

# DEAN PRIOR PARISH

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th March 2024 at 7.00pm at Dean Prior Village Hall

Present ; Cllr Bailey , Chairman of Dean Prior Parish Council , chaired this meeting and Karen Gilbert acted as Clerk Cllrs Chew Rutley Smerdon ( DNPA ) & Thorn were in attendance Dist Cllr Guy Pannell and C Cllr Dan Thomas , and 3 members of the Public

Cllr Bailey welcomed everyone to the Meeting

### 1. Apologies for absence - None

### 2. To receive a report from the Chairman of Dean Prior Parish Council

It has been a fairly quiet year in the Parish with very little input from the residents and no great changes to the status quo.

A few minor planning applications have been reviewed and commented on, and also one major housing development plan which has been submitted for around 75 new homes together with ancillary road widening, in land adjacent to Timbers road.

Although this application is intended to serve the housing needs of Buckfastleigh (Teignbridge D C) on land recommended by DNP, it actually falls within Dean Prior boundaries in South Hams DC.

In principle the Parish Council is in support of the development and have collated and submitted some residents concerns, but are watching the planning process with close interest as it has passed from DNP to the Planning Inspectorate due to the Applicant's appeals against non-determination.

We are also applying for S106 monies for community improvements within our Parish.

The bus shelter has not yet been refurbished due mainly to the selected Contractor letting us down, so we are now seeking alternative quotations, and money has been set aside.

The defibrillator has been given a new lease of life with a new battery and electrode pads purchased and installed. When this battery end-date arrives in about 18 months, a complete new unit will be required.

We continue to monitor the unfortunately perpetual nuisances of fly-tipping, graffiti, and illegal camping.

Many thanks to our County Councillor Dan Thomas, our District Councillors David Hancock and Guy Pannell and to Peter Smerdon of DNP for their input and attendances at our meetings..

Thanks too to our Clerk Karen Gilbert for her robust efforts to ensure that the Council runs smoothly and correctly and finally to our Councillors Mike Chew, Neil Rutley Peter Thorn and Peter Smerdon for their regular attendance and conscientious engagement with the PC.

John Bailey , Chairman Dean Prior Parish Council

### 3. To receive a report from County Councillor Thomas

Another tricky year for DCC with Adult and Children's Services under tremendous pressure and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) section of the latter in special measures under OFSTED criteria.

The other core part of the Council's service – Highways – has not fared much better, with numerous issues with damaged roads and blocked gulleys. In the South Brent and Yealmpton Division, of which Dean Prior is one of 12 parishes, we have not done too badly, mainly thanks to Nick Colton, our local highways engineer. As long as potholes are reported, they are generally being mended reasonably quickly, and when that hasn't been the case, Nick and I have put pressure on Milestone, the external

contractor in question. Whether this crucial service should be privatised to a third party company is a matter of political debate.

The budget for 2024/25 has been agreed, with another 4.99% rise in council tax. Bands are below:

## Key Table 2 – Precept & Council Tax

### TOTAL SPENDING TO BE MET FROM COUNCIL TAX

	£
County Council Budget funded by District Councils' collection funds	529,198,103.08
Net Surplus on Council Tax collection in previous years	(5,223,838.10)
<b>Total to be met from Council Tax Precepts in 2024/25</b>	<b>523,974,264.98</b>

### COUNTY COUNCIL TAX DUE FOR EACH PROPERTY VALUATION BAND

Valuation Band	Government Multiplier		Adult Social Care Precept	General Expenditure	2024/25 Council Tax Devon CC
	Ratio	% of Band D	£	£	£
A	6/9	66.7	165.06	978.72	<b>1,143.78</b>
B	7/9	77.8	192.57	1,141.84	<b>1,334.41</b>
C	8/9	88.9	220.08	1,304.96	<b>1,525.04</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>247.59</b>	<b>1,468.08</b>	<b>1,715.67</b>
E	11/9	122.2	302.61	1,794.32	<b>2,096.93</b>
F	13/9	144.4	357.63	2,120.56	<b>2,478.19</b>
G	15/9	166.7	412.65	2,446.80	<b>2,859.45</b>
H	18/9	200.0	495.18	2,936.16	<b>3,431.34</b>

The County Council Tax for Band D represents an increase of 4.99% on the 2023/24 amount.

The headline spending figures, with this year's figures shown on the left, are below:

2023/24 Adjusted Budget £'000		Changes £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000
340,245	Integrated Adult Social Care	20,501	360,746
206,278	Children and Young People's Futures	21,507	227,785
21,678	Public Health, Communities & Prosperity	(755)	20,923
49,755	Corporate Services	(1,310)	48,445
81,619	Climate Change, Environment & Transport	3,863	85,482

As you can see, the vast majority of spending continues to be on adult and children's services. There is just under 5% more for the whole department that covers highways, suggesting another tough year ahead.

A fully costed opposition amendment for an extra £2million on roads, split into £1.5m for potholes and £0.5m for road lining, was defeated on party lines.

The small piece of good news is that Locality Funding seems to have gone back up to £8k per Cllr. Dean Prior hasn't asked for support this year, but I would certainly look kindly on match funding any projects in the Parish from May.

## 4. To receive a report from District Councillor Pannell SHDC

### Local Elections 2023

At the Local Elections in May 2023 control of South Hams District Council passed to the Liberal Democrats for the first time since the Council was formed in the 1970s. The only other period when the Conservatives were not in the majority was in the 1990s, when members of the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents formed a coalition ruling group for four years. There are now 19 Liberal Democrat Councillors, seven Conservatives, three Greens, one Labour and one Independent. One Conservative member and one Green accepted invitations to join the Council's Executive Committee. Guy Pannell and David Hancock are the two Members for South Brent Ward.



At their February meeting this South Hams District Council voted to accept the Council Plan setting out priorities for the next four years in response to the challenges and opportunities faced by communities across the District. Members also supported the Year 1 delivery plan, and the funding needed to deliver the plans. The Council Plan includes four key policy areas: to tackle the housing challenges, address climate change and biodiversity loss, support the economy and deliver good quality services to our communities. The plan is

funded by an investment of £4.59m. This is made up of £1m of money released from reserves and capital schemes that are no longer needed together with £3.59m from the realignment of core budgets and government grants such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. To complement the housing priorities in The Council Plan, the Executive also approved a specific action plan focused on Housing and Homelessness prevention. Another of the Council's key priorities is to do all it can to respond to Climate change and Biodiversity loss . It will do this with a budget of £500,000 to support a wide range of environmental initiatives, including supporting changes to agricultural practices and decarbonisation of the marine economy. The four priorities will be underpinned by providing good quality core council services. The Council will do this by working closer with our communities, improving customers access to services, making sure it is financially sustainable and putting good governance in place.

### Grants for climate and ecology projects

District Councillors have been given a budget of £2,000 each to enable them to support a wide range of projects to help us tackle our Climate and Ecological Emergency Declarations. The project should meet one of the objectives in the South Hams Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy. These are:

Each Councillor has a budget of £2,000 to help not for private profit groups or organisations to deliver community projects that benefit their Ward or the wider local area. This is in addition to each Councillor's yearly budget of £2,000 for their Locality Fund to support local groups and initiatives on other projects.

## **Devolution Deal for Devon**

Devolution for Devon and Torbay has taken a step nearer with the publication of Government proposals for a ground-breaking deal that could re-draw the future relationship between local government in Devon and Torbay, and Whitehall. The plans, announced by Levelling Up Minister Jacob Young at an event in Paignton in January, would enable more decisions to be taken locally on issues such as building more affordable homes, investing in new quality jobs and skills, and improving public transport. The proposed Deal sets out proposals that could see the transfer of a range of powers and funding to a Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA), subject to public consultation. This body includes representatives of the District Councils in Devon. Under the proposals the new body would have direct control of adult education to create up to 50,000 new training and retraining opportunities by 2030.

Through Local Skills Improvement Plans, the proposed CCA will work with business and education leaders to create a stronger relationship between employers and schools, colleges and universities.. The Government is proposing to transfer over £16 million of new funding to invest in new green jobs, homes, skills, and business growth and accelerate Devon and Torbay's transition to a net-zero economy.

The Government is offering a stronger partnership with Homes England, capitalising on the Affordable Housing Programme and Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund to create a joint action plan for affordable housing schemes for local people and reduce homelessness. The proposal includes additional land assembly and compulsory purchase powers and would facilitate greater Community Land Trust-led delivery.

On transport, the proposed Deal builds on Devon County Council and Torbay Councils' long history of working well together on local transport planning. The proposed Deal will strengthen this joined-up approach with Devon and Torbay working as equal partners on a CCA and improving the efficiency and co-ordination of public transport. There is an ambition to introduce a single ticketing system for travellers and investment in services to provide greater access to public transport.

The Government is also offering to transfer responsibility for developing, designing and delivering the next stages of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 2025.

The CCA would be responsible for working with Devon County Council, Torbay Council, District Councils and the business and education sectors to support high growth business sectors such as advanced marine engineering, defence, photonics and digital, and improve the look and feel of local communities with street and town centre enhancements.

## **Waste/recycling collection on track**

The final reorganisation of the waste and recycling rounds in areas not previously covered has gone much more smoothly than can have been hoped for. Managers have worked closely with the collection staff to ensure the rounds are planned as efficiently as possible, and the introduction of more smaller collection lorries has worked well. In January only 191 collections were missed out of 100,000 – a failure rate of less than 0.2 per cent. The recycling rate for all waste collected is currently 45% but this is steadily improving towards the excellent levels achieved before the service was privatised in 2019.

## **5 . To receive a report from Peter Smerdon ( DNPA )**

An eventful year for me as Dean Priors Dartmoor National Park representative. Following the election process in June I was fortunate to be elected as one of four Parish representatives on the Authority for a four year term.

The Authority continues to experience funding pressures. Our National Park Grant is expected to be £3.8million, the amount having stayed static for several years. If it had kept pace with the Consumer Price Index it would now be worth in excess of £6.8 million. We have managed to set a balanced budget for 24/25 but next year will be challenging.

The Authority has been involved in the ongoing legal dispute with Mr and Mrs Darwall of Blatchford Estate near Cornwood, who dispute the byelaw which gives people the right to backpack camp on certain parts of Dartmoor. Initially the High Court found in the Darwalls favour, however DNPA were succesful at the Court of Appeal where three judges reversed this decision. The Darwalls have since received leave to have the case heard in the Supreme Court and we expect this to take place in the autumn of 2024.

DNPA now has a new Head of Spatial Planning as Dean Kinsella joined us over the new year from Exmoor NPA. We have been able to fill some vacancies in the planning team and now have a full complement of planning officers.

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The two members of the Public commented on the lack of onsite parking arrangements at Dean Forge Cafe and how this was causing residents problems parking near their houses and around the Village . Mention was also made of overlooking issues - with seating on the Fire escape

The Chairman thanked the Parishioners and advised that the Council would make suitable enquiries

**The Chairman thanked everyone for attending .**

There being no questions or comments from the Public , The Meeting closed at 7.30pm

