

Southern Link

Notes of the meeting held on **Thursday March 15th, 2018**
Rundle Room, Tavistock Town Hall, Tavistock at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Town & Parish Councils

Bere Ferres – Cllr R Lethall, Cllr M Page Bailey, Cllr B Lamb

Brentor – *not represented*

Buckland Monachorum – Cllr D Butland , Cllr S Wollacott

Burrator Grouped – Cllr T Aves (Southern Links Chairman)

Dartmoor Forest – *not represented*

Gulworthy –,Cllr K Royston

Horrabridge – *not represented*

Kelly – *not represented*

Lamerton – *not represented*

Lewdown Grouped – *not represented*

Lifton – Cllr C Edmonds & WDBC

Lydford – Cllr B Cook

Mary Tavy – Cllr G Hill, Cllr J Bright

Milton Abbot Grouped – Cllr R Brewer,

Peter Tavy – Cllr J Jeffery, Cllr B Lane

Plasterdown Grouped - Cllr G Antcliffe

Stowford – Cllr P Van Delft

Sydenham Damerel – *not represented*

Tavistock – Cllr H Smith

Richard Easthope (WDBC)

Steve Mullineaux (WDBC)

Sophie Hoskin (WDBC)

Cllr P Sanders (WDBC)

Jo Rumble (DNPA)

Simon Kitchen (DCC),

John Fewings (DCC Highways)

Mrs J Gillard (Links Administrator)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Insp Mark Sloman (D&C Police), Cllr C Mott (WDBC) Cllr T Pearce, (Brentor& WDBC), Cllr J Evans (Lamerton)

2. Agreement of Notes of Last Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 30th November 2017 were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising** – there were no matters arising.

4. **Policing issues** - statistics distributed prior to meeting.

In the absence of Insp Sloman, figures reviewed. One Question arising – Is there any way of identifying which Parishes have the largest problems, can the information be broken down any further.? Response from Insp Sloman in blue italics below –

We can drill further down if required, however before we do this I would want to know which parishes are requesting this and why?

We have about 47 parishes in West Devon so it would be very resource intensive to get all parish figs. But if there is a specific problem then we can certainly look at it.

It was noted the figures were increasing and acknowledged that some of this could be down to the changes in reporting and the fact historic incidents are recorded.

In general we have seen increases in crime over the last 12 months and as I have said before that is following a national trend. We believe there has been an increase in crime but also some of it comes down to the changes in what we record as a crime, this has seen us recording a lot more incidents as crime.

Bere Ferrers raised a problem they are experiencing with anti social behaviour incidents and although reported they are very concerned over an apparent lack of attention given by the Police to it despite the fact they have passed on car registration numbers and names of potential suspects.

Can Bere Ferrers be more specific around ASB in the village, I have checked our records and we have not seen an increase in reporting. We did see an increase of reporting in Bere Alston over the winter months but as a result of this our units were tasked to focus their patrols in that area, which they did. We subsequently saw a reduction.

If there is an issue that we are not aware of I can again look at this.

5. **DCC Highways – John Fewings**

John apologised for his absence from the last meeting, this was due to the weather conditions and the requirement for him to then work.

Concern was raised by a few parishes over apparent lack of co-ordination on signing of diversion routes around road works, John to investigate further however he stated a Highways Officer on sick leave has only had a temporary secondment officer in place recently could account for some issues.

Skanskia have been in place for nearly a year, it has been a culture shock for DCC, new processes have had to be put in place plus making different IT systems work together.

The local Neighbourhood Highways Officers are the first point of contact for Parishes. There is a new Chief Officer in place who is encouraging all to challenge S Traditionally Highways have been 'data led', they are now looking at involving communities more to help Parishes.

Reductions in funding has resulted in them concentrating on maintaining A roads, there is extra money available next year for pot holes and also for cleaning and drainage.

Peter Tavy raised the issue of lack of liason between Highways and Parishes re work that is to be undertaken. John explained different teams are responsible for different types of work and co-ordination is not straightforward. They are looking at better ways of working together and are re-instating the role of Community Liason Officers in an effort to address this. They recognise this is an area where improvement is required.

6. **WDBC Update – Sophie Hoskin and Steve Mullineaux**

SH – previously WD operated with 2 Executive Directors, following the departure of Steve Jorden, there is now 1 – Sophie. Steve is her Deputy and retains his old responsibilities also. Helen Dobby continues to run Commercial Services, Lisa Buckle – Finance and Darren Arulvasagam Commercial Strategy. This is an interim structure to 2019.

Budget setting was completed end Feb, Council Tax (WD element) to increase by 2.99% the maximum possible = 13p per week for a Band D property.

We are in challenging times, the books balance for this year but not for future years therefore the Council is looking at more efficiencies and provision of discretionary services, fees and charges. A robust commercial strategy is in place, they are investigating investing in commercial property. The Okehampton office is to close in April, there will be a new limited face to face service in the Okement Centre, they are stopping taking cash and cheques in any office.

Waste collections – only 1 days collections were missed in the recent bad weather. There is a procurement exercise taking place as the FCC contract ends in April 2019. They are looking at costings for a like for like service and also asking for alternative options eg a reduction in black bag collections.

SM – the Government has announced an increase in Planning fees by 20%, this increased revenue has to be reinvested in planning services, WD fees have been increased, they now have a full capacity of planners and an enforcement team of 3.8 FTE and the enforcement backlog is reducing. There is a national shortage of planners but particularly in the south west, they are therefore looking at ways of working to encourage planners to come to the area and also to retain the existing.

General Data Protection Regulations – WD are looking to see how they can provide support and help to Parishes, more information to come.

Recent bad weather – a good test of their systems, the new way of working showed a lot of benefits with a normal service to customers being provided. They were the only local council able to do this.

Richard Easthope is the Localities Manager in charge of the Localities Team, contact him for any issues.

TAP Guidelines for the coming year – DCC have issued new guidelines on how they wish things to go forward, new name for the fund ‘Communities Together’, WD have not yet been able to finalise the process, more information to follow. The previous Fund worked well in some areas and not so well in other areas in Devon.

7. **DCC Update – Simon Kitchen**

Report distributed prior to meeting. Simon highlighted the information on Crowd Funding in the report – an initiative being investigated by the County as a way of using the internet to raise finance linking local ideas and innovation with individual investors.

8. **TAP Fund new applications**

a. **TAP Guidelines 2018/19** – not yet available see above.

b. **New applications**

Buckland Monachorum – Crapstone Weland Project, request for £2000, total project cost £6000. Cllr Royston advised she was prepared to reduce application to £1500 in order all applications could receive funding. £1500 agreed.

Milton Abbot Group Parish request for funds for 2 defibrillators, cabinets and training etc, original request for £3420 but now reduced to £1858 as Parish can now obtain equipment at reduced costs from Heartswell. £1858 agreed.

Gulworthy requested an application to be considered as received after the WDBC deadline, application for £1100 to provide hearing aid loop and amplifiers for Gullworthy Parish Hall. £1100 agreed.

9. DNP Update – Jo Rumble

DNP still funded by Defra, working on 40% reduced budget from original funding, no changes.

Enjoy Dartmoor magazine, new version circulated, Jo highlighted on Page 30 the Love More Life campaign and the Ranger Code for all visitors to the moor to follow. Cllr Sanders advised Chris Hart has now been appointed Head of Development Management with James Aven as his deputy. Dan Janota has been appointed Head of Forward Planning.

10. Parish Feedback and issues –

The Chair advised that the Link Meetings Terms of Reference could not be reviewed until new TAP or Communities Together procedures resolved, to be added to future agenda.

Southern Links Training Courses – several courses with spaces still available, have been organised – New Councillors/Refershers 22nd March at Tavistock and on a Finance Course and also Chairmanship course.

DATE & VENUE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 5th July 2018 - Rundle Room, Tavistock Town Hall - 7pm

Thursday 27th September 2018 – venue to be confirmed – 7 pm

Thursday 29th November 2018 - Rundle Room, Tavistock Town Hall – 7 pm

(The meeting closed at 8.55 pm)