

Southern Link

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 4th July 2019.

Rundle Room, Tavistock Town Hall, 7pm

Present:

Town and Parish Council

Bere Ferris – Cllr Brian Lamb & Cllr Peter Crozier

Brentor – not represented

Buckland Monachorum – Cllr Dave Butland & Cllr Susan Woolcott

Burrator Grouped – Cllr Tub Aves

Dartmoor Forest – Cllr Gregg Manning

Gulworthy – Cllr Kate Royston

Horrabridge - not represented

Kelly - not represented

Lamerton – Cllr John Edgar & Cllr David Green

Lewdown Grouped – Cllr Tom Andrews

Lifton – Cllr Chris Edmonds

Lydford – Cllr Steve Squires

Mary Tavy – Cllr George Hill & Cllr Tony Williams

Milton Abbot Grouped – Cllr Ray Brewer

Plasterdown Grouped – Cllr Neil Howes & Cllr Simon Hill

Peter Tavy – Cllr Jim Jeffery & Cllr Bill Lane

Stowford – Cllr Theresa Bowers

Sydenham Damerel - not represented

Tavistock – Cllr Anne Johnson

WDBC – Kate Hamp, Richard Easthope, Jane Savage

WDBC Members – Cllr Caroline Mott, Cllr Tim Bolton, Cllr Chris Edmonds

Chair – Tub Aves

Clerk – Bethany Aubertin

Other – Insp Mark Sloman (Devon and Cornwall Police), Simon Kitchen (DCC)

1. Appoint a Chair

The Chair opened the meeting by saying he was pleased to see Parish Councillors here representing Parishes that have not been represented at recent meetings. Only 3 Parish Councils were not represented at the meeting.

The Chair then passed the meeting over to Bethany to take nominations for chair. A nomination was received for Tub Aves, no other nominations were received. This was seconded and Tub was elected Chair.

The Chair took nominations for deputy chair, a nomination was received for David Butland. No other nominations were received. This was seconded and David was elected deputy chair.

It was proposed that the terms of reference state that Chair should change annually. This is not in the terms of reference (attached to this email) and was put to the meeting to discuss. The main consensus was that as there were no other nominations, and the role involves other meetings and a little more knowledge of Council services, that this was not necessary.

2. Apologies

Brentor Parish and Mary Tavy Ward - Cllr Terry Pearce

Dartmoor Forest – Cllr Nigel Tigwell

Tavistock Town – Cllr Ginnie Parker

Horrabridge Parish – Cllr Steve Roche

Bridestowe Ward – Cllr Terry Southcott

Leader of the Council and Milton Ford Ward – Cllr Neil Jory

3. Agreement of Notes of the Last meeting

A couple of minor amendments, please see amended meeting notes attached to the email – otherwise agreed.

4. Matter Arising

No matters arising from the notes

5. Policing Issues

Insp Mark Sloman introduced himself to the meeting as there were Councillors in attendance that he had not met. Insp Sloman then briefly discussed the make-up of the West Devon Police force. There are 24 hour police stations in Tavistock and Okehampton both of which have a Criminal Investigation Departments. There are currently 3 Neighbourhood Beat officers in Tavistock. Insp Sloman advised that West Devon is the third or fourth safest place in the country to live.

Insp Sloman went on to discuss the statistics (sent round with the agenda and attached to this email), he was pleased to see a lot of green on the page. However, this doesn't mean they can get complacent as they can and will always be looking at ways to reduce the numbers of victims of crimes. Insp Sloman pointed out that as they have such low numbers of crimes in West Devon, a small change to the numbers can make a big difference to the percentage.

Insp Sloman then went on to talk about County Lines. This is when drug dealers and suppliers from big cities target rural areas like Tavistock and their vulnerable people to deal their drugs. They pick on vulnerable people to manipulate them, they move in to their homes, take their phone, force them to sell drugs. They can be violent and bring associated crime with them. The increase of violence with injury and possession of weapons may be attributed to this. County lines began being a problem nationally about 3 years ago, it has not had much of an effect on West Devon until the last 3 months. Devon and Cornwall Police have been drawing on more warrants in the last few months and making more arrests, this has attributed to the number of

trafficking of drugs increase. In a bid to combat this, Police Officers in West Devon are visiting residents that they think may be targets of the drug dealers, ensuring they leave lots of leaflets with them and making it clear that Police are watching this resident and their home.

Insp Sloman advised that there is a map on the Devon and Cornwall website where you can look at a specific area and see the reported crimes.

<https://www.police.uk/devon-and-cornwall/DEV.4019/>

An enquiry was made about how the stats reflect reports of crime. An example was given of a dozen cars and anti-social behaviour in a village. If this is reported by a number of residents, would it show as one report? Insp Sloman advised that it would show as 1 report of anti-social behaviour by a dozen vehicles. There was concern about all the reports going on to one crime log.

There was concern that as the figures are looking good at the moment, we could potentially lose a neighbourhood beat officer. Insp Sloman advised that part of his job is ensuring a balance of low crime rates and enough work for his Police Officers to carry out.

Insp Sloman advised that all Officers in West Devon, including PCSO's, now have to wear body worn cameras when attending incidences. This has had a big impact on the number of offenders that have given a guilty plea very early on. It has also reduced the number of complaints as the camera footage can be shown as part of the investigation. Insp Sloman added to this that new legislation to protect emergency responded has been passed and this was used recently to charge a resident on Okehampton recently.

6. DCC Update

Simon Kitchen from Devon County Council came to discuss the Care Service in Devon and concerns over funding cuts. Simon's job role is Head of Communities so this is not an area that he is specialised in but he did pull some information together that was included in the brief sent out prior to the meeting.

Simon advised that all councils are facing cuts to their Care budget. However, it is particularly difficult in Devon due to the population being much older (10-15 years) on average than the majority of the UK. This on top of the rural area make it a costly service within Devon.

Simon advised that Government after Government have made many promises to look in to this issue and it still has not been done. There was a paper from the House of Lords suggesting we adopt a national social care service, similar to the NHS. Options to set a plan of action is delayed over and over by Central Government.

Councillors voiced concerns about Crowndale recycling centre and the on-going problem of cars queuing on the road outside. There was a major accident there last year and a minor one only a couple of weeks ago. Cllr John Hart promised a resolution to this at the last Superlink meeting last November but nothing has been done. Simon Kitchen advised that Cllr Hart had been to meetings about this but he will chase this up with him. Jane added that WDBC Waste get a lot of complaints about Crowndale and she recommended each sending an email/letter in voicing your concerns. Cllr Anne Johnson then expressed concerns that this may cause them to think about closing the recycling centre as this had been suggested by their Council Councillor. Cllr

Caroline Mott asked that if you do email in, to please copy her in to the email as she is not the Lead member for Waste in WDBC. Cllr.Mott@westdevon.gov.uk.

Representatives from Bere Ferres parish talked about Highways contractors and some work recently carried out in the village of Bere Alston. Highways contractors had some left over tar and re-surfaced 75yds of a private drive with it. It was suggested that the contractors should be contacting their local Parish Councillor to find out where it would be best to use this surplus material within the Parish.

7. Communities Together Fund

Simon Kitchen also attended to discuss the new funding options in Devon. Simon started off by discussing the challenges of the previous funding arrangements. The CTF was spent very differently in each Borough and Parish so it was hard to see where the money went and what the positive outcomes were from the spending.

Simon then went on to discuss the new funding arrangements.

An additional £100,000 has been put in to crowdfunding. Crowdfunding has grown nationally in recent years, but it is still fairly new to Devon. Many authorities including the Police have added to the pot and helped to create a larger Devon Fund. The idea is that you come up with an idea and post it publicly, inviting whomever to donate money to the proposal.

Making the connection – bids of up to £300 maximum, there have already been successful applications for this.

Doing What Matters – bids of £5,000 to £20,000, with an additional 25% match funding.

Both of the above are about building relationships within communities, getting more active, getting involved with the environment helping people to feel safe. They are about health and wellbeing in the communities, which is a priority in the Council.

The locality budget that is issued to Devon County Councillors remains and applications can be made online.

There was a lot of discussion about lengthsman funding. It was confirmed that there is a highway maintenance community enhancement fund that can be applied for and although it states that particular support will be given to Parishes on the Road Warden scheme, it is not conditional. However, this fund has become more known and it very quickly running out now. It also, cannot be used to fund work that is someone else's responsibility.

8. DNP

Jo Rumble was unable to attend this meeting and sent her apologies. Jo did not have any update for the meeting and advised that they are currently working on the amendments to the DNP Local Plan and she will update the Parishes once this has been completed.

9. WDBC

The Future of the Waste Service – Jane Savage, from WDBC attended the meeting to discuss future changes to the waste service in West Devon. Jane advised that the waste service is

changing as a result of feedback received from residents saying they would like to be able to recycle, from the kerbside, a wider variety of materials, especially more plastics. Therefore, in September/October, WDBC will be rolling out their new kerbside collection service which will now include the ability to recycle plastic pots, tubs and trays, foil and tetrapaks. Households will be provided with a reusable sack (similar to the garden bags). Having this additional receptacle, therefore the materials separated further, will allow the crews to continue to deliver a fast and efficient service. Information on the new service will be sent to households sometime in September with the sacks being delivered shortly after in September/October. Unfortunately, food pouches will not be one of the items included in the additional materials.

Jane made a particular point to highlight the issue of food waste in the refuse sacks, with around 25% of refuse currently collected, being food that could be recycled in the kerbside food caddy.

Jane offered the pull up poster that was in use at the meeting to any Parish Councils that would like to borrow it for their Parish meetings. A plea was also made for suggestions and invitations to attend local fetes, markets and events in rural areas, to get this information, including new recycling box stickers, out to as many residents as possible. So if you have any suggestions of events that WDBC Waste team could attend and discuss this change, or you would like to borrow the pull up poster, please email Natalie.Johnson@swdevon.gov.uk.

Another change due to take place this year is a trial of 3 weekly refuse collections. This trial will affect around 1000 households although the exact areas that will be affected is yet to be determined. Jane advised that this has been trialled and found to be successful across the country. Towards the end of this trial, a report will be taken to Councillors who will then make a decision on whether to extend and/or expand the trial.

WDBC will be having some Recycling Champions – residents that are not keen on the change, whom they will follow through the journey and see how they feel about it by the end of the 6 months. This was done in North Devon and the resident they followed ended up being a big supporter of the campaign.

A question was asked about the cost and savings from this, Jane advised that implementation is estimated to cost around £20,000 but that the savings could be as much as **£100,000 - £150,000** if/when the three weekly collections have been rolled across the Borough.

Concerns were raised over the time period that the trial will run (Nov-Apr) as it will not include the summer. Jane acknowledged this but advised that other Councils ran trials through the summer and have continued on the service through hot summers and not had an issue. If there is not food waste in the refuse then the heat shouldn't make much difference.

One of the main concerns of the three weekly collections is offensive waste such as dog mess and nappies. Jane said that the advice that will be given is to double bag but also to try to cut down on waste by using re-usable alternatives. The trial will be looking for comments from residents that encounter these issues and trying to find ways to overcome them. Jane asked that dog bins are not used as an alternative as this may cause them to fill up much quicker and end up overflowing.

It was pointed out that the new scheme asks residents to separate cardboard and paper and it was asked how residents could tell the difference. Jane advised that this will be included in the

information packs sent to households but that anything like cereal boxes or similar would be card. Magazines, newspapers, envelopes would be paper.

Another concern that was discussed is when residents go away on holiday etc and are away from the property for the collection day. Residents can take black sacks to Crowndale recycling centre, they just need to call ahead so that it is logged.

Political Landscape - Steve Mullineaux was unable to attend this meeting so Bethany gave an overview of what he had discussed at the Eastern meeting. Below are the notes from the Eastern meeting that go in to a bit more detail.

*Steve Mullineaux opened this update by announcing that WDBC have declared a climate emergency. WDBC have signed up to the Devon County Council Local Resilience Forum meaning they are working more closely with DCC to help combat this issue. One of the things that has been put in to place already is the increased Waste service as part of the Devon Aligned Service.

Steve then went on to say that WDBC are looking in to action they can take on things that are within their control such as the buildings and vehicle fleet, what they can do to influence changes amongst the residents and nationally. Officers of WDBC that have been tasked with this are looking to work with Exeter University and other Local Authorities to run a workshop on what measures can be taken by LA's. These officers will be producing an action plan to present to Councillors within the next 6 months with the aim to becoming zero carbon. WDBC have already made a big impact on the environment by having agile workers and they estimate that they have saved over 1 million miles being travelled by staff.

Steve then went on to talk about the political scene in WDBC following the local elections. There are 15 new Councillors meaning a lot of knowledge has left and new Councillors will require some time and additional support to get up to speed in their new role. There is a new leader in WDBC (Neil Jory) as is the case across almost all other LA's in Devon. The majority remains Conservative but by only one seat meaning decision making will require Councillors to work together more in order to get items through.

Budget – There is a budget gap of around £550,000 for 2020/21 and a lot of uncertainty around future funding due to only receiving a 1 year settlement (the money WDBC get to run services and amounts they can keep from NNDR) instead of a 4 year settlement. Steve advised that they have managed to save over £3 million so far. *

Fly Tipping -

Richard Easthope from WDBC attended the meeting to discuss fly tipping. Richard talked through the process of what happens when a fly tip is reported from end to end. Richard asked that if you do find and report a fly tip, that items are not removed. This can have an impact on being able to find evidence that can be used to prosecute if the offender is found. WDBC have a number of locality officers that carry out searches of the fly tips to find evidence and then hand over to FCC, the contractor, to collect the waste. If a fly tip contains hazardous waste such as asbestos, then another contractor, licensed to collect this material, will need to be contacted. This can be a lengthy process as WDBC often have to get quotes for the collection. Please see attached document for more information and figures from the last 3 years.

A lot of fly tips reported with the Southern Link area are on land that is now the responsibility of WDBC. When these are reported, WDBC pass them on to the relevant authority/land owner.

Fixed Penalty Charge Notices can be issued when sufficient evidence is supplied, these can be up to £400 but are usually around £100. They may vary depending on the severity of the fly tip but are not necessarily representative of the cost of removal.

Questions were raised about whether the number of fly tips increased when Crowndale Recycling centre started charging for certain materials and WDBC started the Garden Waste subscription period. Jane Savage advised that they kept a close eye on fly tipping in the following months after these changes and did not notice any significant change.

10. Parish Feedback and issues

Training – Cllr Brian Lamb – Cllr Lamb advised that some left over TAP funding for training had allowed him to arrange a training session on being a good councillor. Fifteen Councillors attended and it was very well received. Another training sessions is arranged for the 18th September, 10 people are booked in so far but if anyone else would like to attend, please let your Parish Clerk know to pass your details on to Brian.

11. AOB

Planning applications – Bere Ferres Parish Council have been struggling with the new arrangements from WDBC of not sending printed copies of planning applications to them to review before sending in their consultation response. Therefore, they asked for this item on the agenda in order to find out how other Parishes are getting on with this new policy.

Kate Hamp from WDBC attended the meeting to answer any questions and offer support.

Many Parishes appear to be having problems with this new policy, for a number of reasons. Some Parish Councillors do not have access to the internet and so cannot view the applications from home. Many venues for the Parish meetings don't have wifi or phone signal and so the applications are not available from the meeting. Parish clerks have been trying to download the documents prior to the meeting so that they can be viewed offline but this is taking a lot of time and the documents download with a random number rather than a title which makes it difficult to keep track of the documents that have been downloaded/viewed. It was also pointed out that Councillors should really be viewing the planning application prior to the meeting so that the meeting time can be used to discuss and put together a response.

There was a suggestion that projectors and screens may make this a little easier as the documents could be viewed on a larger scale. There is a fund called transparency funding available to Parish Councils from their Ward Member and that this need would meet the criteria for this funding. There is also a projector that is owned by the Southern Link and is available to be borrowed by any Parishes. This is in the care of Tavistock Town Council, please email the clerk to arrange this.

Kate did assure Councillors that for any development of 10 houses or more, they will received a paper application pack still. Kate also pointed out that it is not just the Parishes that are not getting these anymore, paper copies are no longer available to the public at WDBC customer services (applications can be viewed on public PCs) and planning officer's work solely from their laptops.

Another suggestion was made to have the documents available on a cloud or similar to save the time of downloading the documents one at a time.

It was pointed out that it is counterintuitive (especially considering the climate emergency) to have the paper copies and that the answer is not to go back to sending paper but to make it easier to view the digital versions.

Kate advised that she was pleased to have attended and heard their feedback, although they will not be rolling back the changes completely, she understands that more support is needed in some Parishes and she will look in to this.

The Chair wanted to take a moment to thank those that had supported the funding and installing of the defibrillators that have been installed within Burrator Parish and thanks will be given in a press release, hopefully in the Tavistock Times.

CLlr Kate Royston reminded the meeting that the warm home discount schemes applications opened from July. Please include this information in your Parish newsletters.

The meeting closed at 2105

Date and Venue for Future Meetings

Thursday 19th September 2019 7pm – (South requested to swap their meeting date so this has been swapped from the 26th to the 19th Sept)

Tavistock Town Hall, Rundle Room.

Superlink - Wednesday 27th November 7pm – Council Chamber, Kilworthy Park