

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 9th April 2018 at Sourton Hall

Parish Council Members present: J. Hockridge (Chair), S. Daniel, P. Deacon, S.Eberle, G. Jury and M.Spry.

Also present: C.Mott (West Devon Borough Councillor), Rob Taylor (Dartmoor National Park Ranger), C.Dawe, A.Jewel and I. Kaczanow (Parishioners), M.Leonard (Clerk)

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies were accepted from Rev A. Brook, A. Horn (Sourton Parish Councillor) and K. Ball (Devon County Councillor)
3. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting were accepted as read, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
4. Matters arising from the minutes
None raised.

5. Dartmoor National Park Report

Rob Taylor, DNP Ranger, updated the meeting on DNP events.

In summary:

There has been a change in the structure of the Ranger Service and the manager is now Simon Lee. Some areas have changed but this area has stayed the same. There have been fewer problems from Ten Tors practicing this year.

The Bearslake track (Bridleway 13) will be shut for about one week during April for repair of damage caused by a washout in July. The misplaced stones will be dragged back up and then be covered by lighter stone.

Some parts of the Rattlebrook track have also been washed out. The Duchy has allowed some drainage work to be done. Restoration work will done in the area later in the year. There will also be an extension of the previous work done to help retain water in the area. A clapper bridge is planned to be put in place where the Rattlebrook track ends. This is not, at this time, being promoted as a cycle track. Work will also be done on the track along the Rattlebrook up to Kitty Tor. Small sections of board walk are to put in to help to reduce the amount of erosion. If all landowners, commoners etc agree, this work will start from July on to October.

Peat restoration is ongoing.

The Love Moor Life campaign continues. This is to encourage visitors to close gates, warn about fire lighting etc., using visual signs and notices. Stickers are given to children with dogs on leads and leads are offered to dog walkers.

Two walks are coming up, one with Bridestowe school and one with the Scouts. Ranger Ralph cycle rides will happen again this year. There will be further work with volunteer wardens. A new mobile system of maintaining rights of way has been launched making it easier and quicker for people to get in touch and report problems.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor for updating the meeting.

Mr Dawe asked why the bracken at the bottom of Sourton Tor and Southerly Down has been allowed to increase, making it unsuitable for sheep and also increasing the ticks on the moor. Was this Natural England's policy? Mr Taylor explained that this is a matter between the Commoners, land owners and Natural England. Cllr Hockridge reported that the Commoners had been trying to persuade Natural England that burning of bracken should be done.

Mr Dawe then asked whether Dartmoor Planning Department were monitoring the development of the Old Post Office as it was once a picture in the centre of the village. Mr Kaczanow explained that a planning application had been put in last year to restore the building to its previous state, which has been granted.

6. Parish Council's report

The Clerk reported on events during the year and circulated a financial report (copies of both attached)

7. Reports from other Parish organisations

7.1 Village Hall. The Chairman of the Hall Committee reported a good year with plenty of bookings including two weddings. The improvements to the patio area went well thanks to a DNP grant. The electrics are to be done next.. Cream teas will continue again this year. Arrangements for a new picnic table and seat, in memory of Paul Fishleigh, have been put in place.

7.2 Sourton Friendship Group Cllr Jury reported on some of the new group's activities during the year. It hopes to attract a younger membership in the future.

8. Matters raised by Parishioners

Mr Kaczanow reported that a storm drain is blocked below the hall, which causes the A386 to flood in heavy rain. He also reported that when the snow plough went through the village it dug the stones out of the verge past the entrance to the hall. The PC agreed to report this to Devon Highways.

9. There being no other matters raised, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.