

SOUTH PETHERWIN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (VIRTUAL)

Minutes of South Petherwin Annual Parish Meeting 21st April 2021 held, due to COVID-19 restrictions, via the video conferencing system Microsoft Teams.

Present: Cllr P Parsons, Cllr A Jasper (who took the minutes on behalf of the clerk), Cllr R Kneebone, Cllr D Rogers, Cllr M Screech, representatives from local clubs and organisations and 5 parishioners.

Apologies: Cllr A Finnimore and Cllr S Rogers.

Opening remarks: South Petherwin Parish Council Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The Chairman updated the meeting on Parish Council activity. The Parish Council have been operating online since the first COVID-19 lockdown and working with the village road safety group and Cornwall Council to promote safer roads and on-going areas of concern. Two Cllrs have stood down, the Parish Council are very grateful for their active roles.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting. It was proposed by Cllr D Rogers, seconded by Cllr M Screech, that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2019 be approved; all were in favour.

2. Parish Magazine & Parish Website (Editor)

What a year! Such a lot has happened since the 2019 Parish Meeting... At the start of the pandemic, the magazine and the parish council set up a helpline of volunteers. The magazine carried on being printed, despite the obvious lack of events, and there was plenty to talk about and share. We have had some difficulties with costs due to the pandemic – some advertisers have had to pull out or reduce their adverts, and the printing costs are rising. We were very grateful that in the summer the Parish Council stepped in and paid for the May issue – we were also able to give all of our advertisers a ‘free’ issue. November 2020 saw our 100th issue, which we celebrated with a parish calendar. We received some great photographs from parishioners, and sold all 200 of our copies, donating £325 of the profits to Cornwall Air Ambulance. We now have 36 to 40 pages per issue, depending on news, and we believe that we have achieved a good balance between advertisers (we have 36 over 14.25 pages). Currently we don’t have any advertisers on the waiting list and there is space for one or two more – so please let us know if you know of any potential advertisers. Without them the magazine couldn’t continue free of charge, which is something we fully intend to uphold (not all parish magazines are free). We currently have a committee of 7 and we would welcome new committee members – our advertising officer is still helping even though she moved out of the parish several months ago! All the distribution is also carried out by volunteers and I would personally like to thank everyone who is involved – their commitment is amazing. The magazine also depends on people in the parish sending in their ideas, photos and articles to ensure we have a magazine that reflects the issues that are relevant to everyone who lives here, so please contact me if you have an idea for an article – or even just a photo that you would like to share. Thanks to funding received from the Community Fund, the website had a complete revamp using MoorSites, with a ‘soft’ launch in May 2020. We wanted to make the site easier to access and update. It has all the expected pages – the Parish Council, the magazine, History etc. We also have an email distribution list which sends out any news and events (and I would encourage you to sign up if you haven’t done so already), a page for all the clubs and organisations (if you’re not on there, please let me know) and the Partners Page, where our magazine advertisers can advertise for a small annual fee. This all helps to pay for the website administrator. Since it launched we have had over 16,000 views and over 5,500 users, so we are really pleased, but always welcome news and ideas. We have recently just secured funding from the Papillon Fund for work on accessibility and data protection, plus some support due to COVID losses.

3. South Petherwin Community Benefit Fund (Treasurer)

The South Petherwin Community Benefit Trust is independent to South Petherwin Parish Council, although two Parish Councillors are represented on the Committee. The accounts have been professionally audited by Pydris Ltd in Liskeard and are open to scrutiny if required. Since the last Annual Meeting in May 2019 the following grants have been distributed within the community as follows:

1. 1st May 2019 – South Petherwin Cake and Rakers - £ 160.00
2. 1st May 2019 – South Petherwin Fun Day - £ 700.00
3. October 2019 – Launceston CCTV Partnership – Pennygillam - £1,000.00

Signed

4. October 2019 – South Petherwin Gaming Group - £ 300.00
5. December 2019 – OAP Christmas Meal - £ 500.00
6. May 2020 – South Petherwin Parish Magazine Website - £ 872.00
7. May 2020 – Friends of Launceston Medical Centre - £ 500.00
8. August 2020 – South Petherwin Cricket Club - £3,000.00

There is a balance remaining in the Bank account which is available to any future successful applicants. South Petherwin Community Benefit Trust is a separate entity to the Committee that distributes funds received from the Papillon turbine and income is currently generated from the Trevozah and Bottonnett turbines.

Question: How do parishioners go about joining the committee?

Answer: Anyone can join, please feel free to get in contact.

Question: Is the committee quorum with only 4/5 members and are members of the public welcome to your meetings?

Answer: Please put your questions in writing to the committee and the questions will be answered.

4. Tree Warden

You may have noticed the disappearance of trees in the area recently. While it's not something to be encouraged normally, disease sometimes necessitates drastic action. Cornwall has many ash trees; the third most common tree after oak and birch, Ash dieback is a devastating disease, and has now reached Cornwall. It is predicted to severely affect or kill over 90% of our ash trees, which will dramatically impact Cornwall's landscape. Also known as Chalara it's caused by a fungus which affects the vascular system of the tree inhibiting its ability to draw nutrients up into its upper branches. Young ash trees are killed very rapidly by the disease. Older trees often resist the disease for longer periods but succumb with prolonged exposure. You can spot it by;

- Wilting of leaves in summer
- Black/browning leaf, often spreading down the stem
- Black leaf may not drop as quickly as the usual autumn leaf drop
- Lesions, spots and cankers appear on the bark
- Shriveled, contorted leaf

Chalara spreads through woodlands via wind dispersal. Movement of diseased ash trees is likely to be the cause of spread over longer distances. Movement of infected logs, leaf litter and pieces of wood may also spread the disease. So infected trees should be left where possible. Each tree can then also continue to provide valuable habitats for over 1,000 wildlife species. However, where affected trees are close to footpaths and bridleways or near buildings, roads or power-lines they will have to be removed - minimising disruption to wildlife of course (for example, avoiding the bird nesting season). If you have to have a tree felled, is important to plant a new tree to replace it. Choose one grown in Britain by a reputable nursery preferably from seed sourced from South West England. This will reduce the risks of introducing new diseases. In the 60s Dutch Elm disease ravaged the country and millions of trees died. However, a few resistant trees remain and are being monitored. As far as I know, we have 3 elms in our parish. So all is not lost; we may be harbouring resistant ash trees in our parish, too. Let's notice, appreciate, and value our trees.

5. Dark Skies

During February thousands counted stars to measure light pollution, despite chilly nights and the coronavirus lockdown. The biggest ever Star Count, showed that 2021 saw much lower reports of bad light pollution across the UK than in 2020. Only 51% star-spotters said that they could see ten or fewer stars, meaning that they were experiencing severe light pollution. In 2020, 61% of people reported that amount, so there has been a dramatic drop in severe light pollution this year. This is probably down to the 'lockdown effect', as much of the country had strict coronavirus pandemic restrictions during Star Count week, and with quieter urban areas and fewer large buildings in operation, it's likely there was less glow or leakage into our night skies. This year many people could see an amazing 31 stars or more! This means they're enjoying truly dark skies. How many stars can you count in Orion?

If it's fewer than 10, look around to see how much light is spilling out into the heavens, and think what you could do to reduce it. Starry skies are one of the most magical sights the countryside can offer. Light pollution not only limits our views of these skies, but also disrupts wildlife's natural patterns.

6. South Petherwin Bells (Tower Captain)

It is with regret that there is so little to report for 2020 as we have been prohibited from ringing bells since 23rd March due to the Covid19 restrictions, relating particularly to social distancing. However the tenor bell was tolled to mark the Centenary of Armistice Day on November 11th. We have had a 'working party' clean-up within the belfry to ensure the bells remain in 'working order' and especially to prevent ingress by birds. It can be reported that both the bells and the ancillary works appear in good condition and a further maintenance party will be arranged as soon as practical to ensure that when able full ringing may resume. As things stand this could be on Monday 21st June. Be prepared for a cacophony!

7. Cornwall Councillor (Cllr Neil Burden)

For the 2019-2021 period. As you are all very aware Cornwall Council has not met in person in the council chamber or committee rooms for 14 months but some semblance of business continues with virtual meetings. This is in no way ideal as members miss the opportunity of networking with each other and officers. Communication only by email and phone calls with an officer are problematic as most work from home. There have been issues during the pandemic where planning and enforcement officers have not carried out site visits - that has improved of late, and several enforcement notices issued. As you are aware several policy changes are being implemented; a new waste contract where food waste will be collected weekly in our area possibly by the end of the year, recycling weekly and other household waste fortnightly, garden waste to be collected as before. The council also decided to get more involved in house building and set up an arms length company called Treveth. The first houses to be built in this area will be off the Launceston link road. They will be for all needs, social rents, commercial rents, shared ownership, open market. The concern I have; how long before this venture be viable or will it need propping up for many years. It also means the capital borrowing will increase to around a £1 billion. The council working budget is just over £1 billion but half of that goes directly from Government to schools. Some new investment in bus services have been introduced throughout Cornwall with many new bus shelters although not much change locally, however hopefully the new Launceston to Bodmin 4 hourly bus service will be both used and continue. The Social caring costs continue to rise steeply and even with extra Government help of £10m this year there is another £20m to find. So that is why our council tax has risen by the maximum of 4.99%. This rise makes it very hard for many on fixed incomes, there is an increased emergency fund to support those people who are in extreme difficulty. Universal credit does give families a basic income when needed. Homelessness does not go away and we still have many males who find adjusting to civil life difficult and during the peak of the pandemic large Government funds were expended to take these vulnerable people off the streets. Being placed in a hotel room with no cooking facilities, is yes warm and dry, but not ideal. Also wheeled out last year due to lockdown the business sector were supported where staff could be furloughed, also Government grants which the Cornwall council were the conduit for. About £230m was distributed using the data that the council holds on those paying business rates, this was distributed quickly as businesses did not have to apply. Only those paying very high business rates or some services were excluded and have now been able to apply for a much smaller grant. Oddly around £30m is still waiting to be allocated and many representations have been made to use this initial Government allocation elsewhere. Recently charities and volunteer community groups and the like have been given an opportunity to apply. In this period of the council I have played several roles; serving on 2 of the 5 scrutiny committees, customer service, and children and young people scrutiny committees. Named member to visit special supported children's homes for very disabled children. After much debate the children and young people committee rejected the officers recommendation to go out to a outside provider, so the service remains in house. Since then we also had an outstanding verdict from Ofsted. We had an in-depth review of Customers access to council services, this I was asked to chair. Our most senior officers were very keen that all communications with the council should be digital but we also know that few people have a printer or scanner. We held virtual meetings with Durham, Wiltshire and Plymouth council officers and members, the results from 3 of us were identical about 20% of the adult population are outside the digital culture, Plymouth said 40% (that is due to Plymouth turning their libraries into easy access community service centres). The reason that people are outside the digital world is due to 4 main things; cost, equipment, choice or disability. The council do run classes for those needing digital support but it is limited. There are 14 recommendations that were approved by the cabinet as policy and that is the means of contacting council services can still be by phone, letter, face to face with an officer, and all forms of payment cash, cheque, card, at the post office or PayPal shop is accepted currency. This whole thinking was to be inclusive and not create a society of digital outcasts. Yes many people use digital daily but many of us at some stage in life will not have the means due to physical disabilities like sight loss or arthritis where using gadgetry is problematic, or have been badly damaged by scams.

The other personal campaign that took 8 years to achieve was that any dwelling the council builds or commissions to be fitted with sprinklers (mandatory for all new dwellings in Wales). This policy aim had the full support of the Chief Fire Officer who did impressive demonstrations for members in the CH car park of a settee and soft furnishings ablaze, as soon as a sprinklers engaged the fire was out in seconds. There has been no fatality in a house fitted with sprinklers in this country—yet even the last month a family of 4 and other individuals died in March, one in Redruth and 5 in Exeter. The cost to the country of such tragedy is enormous. So in 2019 the council voted to support but it was a long struggle. I have also been the chair over the last 4 years of the Launceston area Community Network where we meet the 14 local parish council representatives and members of the public are encouraged to attend. We have had presentations on topical subjects and 2 successes; first a speed watch group that go out when they can for a couple hours and check speeds with hand held speed cameras, this is effective and supported by the police, and second the council allocated £200K to each network, a fund to be used for smaller highway improvements, each Parish had a list of priorities, some small or bigger schemes, we looked at the list and supported each parish with the main item and so on or 3 or 4 smaller schemes. It was all done in one meeting and now most are completed or close to delivery. It is successful and Oliver Jones of Cormac has been very supportive, some schemes even came in under estimate and now we have purchased 2 sets of interactive mobile speed cameras for the sole use of our network. The scheme will be repeated in the new council. Credit must go to the cooperation of the parishes as we were one of the first to get everything done and dusted where even now some networks are still struggling to agree. Also I am a member of East planning Committee and appointed to the Tamar AONB where I remain the chairman. As Chair of the Tamar valley AONB, even though 2 excellent managers have left us in recent times, we achieved a huge £3.2 M HLF landscape grant called the TAMARA project formal announced earlier this year, which we started working on 4 years ago. It has turned out to be visionary and the 10 elements ticked all the present age concerns. Farming changes, apprenticeships, community well being, volunteering, endangered species, soil management, climate change, woodland and trees. This was no mean feat and credit to our AONB team of officers working through COVID-19 to deliver the final documents on time. I was honoured to have been appointed to the national LGA Community Wellbeing board of 18 members. We meet in London and have presentations by the Secretary of State, Public Health CEO or senior policy makers. This Board is not political and of course recently been virtual board meetings and briefings. The merger of the NHS and social care is always been discussed, named the Integrated Care Service, ideal but barriers to overcome. Also finding some acceptable way for everyone getting free social care without a means test, some sort of half way ideas seem to have some support. There are many other areas that we are dealing with like the needs of the autistic spectrum, obesity and diabetes, suicide rate steadily rising over the last 10 years and possibly faster in the last 12 months –figures are not out yet, COVID19 and mental health provision. The rising mental health in younger people and even primary school children is becoming a deep concern. I thank the Parish Council Chairs and Clerks for their help, also the input of Parish Council Members –the ears and eyes of their communities keeping me informed. Even with the gradual erosion of Cornwall council member influence trying to work within the strong leadership cabinet model, I still feel I can still make a positive input for our local people and the wider populace.

8. South Petherwin Methodist Church (Revd)

Like many organisations we have had to adapt quickly, embracing new technology and ideas. It has been a steep learning curve but we have provided written service sheets and resources as well as taking all our Sunday Services, Bible study, Coffee mornings and other events online using Zoom. We have tried to keep the members of the chapel connected but also to provide a Christian presence within these challenging times. As the vast majority of our members are vulnerable and needed to shield, we felt it was only right, and for the common good of all, to shut the chapel. We are constantly reviewing this situation as to when it will be safe for us to open again and have a meeting at the end of this month with the trustees of the chapel to consider when this might be. We have had to mark key moments in the Church's year, such as Lent, Mothering Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, Harvest, Remembrance, and Christmas in other ways. Being part of the Methodist Circuit has meant that a lot of these things have been circuit led so various members from different chapels have been involved in "Love Your Neighbour" and "Try Praying" initiatives as well as starting a virtual choir. The emotional and spiritual impact has deeply affected the wellbeing of many of us particularly when dealing with the death of a loved one. We have endeavoured to provide pastoral support where needed and in line with the government guidelines, but we recognise that for many this is a traumatic time which does not feel marked in the way we would have wished. With that in mind we would like to consider providing a service of remembrance and thanksgiving for the community at a time when we are able to come together without restrictions.

The lockdown has encouraged us to look forward and consider new ways of being Church within our community and therefore we are reviewing what we did in the past, what we have learnt throughout this pandemic and what we believe God is calling us to be and do as we move forward. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to contribute to these discussions. God bless.

9. South Petherwin Mobile Post Office

The Outreach mobile post office is run by Charles Mitchell on a weekly basis from the South Petherwin Methodist Chapel Sunday school room on Thursday afternoons from 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm. Its operation was established in October 2019 and has been running successfully ever since. The level of support has been really encouraging. The success has been especially evident throughout the series of lockdowns and continues to provide an invaluable service to the community.

10. Elections

You may like to note that as the Polling Station will be operating from the Sunday school room on Thursday May 6th from 7.00am to 10.00pm, the Post office services will be relocated to the chapel vestry at the front of the chapel. The entrance will be through the main chapel door and exit through the transept door at the side. There will be no access permitted through from the Sunday school room to the chapel or visa versus due to Covid-19 restrictions and the normal risk factors will apply.

11. South Petherwin Pre School (Manager)

The past 12 months have certainly been different for the preschool. We continued to remain open for families during the Covid Lockdowns and had to put new robust systems in place to provide the best care and safety for all. We were pleased to welcome back all of our families in March and have been so lucky that all the children have settled back into preschool like they have never been away. They certainly missed each other and it was so nice to see them all reunited. We have now had some new families join us and more waiting to start in September. There will be 9 children leaving to all go up to South Petherwin primary school in September, it will be nice for them all to move up together. We still have limited spaces available in September and are looking forward to meeting our new families.

12. South Petherwin CP School – Headteacher

We remained open every day during the lockdown to children of critical workers and to our vulnerable children. However, nothing beats being fully open and was great to welcome everyone back to school last month. We have a variety of measures in place to keep the school community safe and are pleased that every member of staff has now had their first Covid-19 vaccination. Our numbers remain very buoyant and we currently have 113 on roll. We continue to be popular and over-subscribed (42 parents put South Petherwin School as either their first or second choice for our new reception intake, September 2021). As we have a limit of 15 per year group we prioritise children who live in the parish or who already have siblings in the school. Over the Summer Holidays, we are having the whole of the school roof replaced which will be such a relief. We have spent the last couple of years running around with buckets to catch the ever increasing leaks. The damage has been extensive causing some rooms to be out of use. We are very grateful to the County Council for making these repairs a priority. Buddy (our school dog) and I have enjoyed walking around the village and in doing so have met more parishioners and their dogs. South Petherwin really is such a lovely, friendly village and it is a privilege to be the headteacher of your primary school. Thank you to everyone for your support and I look forward to seeing you, hopefully in person, next year.

13. Neighbourhood Watch

As a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, all Devon and Cornwall Alert messages are sent to me within the secure Neighbourhood Alert system and are clearly branded as being from Devon and Cornwall Police. I then forward these onto my members via email but they can also be shared via other forms of social media. The system is continuing to work well and national and local alerts are being sent out on a regular basis, especially the latest scam information together with any rural crime updates. To sign up to this system you are required to complete an online registration form and have the opportunity to select the settings that interest you. We are encouraged to pass on any relevant information to those who would not otherwise be able to access this information. I also use the Parish Magazine as a way of communicating important issues.

14. St Paternus Church (Church Warden)

The last year has been very challenging for the church as it has for all other churches and chapels. Due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, we went from a service every Sunday, monthly coffee mornings and quizzes in the village hall to no services in the church at all or indeed any fund raising events. Our last service in the church was with Reverend Heather West on Sunday 22nd March 2020. Reverend Heather did start zoom services which continued until her retirement from South Petherwin at the end of May 2020. These continued with other priests and worship leaders taking a variety of different services by zoom. We then started holding twice monthly services again in the church from Sunday 9th August 2020 through the rest of the year. Our last service before the next lockdown was on Christmas Eve when a Eucharist service was held which was well attended. The Parochial Church Council felt they were unable to open the church safely for the first part of the year, but with coronavirus cases dropping significantly and the huge vaccine rollout I am pleased to confirm that the church will be re-opening on Pentecost Sunday 23^d May 2021 for Morning Prayer with Dr. Brian Davies at 11.15am. We will then have a Eucharist Service on Sunday 13th June and Morning Prayer on 27th June 2020 both at 11am. The church is struggling, and I am sure this is no secret to anyone both financially and also with falling members. If South Petherwin wishes the church to survive then come and support us. Join us for a service, you will be very welcome. If not, would you prefer to help the church in another way such as standing as secretary or treasurer at the APCM on Tuesday 4th May. It is not however all doom and gloom as I am delighted to announce that the Reverend Sean Clancy is to be priest in charge of the parishes of South Petherwin, Lezant, Lewannick and North Hill, Lawhitton and Altarnun with Bolventor and team vicar of Launceston. Reverend Sean will be licensed by the Bishop of Truro on 15th June 2021 with the venue still to be decided upon. Reverend Sean will be living with this wife and young family in The Rectory in South Petherwin and I am sure we all wish him a very warm welcome. We also have three weddings in the church this year so let us pray that this is an exciting new era for our church life in South Petherwin. For any future services and events please check the church notice boards and also the parish magazines.

15. Village Road Safety Group

Apart from some signs kindly arranged by the Parish Council, we remain disappointed by the seemingly apathetic attitude of the council. Nothing has really changed to date. It is a sad country we live in where police and council stand by guidance rather than stop people breaking the laws.

16. South Petherwin Gamers

Stocking up on games, lot and lots of games, both individually and from club funds. The members have all been keeping me updated with their at home hobbies, including lots of miniature painting and all their new purchases; they are desperate to play. We are looking forward to reopening and being able to run a huge variety of table top games. Although the last year has been a bit dull for us the year ahead is looking very exciting.

17. South Petherwin Village Hall

The village hall committee were pleased to say that they were given a grant from Cornwall Council to help with the loss of revenue during the lockdowns. They are reopening from May 17th for small groups at first and following government guidelines.

Question: Is there any funding/help available with getting broadband into community buildings?

Answer: It will be looked into.

18. South Petherwin Allotment Gardeners

2020 saw SPAG benefit enormously from a growing interest in allotments generally, combined with the furlough scheme. In August 2019, the then committee resigned not only their committee positions but also their plots, adding to a growing number of already vacant plots. We took on the responsibility, publicising widely and we are now full, that is with 17 separate tenancies made up of half and full plots and with a waiting list. The furlough scheme allowed people to invest a good amount of time setting up their new plots really well, and we are also lucky to have several new plot holders who are proficient, and happy to lend their skills to community projects; this year we have re-built the water harvester, re-felted and painted the community shed and finally demolished the long serving, but now dilapidated compost toilet, replacing with an adapted second hand portaloo – still composting but with its own soak away. Being full also means that there are a good number of members to complete the other community tasks such as mowing the common areas, and so SPAG feels very positive and tip top in 2021.

19. Cakers and Rakers (Abi Caine)

A quiet year for SPCR given that our volunteer events could not go ahead, however, we managed to complete all the necessary raking through people going individually to complete the work, and none of the important progress made in the preceding year was wasted. This year has seen the addition of a handsome owl box, made by Peter Bailey. We have found someone locally, who can make some simple wooden benches, and have asked the permission of the PCC, to install them. We are very much looking forward to the reduction of restrictions and involving people once again, in what is a surprisingly enjoyable and social activity, and we are planning on contacting the health centre about being part of social prescribing in the coming year.

20. Any other Business

Jonathan Blake – Statement

I am the parishioner who has, over the last 6 months, been asking questions of the Parish Council that have not been satisfactorily answered. In this respect, I wish to place on record my disappointment as to how some of our public money is being spent by the Parish Council. Furthermore, I do not believe that the Chair or Clerk, on behalf of the Council can sign off the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/2021. I think it is important to bring this matter to all parishioners' attention in the interests of transparency and to ensure funds are spent correctly. I have sought advice from the Information Commissioner and submitted a request under the Freedom of Information Act and expect to receive answers to all of the questions raised.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 19:56

DRAFT