 9.30pm. Meetings will continue to be conducted remotely until further notice and in accordance with Government guidelines.

Councillor Jack Rhymes  
Chairman