

SOUTH MILTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29th APRIL 2019

1. Present/Apologies: Cllrs M. Brice, P. Davies, T. Lewis, R. Luscombe, G. Collyer and P. Booker (SMPC) present. Also present Cllr R. Gilbert (DCC). Apologies from Cllr E. Grant. Due to it being District Council election week, Cllrs S Wright and J Pearce did not attend but SW sent in his annual report after the meeting.

2. Minutes of last Annual Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2018 had previously been circulated and were taken as read. They were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising not raised in agenda items below – none

4. Reviews of the Year

County Councillor's Report – Cllr Rufus Gilbert

- It has been a tight year for the County, we have a balanced budget for 2019-20 but 2020-21 will be very tough unless Government provide more money. There is more money available for Highways. Devon is in a fairly good position having had a mild winter.
- The economy in Devon is in pretty good health with average earnings at £25,000 (nationally this figure is £28,000).
- House price ratio 9.36 times income (nationally 7.9).
- Unemployment level in Devon at 2%.
- Life expectancy is 79.5 years for men and 83 years for women.
- By 2030, population is expected to have increased by 13% with a high percentage of over 65.
- Roll out of superfast broadband has not had a smooth ride overall; however, it looks as though it is getting closer for us.

District Councillor's Report – Cllr Simon Wright

Much has been said about the Authority's transition programme reducing costs while maintaining front line services. Storm Emma provided the opportunity to test the programme and the result demonstrated the Authority's ability to run normally with officers all working from home. This included the call centre working from both SHDC and WDBC. National recognition came with a Bronze Award at the annual Iese Local Authority awards ceremony.

The new Corporate Strategy was confirmed with the following priorities:

- Our environment
- Council sustainable financial future
- Employment
- Homes
- Communities
- Wellbeing

Due credit must be given to the Joint Local Plan. An enormous amount of work resulted in its adoption: this was ground-breaking work to have an agreed plan for two district councils and a unitary authority.

With the successful roll out of T18, it was time to start challenging staff and residents with how they felt we were performing. We now see an improved level of staff satisfaction but some additional work is still to be done. The senior Leadership Team has been rolling out a number of initiatives to provide improvements. Residents were then requested to report their satisfaction. This produced surprisingly good results, although improvements were identified and these are now being addressed. We then invited the Local Government Association to conduct a Peer Review. Senior officers and members from other Authorities looked at the way we do business and the new Council

will grasp the resulting report and start implementing the highlighted areas which should be addressed.

The Government's policy for Business Rate Relief on the rental of second homes has been challenged and brought to the attention of our local MPs, the LGA and central Government ministers who have all been lobbied and will continue to be so.

Waste service underwent a two-year review which resulted in Members agreeing to partner with a third party. 1st April 2019 saw FCC take over the waste service and we will see a financial saving while delivering an enhanced service. Next year we will see roadside recycling being rolled out and our being part of the Devon aligned service.

Commercial investment has been seriously considered but, unlike many authorities, Members agreed not to invest outside the District but rather to invest within provided it also demonstrates a benefit to our communities such as the Dartmouth Health and Wellbeing Hub, additional parking in Salcombe and a hotel in Kingsbridge.

With the £1.8m given to us from the increase in stamp duty in recognition of our proportionally high second home numbers, we have started actively to support a number of Land Trusts. We have a target of 50 truly affordable homes being built next year. These homes will be based on build costs only and have some very strict local occupancy criteria. We have agreed to borrow up to £8.5m to cover Phase 1 and 2.

Finally, mention must be made of the Neighbourhood Plans. Judy and I are delighted our Ward now has two adopted Plans and a further four in various stages of development. These Plans provide ability to shape your own future.

Chairman's Report – Cllr Marion Brice

Once again, I must thank all those who have helped the Parish Council in so many different ways.

Firstly to the Parish Councillors who make my life so much easier by their hard work and commitment. They take on roles that ensure that South Milton is a good place to live.

The Neighbourhood Plan is now complete and has passed all levels of scrutinisation. We now wait for S.H.D.C to confirm a date to allow the parishioners to vote on the document. This has been an enormous task and I cannot thank enough all those involved, both Councillors and Parishioners who have worked tirelessly on this plan for so long.

We have had some generous donations through the year, firstly three granite troughs from the Smerdon family. These were originally from the old forge in Kerse Lane. They are now in Backshay Close and at the bottom of Hillingsdown. Both have been generously planted with flowers by volunteers. Secondly a flag pole and flags donated by the White family to commemorate the end of WW1 which has been erected by the War Memorial.

We continue to have a working party in conjunction with the National Trust to alleviate the problems at South Milton beach. It is slow progress as the higher management of the Trust do not appreciate our concerns regarding the traffic congestion at peak times and problems arising from the café e.g. rubbish, the need for proper toilet facilities and realistic pricing for local people.

Parish Councillors continue to monitor the footpaths and, with the help of Mr Nick Townsend, the drains, streams and water quality running through the bird reserve.

The Parish Council is very grateful for the help that the District Councillors and our County Councillor give the Council. We are even more grateful for the funds they have given us to buy a lap top computer and printer to enable us to show plans at our meetings.

Last but by no means least I must thank our Clerk who keeps us on the straight and narrow.

Police Report - none available unfortunately

MB took the opportunity to thank all three Councillors for their attendance at meetings throughout the year and for their support to the Parish Council.

5. 2018-19 Accounts – A copy of the financial statements had previously been circulated to Councillors who voted to agree the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet for the year 2018-19 at their meeting on 29th April 2019.

OPS

MB thanked Paul Davies for his contribution to the Parish Council over the past 12 years. He had been Chairman and Vice Chairman during that time. Letters of thanks will be sent to both him and also Evelyn Grant on their retirement from the Parish Council.

Approved..... Date.....
(Chairman)

