

SOUTH BRENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7pm South Brent Village Hall, South Brent, TQ10 9JL

Present:

Cllrs Richards (Chairman), Childs, Fone, Johnston, Butcher, Armstrong, Hanney, Hancock, C. Pannell, G. Pannell, S. Astal-Stain, P. Astal-Stain, 29 members of the public and Sophie Jones, the Clerk to the Council.

Chairman asked members for consent to move items 5 and 6 to follow item 1. Carried unanimously.

1. Welcome, and apologies for absence.

The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received.

Items 5 and 6 were moved to this point.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meetings 2023 to be agreed and signed.

Taken as read and signed by Cllr. Richards. Proposed that they are accurate by Cllr. Hanney, seconded by Cllr. Childs.

3. Presentation of the Community Champion Award 2023-2024.

Nominees for the Community Champion 2024 are:

Mike Roberts

I would like to nominate Mr Mike Roberts. Mike has been the Royal British Legion Standard Bearer at both the Act of Remembrance and Remembrance Service for many years, which has been very much appreciated by the Council, and now due to ill health is no longer able to perform this function.

I therefore Nominate Mike for his service and contribution to the community of South Brent.

Gary Tidball

I nominate Gary Tidball for his passion and commitment to the young footballers in South Brent. I think he started with an under 9 team for his son and his friends. The team won the league and cup a couple of times over the following years and most of them still play now as a second men's team as they are now mostly 18.

Jude Bishop

One person who stands out is Jude Bishop, whose efforts cross over several organisations - SSB, SBADC, local Refugee charity and is leading the development of a repair café.

Commemorative certificates were presented to all nominees, and the Community Champion shield was awarded to Jude Bishop.

Nominees for Junior Community Champion 2024 are:

Kieran Grills

The Dartside Explorer Unit Leaders would like to propose Kieran Grills as the South Brent Junior Community Champion. He assists with the younger members of the Scout Troop. His gentle and caring help is unfailingly thoughtful and appropriate. Kieran has an uncanny knack of knowing what needs doing, when and how. His contribution to the Explorer Unit is always a joy and is very effective. No matter what the task. Tidying up, cleaning - all tasks are completed with a big smile. In short Kieran is just great.

Alice Hawkins

A second proposal would be for Alice Hawkins. Her help with the younger children is effective and enthusiastic. She is also a highly motivational young woman always willing to encourage and assist.

Commemorative Certificates were presented to both nominees, and the Junior Community Champion shield was awarded to Kieran Grills.

The Community Champion and a guest will be invited to the Chairman's dinner, and the Junior Champion will be invited to turn on the 2024 Christmas lights.

4. Chairman's Annual Report

Following the election in May 2023, Councillors Alastair Childs, Rich Fone, David Hancock, Stephen Hanney, Katharine Johnston, Cathie Pannell, Guy Pannell and me were all re-elected. We were very pleased to welcome four new members, Councillors Katy Armstrong, Paul Astal-Stain, Sue Astal-Stain and David Butcher. This brought the Council up to its full strength of 12 members.

On Sunday 16th July 2023, a reception and presentation was held for former Councillor Peter Kelly to be enrolled as an Honorary Freeman of South Brent. This is a very rare honour as only three others have been awarded in the past 25 years.

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In the Autumn, the Council made the decision to move Full Council and Committee meeting back to the Village Hall, Station Approach and initially were held upstairs in the Stansbury Room. This has now changed to the Side Hall, which is more accessible.

Over the winter the Parish Council carried out a Staff review. The result of this review, was to change the hours of our Clerk, Jane Sullivan, from 23.5 to 18.5 per week and employ an Assistant Clerk for 9.25 hours per week. In March 2024, we were very pleased to welcome Sophie Jones as South Brent's Assistant Clerk. This move will give improved support for the Clerk, Committees and Working Groups, as well as providing cover for any absences.

The Parish Council has started a review of Council assets and amenity land inside the 30mph zone. The Council has an extensive list of Parish Assets, this is being updated by adding locations to every item to allow the Council to improve the inspection and maintenance of these assets.

Amenity land are small parcels of land, usually grassed and unfenced, that are near or adjacent to residential properties. These areas of land may be owned by the County, District or Parish Council or the responsibility of local residents. It is anticipated this review will identify unmanaged areas of amenity land. Our various committees and working groups have met as and when it was necessary, and the Parish Council has met many times to conduct Parish Business.

These are the reports covering this past year from our Chairs of Committees and working groups:

Planning Committee, Cllr. Richard Fone

This is my third year in post as Chairman of this committee. As was the case last year, these figures refer to the 2023 calendar year.

Applications details

- 33 Planning applications were received, exactly the same as 2022
- 24 Planning Applications were in Dartmoor National Park Authority area: 14 were granted, 3 were refused, 4 were withdrawn and 3 still pending a decision
- 9 Planning Applications were in South Hams District Council Area: 3 were granted, 5 were refused and 1 was withdrawn

Only 4 of the planning authority decisions differed from the view of the Parish Council Planning Committee.

Application by type

5 (4 in 2022) Commercial Applications

3 (4 in 2022) Agricultural Applications

23 (25 in 2022) Householder Applications

2 Other

Changes

This year there has been exactly the same number of applications as in 2022. In 2021 there were 36 applications, so numbers of applications seem to be stabilising in the low to mid 30s. As in previous years, householder applications form the majority of the applications (23). Commercial applications (5) have increased by 1 compared to 2022 and there has been a drop of 1 in Agricultural applications (3). It is really encouraging to see that the recommendations of the Parish Council Planning Committee largely agree with all the decisions of the two planning authorities. Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Planning Committee for their service to the community and the rigour with which they approach the planning process.

Finance and Human Resources Committee, Cllr. Alastair Childs

The precept request for 2024-2025 is £94,000, increased from £88,700 last year. This is an increase of just under 6%. It was deemed, by the committee, appropriate to increase the precept by this amount due to inflation and increasing costs being incurred in management of the parish. The parish does have reserves which could be utilised if necessary, however it was felt prudent in the current financial situation not to rely too heavily on these.

During the year a new assistant clerk was employed on a part time basis, due to the increasing size of the parish and commensurate increase in workload for the existing clerk.

Parishioners are always welcome to attend finance and human resources committee meetings with any queries and can view our meetings agendas on the village noticeboard and online accompanied by minutes of the meetings.

Land and Estates Committee, Cllr. Stephen Hanney

Taking over the Chair 9 months ago, I resolved that because the last time the village won the Best Village Plaque was in 1993 and since then, this scenic and beautiful area has gone downwards, this Committees' ambition would be to get back to high standards for the benefit of the parishioners. A start was the Council employing a Roadside De-Weeder, (for want of a better title), Mark Bancroft, who has already made tremendous improvements to the roads within the 30 MPH zone.

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The Stockbridge Lane Toilets have been under attack from vandalism these last 12 months, costing the villagers over £11,000, which cannot carry on and therefore there will be a consultation with the people and traders of South Brent as to the future of the Toilets, in the following months.

Railway Wood has already received this Councils' approval for remedial work on a lot of decaying and dangerous trees, which is scheduled for this summer. On the Plymouth bound side of the Exeter Road, a new bus shelter will be constructed opposite the shelter outside Pool Park to enable waiting passenger a dry and safe refuge during inclement weather, after going through Dartmoor National Park Planning.

Negotiations are underway with Stagecoach to move the Falcon coach stop from Marley Head to bus stops on Exeter Road, mainly for the principle reason of safety of passengers, from traffic and night-time worries. Wellington Square, an eyesore at the moment, will be attended to at the beginning of autumn, we are currently obtaining expert advice as to the best course of action, as to weed control and preserving any fauna of natural interest, and quotes for works.

The future of Station Yard has already had a public opinion poll undertaken in the village and the Working Group are working with South Hams District Council to put forward ideas for discussion by this Committee in the near future.

These, coupled with the everyday running of the grass cutting, Playpark, Toll House, Allotments, and others falling under the remit of this Committee, will improve the ambiance of the village for the benefit of its inhabitants.

Media Working Group, Cllr. Stephen Hanney

This small working group has met when necessary, throughout the year and continued to produce the Parish Newsletter four times a year. The newsletter is available online and emailed to subscribers (via the sign-up on the website). There are also 200 copies printed and distributed at prominent sites in the village, such as the Toll House

Christmas Lights Working Group, Cllr. Cathie Pannell.

The Christmas Lights Working Group has met during the year, in the run up to Christmas 2023 to discuss and decide on the displays in the Village Centre. It was decided to do a similar format to the previous year with some additions and changes of colours of the display. More lights were added to Station Road.

Unfortunately scaffolding in Church Street prevented some lights being put up.

The switch on was very well attended by the community. The fact that it was a fine and dry night undoubtedly encouraged this. The lights were, as is traditional, switched on by Molly Yates our Junior Community Champion. After some initial problems the displays were completed and very well received by the community.

Our thanks go to the businesses and individuals who have supported the Parish Council in helping to provide financial backing and especially to Freeman Peter Kelly who continues to help with the practicalities. We also appreciate the work of our suppliers, Torbay Display, in providing and fitting the displays. We hope to continue with the Christmas Lights in the Village and would welcome input from the Parishioners.

Station Yard Working Group, Cllr David Butcher.

The Station Yard working group was established to make a recommendation to the full council for action, when the present lease expires in October 2026.

A meeting with representatives of South Hams District Council (SHDC) clarified their views of the options available to the council, which basically left the decisions with the Parish Council.

The options available are basically:-

1. Purchase the site from SHDC
2. Renew the lease
3. Surrender the lease

The Working Group are engaged in a consultation exercise and have received a number of responses reflecting the varying opinions of parishioners.

The Working Group will work towards making a recommendation to the Parish Council by October 2024

Beating the Bounds Working Group, Cllr. Katharine Johnston.

South Brent Parish Council once more organised and re-enacted the ancient ceremony of Beating the Bounds which had to be stopped due to Covid in 2020. The first bound chosen to be beaten again was the northern moorland part. September 2023 saw 113 walkers, aged between two and the upper seventies,

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meet in the Station car park and be transported up to Heathstone Head using Bob the Bus and Kingsbridge Community College mini busses.

After registration and the traditional Loyal Address from Cllr. Glyn Richards our Parish Council Chairman and an explanation from Tim Harvey of the Explorers Scout Unit they all set off. The walkers were led by the Explorer Scouts who escorted everyone safely on their way for the nearly eleven miles with no lost people or mishaps. At an elevenes' stop at the Avon Dam, South West Water arranged to open up the tunnel underneath so walkers could walk under the dam. We saw the boundary line between South Brent and Dean. Parishioners went through from South Brent side to the parish of Dean and popped up again. Traditionally they should have been beaten back with sticks as the people of Dean defended their territory but we fortunately went unnoticed.

The walkers continued for the longer section, via Buckland Ford, Petre's Cross and back to the road at Aish. Then downhill all the way to finish at a South Brent pub for a pasty and a drink. A round trip of nearly eleven miles completed by ninety-two people. This memorable event was provided by our Parish Council with invaluable help from many people, most especially the Explorer Scout Unit led by Tim Harvey. South Brent managed with no clashes with neighbouring parishes to Beat the Moorland Bound. The Southern Bounds we will hopefully aim to beat again in 2027. There have been no further meetings of the Beating of the Bounds Working Group but look forward to regrouping for the next walk.

Finally,

Among many items that have come to the Parish Council during this past year, as there was an underspend in the Local Projects budget, we agreed to provide funding towards three Bell Tents for South Brent Scout Group following their unsuccessful application to the National Lottery.

The Community Benefit Fund has provided small grants of up to £250 to several local organisations. As this fund has now come to an end, with the exception of specific funding for projects at the Recreation ground, additional funding has been added to the Local Projects budget line to continue to provide this extremely valuable financial support to local community groups.

I thank all Councillors and our Clerk Jane Sullivan and new Assistant Clerk Sophie Jones for their hard work. I also wish to thank John Shepherd for his work on the South Brent Community website for many years of valued service. We are also very grateful to our County Councillor Dan Thomas and our two District Councillors, David Hancock and Guy Pannell for their very regular attendance at Parish Council meetings and for their assistance on so many matters.

Thank You,

Cllr. Glyn Richards.

Chairman, South Brent Parish Council.

5. Police report

Report from Neighbourhood police officer for South Brent, PC James Bolton. Crime figures for South Brent, 1st Jan to today; 48 crimes recorded in South Brent. Most of those domestics within 1 dwelling. There has been a trend of damage to public spaces, parks, etc. Higher patrols have been tasked. Aware of damage to toilets, allotments, lawn mower theft (which has since been found). PC Bolton then invited any questions from the public.

Cllr. Johnston informed PC Bolton that the toilets have now been closed to save money on repairs and break the cycle of damage. PC Bolton suggested a multiuse toilet. The police will also increase patrols to provide reassurance.

6. Report from Ella Briens DNPA ranger

Ella Briens presented a report from Dartmoor National Park.

There is a team of 8 at the moment, but we are down a couple of Rangers. Massive thank you to the volunteer wardens. There are currently 40 regular volunteers who last year contributed over 5000 hours of help.

Rights of Way are an ongoing issue with the Ranger team. There are currently 500 standard issues a month on rights of way – they get through about 100 a month.

The key messages at the moment are regarding bird nesting season, lambing, open fires (camping). We are working in partnership with the police regarding signage.

There are many massive projects happening on Dartmoor; farming, protected landscapes, full scale damming projects, tree planting, the Pine Martin project. I encourage you to look at web page for more information and can provide contacts should anyone want further information on projects.

7. Primrose Trail Update

John Rawlinson updated the council on the Primrose Trail. He showed the 'Cycling in South Hams' leaflet, which he noted came out in 1999 from South Hams District Council. Some of the plans described in the leaflet have changed but there are aspirations to use original track bed route. There was never any intention

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to use the track bed route without the owner's permission. He noted that some routes may have to be split due to the cobbles, or may have to have a dismount. Alternatively, traffic calming measures could be used. Part of the vision was for South Brent to be at beginning of the route and become a cyclist hub.

John noted that they have investigated funding for the Primrose Trail within Section 106. He is hoping signage can be installed fairly soon, with help from the Scouts. There will also be a digital map that can be downloaded onto phone.

8. Presentations from organisations which have received a grant of £500 or more from the parish council or the Community Benefit Fund during the financial year 2023-2024:

a. The Recreation Association

No representative

b. Ivybridge Youth for Christ bus

Report emailed from Elis Norton, Director of Ivybridge Youth for Christ

REPORT FOR SOUTH BRENT PARISH COUNCIL APRIL 2024

Youth Outreach (The Bridge Project) by Ivybridge Youth for Christ. Thank you so much for the £1000 received on the 29th of May 2023. This drop-in youth provision has been running in South Brent for over 5 years. One paid member of staff from Ivybridge Youth for Christ works with 3 regular South Brent volunteers as well as the occasional Ivybridge volunteer when the need arises. We've also had visits from university researchers and local community representatives wishing to report on and develop good links within the community. Many of the young people have also filled in the recent survey about the SBRA. During the 2023/24 financial year, we worked with 96 young people. The vast majority of these are from South Brent, but some young people bring their friends who may live in the Totnes, Diptford or Ivybridge areas. For most of the year we've been using the "Party Bus" on Wednesday evenings to welcome the young people. Since 15/1/24 however, we have been meeting on Monday evenings in the South Brent Recreation Association building. This has enabled us to welcome more young people in from the cold/wet weather and has made it easier for us to provide:

Free refreshments (hot chocolate, biscuits, and squash) which we serve from the hatch in the well-equipped kitchen, and

More space to play games e.g. snooker, table football, table tennis, card/board games, etc.

We are already experiencing more positive engagement with the young as result of this new, bigger space. Thanks, once again, for your support.

c. Ivybridge Ring & Ride

No representative

d. South Brent & District Caring

Report presented by Susanne Archard, Coordinator of South Brent & District Caring

South Brent & District Caring Report for South Brent Parish Council AGM 13th May 2024

Thanks to SBPC for their support in the last year including additional monies of £500 this year towards our Transport Services. We are in year two of a three year commitment from the parish Council to support our charity with £1000 a year.

All our services are increasing and costs are higher so the support from the Parish Council is vital for us to provide local services to those who are vulnerable, isolated, older, or who have caring responsibilities or are struggling with financial challenges or their mental health.

A few Caring facts for you,

- did you know we work with people aged 18 and over, not just older people.? The age range over the last year has been from 24-101 years old.
- We have around 100 active volunteers, from this community and supporting people in this community. They are our eye and ears and ambassadors of what we do

The Hub - growth from the Warm Space

In partnership with Sustainable South Brent (SSB) we run The Hub based at The Old School Community Centre, who are also key partners. The Hub is a place to come and connect have a cuppa play a game, knit, hot desk or get some basic IT support or access our services and other support. This started as The Warm Space and SSB drop in and after community feedback we committed to keeping this open year round. We offer a week day drop-in from 9.30-12.30 and since January 2023 (the start of recording footfall) until the end of April 2024 we have had 3109 visits (from last April 23 – March24 2270), we have a team of

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9 regular and some occasional volunteers across SSB & SBDC staffing The Hub who have delivered 204 days of Hub opening and support in the year from 2023-24.

Having a drop-in like The Hub is offering a central place for people to come and find the village community, and be accepted and come as you are. We are seeing a number of residents who have complex needs, and feel this demonstrates that we are starting to reach the harder to reach groups in the community. The value of the The Hub plus our service offer has been recognised by professionals with visits from The Devon Mental Health Alliance, researchers looking at Homelessness and mental health services, the Plymouth University Can Do research, social prescribers and we have had drop-ins from local Physios walking people down as part of treatment and local GPs.

Caring Core Work

We have run 48 coffee morning, 23 compassionate cafes, 16 Foot care clinic sessions, 44 Lunch Clubs - serving 1132 meals, 45 Wednesday Friends Day Sessions (which is a group focussed towards those with memory issues – but all our services are dementia friendly). 51 walk & Talk sessions, 4 trips out. 122 individuals have directly benefited from these services and groups.

We have delivered 51 signposting & information sessions, 34 formfilling or admin help sessions, supported 29 people with befriending or carers respite across over 400 visits.

SBPC kindly funded us for the additional support with our Transport service, last year we did 419 journeys, with 467 passengers with drivers notching up 7466 miles. Our year ended at the end of March 24, since April we have already had 64 journeys to health appointments. We were particularly glad to receive the extra funding to help support getting people to our groups and services. This is essential to get housebound people connecting at our groups and interacting that otherwise would not be able to attend. Last year 25 clients needed that help to get to our groups and services. Already since April 2024 that has increased to 30 people needing that service.

So lots of statistics and numbers but what about the people and the stories to understand how we are making a difference to people's lives.

Some things that have been said about SBADC, The Hub and our other work 'it if wasn't for Susanne & Lucy I wouldn't be here right now – it has saved my life', 'thank you I really feel accepted and not judged here', 'what a lovely welcoming place', and on what would you do if there was no Hub or Caring 'I wouldn't have anywhere to go'. People tell us they love the 'open door approach' and our volunteers tell us they get so much out of volunteering it's beneficial for them too. We couldn't achieve everything we do without all those volunteers.

Case Study – Don & Mary

What follows is a case study for you about how we offer to wrap around people to support and encourage them to use what they need of our services.

Don & Mary started out asking us for support with Transport as Don's sight was deteriorating, he'd given up driving, and Mary was having a few health issues and they lived too far to walk to the health centre. They had a number of trips and one of our drivers became a pretty regular driver for them. After a few trips our volunteer driver shared some concerns about Mary's behaviour and Mary's mental health. The Coordinator called them for a chat and spoke to Don, doing a basic assessment over the phone, then arranged to do a home visit and went out to meet them. Mary was on the route to being diagnosed with dementia and part of her disease is seeing things that aren't there. Don welcomed some help with an Attendance Allowance form to get them some extra money for Mary's needs, and I encouraged them to come and attend our Friends Day Wednesday group for carers and people with memory issues. It was obvious Don had been coping on his own and could find it a bit tough at times. We offered them transport to come to that group, as without that they wouldn't be able to get there. I knew one of our volunteers shared the same background in farming as Don & Mary and as we chatted it turned out they knew each other, this helped Don's confidence with coming to the group. Don and Mary first came to the group last autumn, they are now regulars. Don has met Andy at the group whose wife also has dementia. Andy used to garden and grow prize winning veg, they hit it off, and sit together every week and chat. Andy (a man of few words) said 'it really makes a difference to have that in common'. They have also been awarded Attendance Allowance for Mary's needs.

e. Dartside Explorer Scouts

Tim Harvey presented a report to the Council. He expressed his gratitude have been awarded a grant from South Brent Parish Council. The grant enabled the Scouts to buy appropriate gear for 6 youngsters to go caving, plus fund a professional qualification for 1 leader. They are working towards leadership qualifications for kayaking and canoeing.

The Scouts have so far been caving locally and in the summer will be caving in some of the largest caves in the UK. Caving gives a complimentary set of skills of self-discipline and courage. The qualifications need to be kept up to date to ensure the young people are kept safe.

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f. South Brent Short Mat Bowls

No representation

g. South Brent Primary School

The School Association thanked the Parish Council for the £1000 grant. It kickstarted fundraising for the school. A design has been chosen, and they are ready to put the planning application in. The idea is to provide curriculum despite the weather. There will be improvements over several years, such as cladding and planting. There is a lovely green space. A tarmacked area will be filled with planters for bugs, edible plants, herbs.

h. South Brent Scout Group

Tim Haley presented a report to the council.

South Brent Scout Group doing very well. There is a strong and active leadership team. Ideally each section needs four leaders to work effectively – there is space for more leadership. The subscription is £12 a month, most of which goes to leadership association. It is open to everyone, and have a support fund for those unable to fund it. All the leaders are volunteers, providing their time freely and willingly. There currently isn't a Squirrel group (4 to 5 year olds) but are considering if we can do it. Need adult leaders to come forward.

Many of youngsters are gaining some of the highest awards; there has been a number of Chief Scout awards. Camping is one of the best activities we can do and we have held many since the last Annual Parish Meeting. Last June we had a camp in terrible weather, which saw the demise of our entire range of tents. Thank you to the parish council for enabling us to buy new bell tents. The bell tents are made of high-grade modern materials. We have a nice dry space to sleep in and another dry space to keep kit in. The tents will last us 10 to 15 years, if we use them for 1 – 2 weeks per year and maintain them well.

Tim thanked the parish council for the funding to enable the Scouts to buy the tents.

9. Parishioners' questions. For parishioners of South Brent.

Cllr. Richards – thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed at 20.15