


KINGSTON PARISH COUNCIL 
Annual Parish Assembly Meeting

Held on 18th April 2024 at 1900hrs

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT	Cllr Eve White	Cllr Merv Freeman
	Cllr Suzannah Grant	Cllr Holly Rahder
	Cllr Joel Wakeling	Cllr Don Kelly
	SHDC Cllr Samantha Dennis	Cllr Sarah Banham
APOLOGIES	DCC Cllr Rufus Gilbert	
IN ATTENDANCE	Parish Clerk Lorraine Squire	

01.24	<p>Chairman's Introduction & Welcome: Cllr Eve White welcomed all councillors and Parishioners to the 2024 APA meeting. This Parish Assembly is held annually and is intended for me, as chairman of Kingston Parish Council, to tell you what we have done in the last twelve months. Normally there are ten council meetings held in the Reading Room where our business takes place and Parishioners are welcome to come and speak in the Open Forum then are welcome to listen in on our later discussions although at this stage of the meeting are not allowed to say anything.</p> <p>I would like to introduce your councillors who have all taken the lead for various topics of council business, Don Kelly- Neighbourhood plan/church/CAP (community action Plan)) Mervin Freeman (vice chair)- planning/parish web site Suzannah Grant -Newsletter/recycling And me Eve White (Chair) overall responsibility for budgets/reports in conjunction with the Parish Clerk (and anything else!) There were two new councillors who joined us last spring when Alison Lewis and Phil Anderson stepped down last year. Holly Rahder – footpaths Joel Wakeling playing field / trees. Finally Sara Banham (taking Heather Summer Nutting's place when she had to resign for health reasons)- Reading Rooms /allotments.</p> <p>Our very able Parish Clerk, Lorraine Squire, deals with the day to day running of the council answering questions, emails, phone calls, finding out information for us etc. etc. and generally keeping us on the straight and narrow. The Clerk is also our Responsible Financial Officer having to deal with the accounts and making sure everything satisfies the auditor.</p> <p>We could not do such a successful job without the support and help of our Devon County Councillor Rufus Gilbert and South Hams District Councillor Bernard Taylor who keep us up to date with Devon County and South Hams Councils news and information, advising and answering questions. They both generously supply us with small grants which we were able to use for things like the Recreation Grounds and defibrillator.</p>	
02.24	<p><u>Summary of 2023 Annual Reports</u> <u>Neighbourhood Plan</u> This is working well but will be reviewed in 2025.</p> <p><u>Recycling</u> Suzannah liaises with South Hams about the new inhouse recycling system introduced by SHDC last year. This seems to far more successful than the previous one but if you still have problems with this service, please, do not hesitate to contact Suzannah or the SHDC website where you can find out things like collections days and items you are allowed to include in your recycling and black bins.</p> <p><u>Planning Applications</u> There have been 14 planning applications and 3 appeals in the past 12 months, 1 planning and 2 appeals still waiting to be decided, there is a new portal on the SHDC website which has made searching easier (just type the property name) and provides a little bit more detail. Overall we have been satisfied with the decisions made by the planning team. Please be aware that although we are asked to comment on planning applications ultimately it is SHDC that make the decisions.</p> <p><u>Highways</u> This winter it seems that it is either pouring with rain or blowing a gale or both! This inevitably results in large puddles, floods and the new sport of dodging potholes! Ideally repairs should be done in dry weather but some of the holes are so bad they can't wait also other utilities need to do their thing, so we are seeing a rash of roadworks being done just now. Please be patient because the sooner it is done the better the roads will be. A big thank you to all the residents that took the trouble to clear any blocked drains as this headed off any potential flooding.</p> <p><u>Footpaths</u> We have 10 footpaths including the coastal path, two permissive ones and a bridleway, all are of varying degrees of difficulty. These</p>	

Signed By Chair Dated

Kingston Parish Clerk – Lorraine Squire, Tomar, 3 Church Park, Kingston, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4PP
E-mail kingstonclerk@gmail.com

<p>02.24 Cont'd</p>	<p>are monitored and are frequently walked by everyone. Any repairs or maintenance problems are reported to Devon County Council.</p> <p>Newsletter We thank Katherine Harding and her team of newspaper boys and girls for the monthly newsletter that allows us to keep in touch with you all with the council's news, announcements of happenings, reports, adverts and many other things of interest to the village.</p> <p>Reading Rooms I expect you will be aware the Reading Room committee have plans afoot to improve the reading rooms and have drawn up plans to increase the area available and amenities for the benefit of the hall users so watch this space. It is a charity and because of the many changes ``to the rules`` a new constitution is being introduced to bring it up to date. There is a new Revival group created to modernise the uses of the RR, so if you have spare time to help or come up with ideas, please contact Juliet Manners or Jenny Kinder. The panto this year was again a resounding success again so well done to all concerned! The Fun Day is taking place again this year so any help that can be given to make this another brilliant day please contact KEG who would be very pleased as there is always much to do behind the scenes.</p> <p>Recreation grounds These are very popular with everyone and are very busy, from the little children to grandparents, all thoroughly enjoy themselves. Joel is heading up a group to revamp the skateboard park so if you are interested, please contact him. Any help with the ongoing repairs also needs volunteers even if it only to use a paint brush.</p> <p>Things to Note The AONB has changed its name to National Landscapes. The issue of water quality of the river Erme has become a pressing concern and KPC has become involved with various groups looking for a way forward. The loss of the mobile library service is disappointing but there are several ideas floating around to see if a local remedy can be found.</p>	
<p>03.24</p>	<p>Financial Report 2022/23 The monies we receive are mostly from our portion of the Council Tax, which is added to with various grants from DCC, SHDC and other fund-raising events. Although the total may seem a lot, we have many financial commitments including the maintenance of the playing field. As I said before the clerk is also our Responsible Finance Officer and she keeps a close eye on our spending. The government rules that local Councils need only use the Internal Auditor if there is less than £25,000.00 turnover. As KPC's 2023/24 accounts closed on 31st March 2024 with less than a £25,000.00 the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn require only the proof of Exemption Certificate. For Openness and Transparency, the Council Accounts will be placed on the Kingston Parish Council Web Site for inspection.</p>	
<p>04.24</p>	<p>Devon County Council:- Cllr Rufus Gilbert – Annual Report GENERAL ROADS. a) Devon has 8500 miles of roads and 426 Parish Councils b) To put Devon's roads back to something reasonable would require about £1.2 billion c) Wettest year for 130 years and the system can't cope and was not designed to do so under these conditions. d) Highways will do there best to catch up in the summer e) Please keep reporting the potholes/flooding etc www.new.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem</p> <p>DEVOLUTION. This is progressing well and for further information please visit: www.devonandtorbaydeal.org.uk</p> <p>DIY WASTE AND RECYCLING. For information please visit: www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling</p> <p>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 you local library for information on books delivery</p> <p>LOCALITY FUNDING. Most of my parishes have been given some funding, which I hope was found to be helpful.</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>05.24</p>	<p>South Hams District Council:- SHDC Cllr Samantha Dennis on behalf of SHDC Cllr Bernard Taylor</p>	

Signed By Chair Dated
Kingston Parish Clerk – Lorraine Squire, Tomar, 3 Church Park, Kingston, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4PP
E-mail kingstonclerk@gmail.com

<p>Conti... 05.24</p>	<p>District Councillors Report for 2023 -24 to the Parish Annual Meeting.</p> <p>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!</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The year began with elections held at District, Parish and Town Council. The elections saw Cllr Bernard Taylor re-elected. 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.</p> <p>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."</p> <p>The weekend after the local elections also saw Coronation celebrations held across the area, congratulations to all the organisers.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 South Hams District Council 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Following implementation of a Planning Improvement Plan, 100% of major planning application 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.</p> <p>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,</p>
---------------------------	---

Signed By Chair **Dated**
Kingston Parish Clerk – Lorraine Squire, Tomar, 3 Church Park, Kingston, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4PP
E-mail kingstonclerk@gmail.com

	<p>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.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Group (chaired by Cllr Dennis) 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor will continue to attend the monthly Parish and Town Council meetings to update on District Council activities and respond to questions.</p>	
06.24	Parishioners Question Time: - No Parishioners present.	
07.24	Closure of the Meeting: Cllr Eve White closed the meeting at 7.30pm	
	Meeting Closed 7.30 pm	

Signed By Chair Dated

Kingston Parish Clerk – Lorraine Squire, Tomar, 3 Church Park, Kingston, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4PP
E-mail kingstonclerk@gmail.com