

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF YEALMPTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 10th FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30 PM AT THE COMMUNITY ROOM, STRAY PARK, YEALMPTON.

Members of the public present: None.

Public Forum – no members of the public attended.

Councillors present: Cllrs Baldry, Endicott, Craddock, Tucker, Barton, Riley, Hopkins, MacKay and Thomas,

No	Minute	Action
1)	To receive apologies for absence Cllr Street and District Cllr Edie	
2)	Report from County Council – Cllr Dan Thomas Last month, we ran out of time and to your enormous relief, I didn't get the opportunity to give you my tuppence on the Government's recent White Paper on Devolution. The paper, published the week before Christmas, delivered two messages; one entirely expected, the other less so. The first part was to do with the continuation of a policy of Strategic Mayoral Authorities (SMAs), which have been around for some time. In essence, all council areas need to join with neighbouring authorities to form these larger alliances, ultimately overseen by an elected mayor. The Combined County Authority of Devon and Torbay - which is now formally in existence - should be viewed as the first iteration of a larger body (as many of us predicted would be the case). The leaders of Devon, Torbay and Plymouth Councils have expressed their preference for a peninsular based SMA with a population of 1.8 million, encompassing their authorities as well as Cornwall. The Cornish are determined to go it alone and as such, there is no clear agreement. This will become relevant further on. The more unexpected part of the White Paper was Local Government Reform (LGR), indeed the most wide sweeping LGR since the establishment of the District Councils in 1974. Here, the Government's preference is to do away with two tiers of local authority, to be replaced with unitary councils as we see in Plymouth, Torbay, Cornwall and Somerset, to name but 4. What this means in practice is that an area, instead of being represented by District and Councillor(s), would instead be represented by one or more unitary councillors, who would be responsible for the whole spate of local government responsibilities. It was suggested that a suitable size for a new unitary authority would be 500 000 people. To put this in context, there are around 265 000 in Plymouth, around 130 000 in Exeter and 1.2 million in Devon altogether. To muddy the waters further, it was made clear that existing unitaries might be able to mount a case for continuation if they could prove their own sustainability and have a population nearer 300-350 000. Plymouth hopes to be such an extension but Tudor Evans has made no secret that consequently the city boundaries will need to grow. It is anticipated that this will mean Woolwell and Sherford are subsumed into the city. Assuming that Plymouth is allowed to be an exception - and that is still only an assumption - what of the rest of Devon? The pre-Christmas announcement also made it clear that areas that already had agreed plans for an SMA and/or for LGR should write to the Minister before January 10th explaining their reasons to be a priority case. Assuming the reasons were accepted, the Minister would then postpone the May County elections for 12 months	

	in readiness for an election to the body of a shadow unitary authority in May 2026. This shadow would exist for 12 months before taking over fully in 2027. With what can only be described as indecent haste, James McInnes, the Conservative Leader of DCC, gave a press interview explaining that the only solution was a single unitary authority for the whole of Devon and that he would hold an extraordinary meeting at County Hall on January 9th to ratify a request to the Government to postpone elections (as above). It was repeatedly pointed out to him at the meeting that none of the lower tier District, Borough or City Councils agreed with this stance, moreover the upper tier Torquay Unitary was also against. Furthermore, and as described above, there is not a consensus from all parties for an SMA either. However, Cllr McInnes ignored Devon's abject failure to meet the tests set (by the Government for postponement to be considered) and claimed that the situation was too important to allow new members to be dealing with LGR and that the experienced, sitting councillors were the only people qualified to make these decisions. With that, all the Conservatives voted to write to the Government asking to postpone elections. It should come as no surprise to the fair minded among you that last week, the Minister roundly rejected Devon's case because it clearly failed to meet the test. The County is now on Track 3 - the lowest category of multi-tier councils and a transition in 2028 at the earliest. It is difficult to see how it could possibly be any quicker, since there may well have to be Boundary Commission changes (due to Plymouth's ambitions). It is also difficult to see how this was anything more than a case of the self'-preservation society in action at County Hall from Councillors keen to avoid the entirely justified anger and disappointment of their electorate. Let's not forget that Children's Services has been in Special Measures (the lowest possible OFSTED rating) since 2010. As to the future, we are still no clearer now as to what will actually happen. If I could choose, I'd probably accept Plymouth's ambitions for growth and then have 2 further unitaries: one encompassing West Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge and Torbay; the other being Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge. But in case you think that sounds an easy option, it's worth pointing out that the Labour Leader of Exeter City Council would also like his city to be an exception and become its own unitary. It seems that, perhaps unwittingly, the Government has created a local government version of the Hunger Games.
3)	Report from District County Council. Cllr Edie SHDC – February 2025 Garden Waste Service Just a reminder - South Hams residents can now sign-up to or renew their subscription for our garden waste collection service. Please help spread the word that the quickest and easiest way of doing this will be on our website www.southhams.gov.uk/gardenwaste. Messages for residents: •The fee is going up to £68 this year to cover costs •Anyone who signs up between 3 February and 1 April 2025 will pay a discounted fee of £65 •There is a maximum of two subscriptions (which would cover two brown wheelie bins) per household. •For current subscribers who renew before 1 April, there will be no changes to their service, and they can continue to use their brown bin with no interruptions. Council Tax Second Homes Premium

	Subject to agreement by Full Council, the Council Tax Second Homes Premium will appear for the first time on the Council Tax bills for 2025/26. There will be limited circumstances where the premium of 100% will not be payable, as set out in mandatory and discretionary exceptions. The Council's website will be updated with further information and an explanatory note will be included on the annual Council Tax bills, which will be issued in early March. Bottle banks removal The removal of bottle banks across the South Hams has now begun, as part of our ongoing efficiency programme of our waste and recycling service. 13 banks across the District have been taken away in the first wave of removals, which began at the start of this week. The second phase of removals begins on 24 February. Ten banks are to be removed from the least used sites in public settings. The banks set to be removed in phase 2 are: •Rattery Village Hall, •Noss Mayo, tennis court car park, •Loddiswell, Butts Car Park, •Harbertonford Car Park, •East Prawle, layby, •Strete, layby, •Beesands seafront, •Woolwell Community Centre, •Lee Moor, Village Hall, •Modbury, Poundwell Meadow The third and final phase is scheduled to start from 17 March, removing the remaining bottle banks in public settings. 15 bottle banks across nine sites will remain in place. [END] Cllr Thomas reporting that the District Council officers are meeting with residents along the stream at Footpath 18, who have been concerned by the recent collapse of the stream bank.
4)	Councillors' Declaration of Interest: none.
5)	Previous minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 13 th January 2025 were approved and signed.
6)	Planning matters - A brief update was given on applications relevant to the Parish. - YPC have been sent details of two applications to vary existing planning permissions granted by SHDC. The variations have been reviewed by members of the planning committee and it is not felt that it is something which the Parish Council is required to comment on – they relate to changes of materials and changes to the location of non-visible structures. No YPC response will be made.
7)	Financial matters - Accounts to end of January were reviewed. - Payments were approved totalling £8,741.39 - It was agreed that £40,000 would be placed in a higher interest yielding account for six months.
8)	Environmental Report YEG report February 2025 Water The EA have encouraged us to report in anything that may be a pollution incident to the incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60 along with photos date, time, observations, grid refs. Without this information reports can only be treated as anecdotal. YEG is considering how best to achieve this. Contact information for local newsletters for the relevant parishes (Wembury, Brixton, Sparkwell, Cornwood, Ermington, Yealmpton, Newton and Noss) would be welcome. The RYWQG has also taken steps to improve access to information on water quality in the Yealm through setting up a website

https://www.rywqg.com/?fbclid=IwY2xjawlQSUpleHRuA2FlbQlXMAABHbkja6LWpFaLY1ZDVt91_HzpYG8ROmxBm6wD0siQ9h0ce8FGpqqdzlbQhWg_aem_aBDLxdhT5dJiDMSDuQalaw and a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/951554389942895>

The EA is taking further steps to mitigate the decline in bathing water quality at Wembury. At a meeting (EA and lead people for CSI on the Yealm) it was agreed to increase sampling sites to include streams feeding into Yealm Estuary that have not been sampled to date. Jane Pennington will be attending MudSpotter training on 5 Feb 2025. The MudSpotter survey and app based methodology gives us a standardised way to record the sources and pathways of mud being transported into rivers during or shortly after rainfall. Results will be uploaded to Cartographer which our volunteers use to record water quality and riverfly survey results.

There has been a meeting with SWW to discuss results from CSI monitoring leading to an offer of SWW help to identify the location of our pollution hotspots and potential solutions.

Saltmarsh and intertidal habitat resilience project

Within sheltered water bodies such as estuaries, saltmarshes can play a particularly important role in regulating water quality. Their ecosystem can reduce high nutrient levels such as inorganics, phosphates, nitrates and faecal organism concentrations. Saltmarshes also absorb heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium and uranium from the water. South Devon Natural Landscape (SDNL) have been successful in securing some Water Environment Improvement Funding (WEIF) from the Environment Agency (EA) and will start work on a Yealm Estuary Saltmarsh and Intertidal Habitat Resilience project. The first priority is to survey and consider the health of the estuary's saltmarshes with a view to how we may conserve, enhance and/or restore them, and the project is in the process of engaging the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology for their expert assistance in this. The project is managed by SDNL working closely with the EA and the community via YEM.

[https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-](https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Saltmarsh_Restoration_Handbook_FINAL_20210311.pdf)

[content/uploads/2021/10/Saltmarsh_Restoration_Handbook_FINAL_20210311.pdf](https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Saltmarsh_Restoration_Handbook_FINAL_20210311.pdf)

<https://www.wwt.org.uk/uploads/documents/2023-01-30/wwt-blue-carbon-route-map-2023.pdf>

Active travel

We still await the final report from South Hams on the LCWIP consultation process.

Control of Invasive species

A Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed eradication programme is currently being planned for three sections of the Yealm river, the middle and lower sections being in the Yealmpton parish. This will involve volunteers 'pulling' the Himalayan Balsam out, but at large stand where it grows amongst brambles and ferns, it will require professional 'brush cutting'. There are also two large stands for Japanese Knotweed, which will require professional spraying. This will take an estimated six days work at £2,650 and funding is sought for this.

Planting trees

On Wednesday 12th February a Wildlife corridor hedge 275-metres long consisting of 1,500 trees with guards and stakes will be planted along an unmade lane at Torr Farm south of Yealmpton by volunteers under the supervision of ParkLife SW CIC. Trees for the planting will be lifted from the Kitley Community Tree Nursery on Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 February by volunteers, supervised by Liz Tutty, who manages the nursery. These include hazel, hawthorne, dog rose, spindle, hornbeam and wyche elm, from seeds gathered at previous Tree Seed Sundays. Additional trees are being sourced from the YEM Tree nurseries at Noss Mayo and Newton Ferrers as well as from Devon Wildlife Trust.

In late February/early March, Tree planting will also take place at:

- Worston Farm and Ewells Wood, with circa 3,000 trees being planted over 12-HA with volunteers under the Plymouth & South Devon Community Forest scheme

	- at Long Meadow by Steps River Lane, with 80 low density trees in guards. The 500 holly trees planted last season in the wood beside the Yealmpton sewage works that had not survived were removed and a number were replanted in gaps. The tree orchard and other trees in Stray Park have been pruned. Biodiversity Ruby's wood biodiversity surveys will continue in the spring funded from a locality grant, with the Ivybridge Community College, local volunteers and ParkLife SW CIC. Also in the spring, volunteer bird, mammal and bat surveys are planned, which will form part of an ongoing monitoring programme to assess change along the Yealm corridor. A new pond for invertebrates is planned at a location beside Steps River Lane. Linda Durman Chair, YEG	
9)	Road Safety Total costings for remarking the Yeo Park SLOW signs, creating a new roundel on Ford Road and remarking the other three roundels have not yet been received – this matter will be considered next month.	
10)	DCC urban grass cutting scheme Council agreed to remain in the scheme and this would be delivered by our grass cutting contractor.	Clerk – to sign and return the agreement
11)	Footpaths The Clerk had now heard from DCC P3 officer. We have been promised £2,290 in respect of the last two year's basic payments and funds for projects this year. Cllr Barton is progressing the return for this year. Footpath 19 stiles will fail the inspection and this will be reported to DCC. They were going to meet with the landowner and arrange for new gates to be installed, but we have not been updated on this. Chippings will need to be placed on the surface of footpath 19 to stop it getting muddy again. Cllr Thomas agreed to liaise with DCC Footpath Warden.	Cllr Barton and Clerk to submit paperwork for P3. Cllr Thomas to encourage progress.
12)	Shared Youth Worker Wembury PC was taking the lead on coordinating a Shared Youth Worker to work for local parishes to encourage young people to engage with them and hopefully prevent antisocial behaviour. It is hoped that this project can be grant funded. YPC agreed to be part of the project.	Clerk to report to Wembury PC.
13)	Gardening Contract Council approved the scope of the new gardening, footpath and asset maintenance contract was agreed. We have not had many approaches from local gardeners, hopefully an appointment can be made next month. The routine use of pesticides was discussed, council voted by majority not to allow contractors to use pesticides in the routine maintenance of YPC grounds/gardens and on footpaths in line with SHDC.	Clerk to update the gardening specification
14)	Stream on Bowden Hill The stream that leaves the property of Squires Acre and flows into a culvert on Bowden Hill has been overflowing more recently. This is caused by leaf debris accumulating on the trash screen. The Clerk has been in touch with DCC Flood and Coastal Risk and Devon Highways. It has not been possible to identify the landowner. It is agreed that Cllrs Thomas, Endicott and Tucker to meet to consider what can be done to improve the situation.	Cllrs Thomas, Endicott and Tucker to meet and report.

15)	Accessible bench An accessible bench has been gifted to YPC by the National Landscape. Three potential locations have been identified and the relevant landowners will be approached to gain consent.	Clerk to approach landowners
16)	Road Warden Scheme YPC agreed to join the scheme, the Clerk, Cllrs Hopkins and Barton will be trained under the scheme.	Clerk to arrange.
17)	Footpath – Villa to Yealmbridge Cllr Tucker will arrange for the hedge to be cut and will scrape the surface of the hedge back to widen the pavement area. Clerk to confirm permission with landowner and consult Devon Highways.	Cllr Tucker/Clerk
18)	Report on actions from previous meetings. None.	
19)	Reports on areas of responsibility. a) Works – YPC agreed to pay for an early cut of the verges now with new contractor b) Cllr MacKay reporting a new speed monitor had been purchased and he had met with a DCC contractor who would install a new pole at Yealmbridge. c) Cllr Barton reporting that two new shelves were required for the library. Cllr Craddock had spoken with the Men's Shed and the shelves for the phone box book/puzzle exchange were being built. d) Cllr Tucker asked the Clerk to ascertain whether the grassy area by Yealmbridge was an intentional verge of DCC or an accumulation of soil/vegetation. We could then decide if this needed to be cleared.	Clerk to confirm with contractor.
Correspondence a. It is noted the bottle bank has been removed. b. It was agreed the Clerk and Cllr Baldry would attend the SHDC Parish Forum at 6pm on 27 th March 2025. c. Churchyard push testing would be taking place in the churchyard – any stones which fail, will be placed on the ground. d. An email received from someone who frequently uses Yeo Lane and has done for a long time, to say they have never had a problem with traffic and do not consider it warrants investment in signs or road redesign. e. South Hams Community Action closure is sadly noted. Meeting closed at 9.21pm		
Date of next meeting: 10th March 2025		

YEALMPTON PARISH COUNCIL Accounts to end of February 2025

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	Budget 24/25	Variance	Person responsible
Period 2024-25																	
Balance Brought Forward		74,437	95,100	91,693	78,504	76,382	64,831	94,098	86,945	81,414	79,881	72,186	75,782				
Receipts	Precept	30,000					30,000							60,000			
	Interest	3	876	20	7	7	6	5	888	5	6	6		1,827		-1,827	
	Grants						505							505		+505	
	Borrowings																
	Other Income							740				6,999		7,739		-4,780	-2,989
	Parish Room - Income	634			415						1,010			2,060		1,000	-1,060
	VAT Recovered		3,004											3,004		3,000	-4
Total Receipts		30,634	3,879	20	422	7	30,511	745	898	5	1,016	7,005		75,143	68,750	+6,393	
Payments	Clerk Salary	-633	-633	-977	-669	-669	-669	-669	-106	-691	-691	-691		-7,817	-9,500	+1,683	Craddock
	Income Tax	-488			-671			-534						-2,312	-1,800	-712	Craddock
	Loan Interest																Craddock
	Other Admin	-40	-259	-34	-41	-41	-41	-75	-41	-41	-57	-50		-1,128	-1,700	+1,572	Various
	Insurance													-712	-750	+26	Craddock
	Donations			1,190		-9,500			-1,700	-1,700				-15,150	-16,500	+1,350	Craddock
	Jubs	-718												-718	-844	+124	Craddock
	Grass Cutting	-1,510												-1,510	-1,500	-10	Hopkins/Guy/Flarens
	Village Gardening Contracts		-1,213			-1,348		-1,213				-1,293		-4,468	-5,000	+534	Craddock/Tucker
	Flower Tubs				-510			-510				-57		-1,077	-1,000	-77	Craddock/Tucker
	General Contractors	-1,284	-101	-193	-740	-375		-410			-1,260			-4,553	-10,000	+15,465	Various
	Silverbridge Way Maintenance											1,310		-1,310	-1,500	+180	Craddock/Tucker
	FP 20													-10,000	-10,000		Barton
	Rents		-138		-161				-115			-145		-459	-600	+29	Craddock
	Mileage								-59					-59	-50	-9	Various
	Parish Room - Maintenance				-109	-199	-106	-882	-52		-123			-1,473	-800	-673	Craddock
	Parish Room - Utilities	-40	-119	-79	-73	-65	-154	-167	-54	-106	-179	-118		-1,150	-1,000	-150	Craddock
	Environment Group Projects	-4,100	-201	-1,515			-141	-531			-503			-7,190	-8,000	+1,000	Hopkins/Guy/Flarens/Barton
	Silverbridge Way extension													-3,000	-3,000		Barton
	Youth Projects		-1,750								-4,310			-6,060	-7,000	+438	Thomas
	Other Miscellaneous	-151	-1,160	-7,611	-100	-361	-100	-1,705	-55		-405			-15,028	-18,700	+691	Various
	Fixed Assets																Various
Total Payments		-9,965	-7,234	-13,109	-2,554	-11,557	-1,764	-7,899	-6,419	-1,538	-8,711	-3,408		-73,798	-105,024	+31,226	
Receipts less Payments		20,672	3,415	22,220	2,117	22,551	29,267	27,159	5,931	1,533	7,696	1,596		1,345	-16,174	+17,619	
Accounts	Treasurer's Account	42,405	35,111	21,902	19,773	8,216	37,477	30,319	74,781	73,244	69,542	29,133	29,133				
	Business Bank Instant	2,703	6,582	6,602	6,609	6,615	6,621	6,626	6,632	6,638	6,643	6,649	6,649				
	Fixed Term Deposit	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000					40,000	40,000			
	Total	95,108	91,693	78,504	76,382	64,831	94,098	86,945	81,414	79,881	72,186	75,782					

The Receipts and Payments in the month are shown below

Replace with snipped analyses of details for each month.

03-Feb-25	British Gas	65,467.50	-74.95
11-Feb-25	Transfer between accounts	25,467.50	-40,000.00
12-Feb-25	Brixton Parish Council - Silverbridge Way	24,147.50	-1,320.00
12-Feb-25	YCA - room hire charges	24,001.34	-146.16
12-Feb-25	Clerk Salary and expenses	23,259.89	-741.45
12-Feb-25	James Roberts - gardening contract	22,167.39	-1,092.50
19-Feb-25	Marland Solar Farm	24,090.32	1,922.93
19-Feb-25	Creacombe Solar Farm	27,007.38	2,917.06
26-Feb-25	TalkTalk	26,974.16	-33.22
27-Feb-25	Newton and Noss Parish Council - VAS share	29,133.07	2,158.91

Proposed payments to be approved at meeting on 10th March 2025

		net	vat	total
KK Controls	Emergency lighting servicing	£ 88.00	£ 17.60	£ 105.60
Sasha Walton	Salary and contractual expenses	£ 727.45		£ 727.45
Andrew Goodcl	Grass cutting	£ 185.00	£ -	£ 185.00
IDALC	Subscription IDALC	£ 7.00		£ 7.00
James Friend	Contractor repair of footpath 18	£ 409.80	£ 81.96	£ 491.76
James Friend	Contractor - VAS pole and installa	£ 296.10	£ 59.22	£ 355.32
Office Boffins	two tables for hirers use in Parish	£ 231.90	£ 46.38	£ 287.28
Cameron Haris	Clearing of Footpath	£ 84.00	£ -	£ 84.00
R & F Dearn	Reimbursement for shelves	£ 37.80		£ 37.80
				£ 2,281.21

YEG Annual report 2024/5

River Yealm water quality.

Emerging areas of concern relating to water quality were identified in a report on results from our first year's CSI measurements. We continue to share information with other groups that are working towards improvement of water quality in the catchments (Yealm and Tamar) on the best equipment and quality control measures to use. Our data has helped the EA and SWW focus on areas that merit intervention, particularly relating to problems at Newton Stream and The Pail and resulting in effective actions.

Information sharing between partners is essential to establish what is affecting our river. We make our data freely available but there is often reluctance from other organisations to share theirs, even if they are required to by law. It took time and effort for RYWQG to succeed in obtaining the on-off times for all overflows of untreated sewage on our river during 2023. An Environmental Information Request (EIR) was submitted to SWW in April 24 and refused. RYWQG subsequently appealed and obtained the information in mid 2024. RYWQG has continuing concern about pollution arising from **Lee Mill Industrial Estate**. SHDC has provided a map of drainage points within Lee Mill Industrial Estate, but this did not include information on the source of drainage or destination of foul water. SHDC claim that they do not hold that information which seems odd as this information must have been part of their applications for planning consent.

YEM is in discussion with the Environment Agency and Wild About The Erme River (WATER) regarding a scoping study towards mapping soil type, agricultural practice and surface water drainage throughout both the Yealm and Erme catchments so that mitigating schemes that will help cleanse that runoff can be developed.

Cllr Thomas is speaking about community involvement at the Clean Rivers Clean Seas Assembly organised by South Devon River Champions in two weeks, hopefully drawing upon and emphasising all the above.

This gives an indication of the range of bodies involved when there are problems with our water. Their geographical areas of influence all differ. Some very good news is that there are now groups whose main job is to co-ordinate information, policies and action plans affecting the whole river. For the Yealm, the main groups are the South Devon Catchments Partnership (SDCP) and the Yealm Estuary Management Group (YEMG). We are represented via YEM.

The Catchment Partnership was able to prioritise our six major pollution concerns highlighted by our data. These form the backbone of our strategy for the Yealm with all key partners. We are now involved in developing the **Catchment management plan** for the Yealm which is a very significant step and again involves all major players working in our catchment (EA, WRT, DWT, SWW and others). Not many river groups have a catchment plan in place or have evolved to this level.

Work with young people

On our behalf, YEM (Yealm Estuary to Moor) continues to address the government's policy on climate change and sustainability in educational settings. Ruby's Wood is used by ICC for students to practice their research methods and collect their own data and records about the River Yealm, its biodiversity and its flora and fauna, by monitoring of birds, bats, butterfly & moths, beetles, bees, fish, river fly in order to identify species change indicators along the river. Over time we hope the data will become a benchmark against which other sections of the river Yealm could be compared. In September 2024 a cohort of 28 new students began the A level Environmental Studies course. YEM provides information, web links, and material support for each school in the catchment according to need. School engagement can be extraordinarily difficult: the seven YEM catchment schools belong to five separate federations, affiliations, trusts or associations and some outsource forest school, nature and outdoor activities, further complicating easy relationships.

Biodiversity

South Devon Natural Landscapes have chosen the Yealm estuary for Yealm Estuary Saltmarsh and Intertidal Habitat Resilience project. Specialists from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology surveyed the saltmarshes around the fringes of the Yealm Estuary in February. The surveys will help inform the delivery of future detailed conservation management options to enhance and/or restore natural habitats. Saltmarshes act as carbon traps, shoreline buffers, biodiversity hotspots, fish nurseries and bird feeding stations.

On parish land, in addition to the work done with schools in Ruby's Wood, YEM is exploring monitoring of birds, bats, butterflies and beetles for representative sites where YEM has made habitat interventions in upper, middle and lower reaches of the Yealm. Kitley Woodland (Lodge Gate Field) will be one such site.

Plants and habitats

We provide advice and assistance for nature recovery projects to local non-farming landowners (NFL) in order to make changes that benefit our environment. There are 32 NFLs in the parish who want to improve wildlife and biodiversity. They own and manage a large proportion of land in the Parish and do not have the government support offered to people with commercially farmed land. We work jointly with the Environment Agency, Devon Wildlife Trust, Wild About the Erme River and ParkLife CIC.

In **2024** we undertook wetland restoration projects including a 90 metre stream realignment with leaky dams, ponds and bunds, over 375 metres of new fencing to protect water courses and prevent livestock access, creation of two new cattle drinking points and approximately 10 metres of stone wall restoration. Two acres of new wildflower meadow was created, 195 metres of new hedges and over 2,100 trees planted, all following nature restoration advisory visits. YPC has part-funded these initiatives for land in our parish.

Already in **2025** we have had planting days at Worston Farm (1500 trees) and Trap House, Yealmpton. Planting is planned for Ewells Wood (3,000 trees over 12 hectares) and we will plant around 1,850 hedge saplings with guards and stakes at Torr Farm to create a wildlife corridor hedge 275-metres long with saplings from local tree nurseries. These include hazel, hawthorne, dog rose, spindle, hornbeam and wyche elm, from seeds gathered at previous Tree Seed Sundays. In addition, at Long Meadow by Steps River Lane, we will plant 80 low density trees in guards. The 500 holly trees planted last season in the wood beside the Yealmpton sewage works that had not survived were removed and a number were replanted in gaps. All planting is done by volunteers under supervision and following health and safety assessment.

The tree nursery at Lodge Gate Field has been very successful with over 2,000 trees grown from results of Tree Seed Sunday 2023. The seedlings have to be moved from planting trays to root trainers so a polytunnel with staging was erected to enable this. When big enough they are planted out in the ground (in the nursery) and labelled ready for use in spring. Daily watering is needed during summer months. An area near the entrance to Lodge Gate Field has also been prepared as a wildflower meadow. Veterans Outdoors is still focussed on the development of an environment hub within the Kitley Woodland (Lodge Gate Field). Plans to source funding continue. Veterans Outdoors does have planning consent for shipping container buildings on Lodge Gate Field.

The INNS (Invasive non-native species) programme continued in 2024 with nine bashing events for Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed on five sections of the river over 3-months with 20 volunteers. Locations were based on an extensive survey along the river. We have bid for funding from the EA's Water Restoration Fund for further weed control and monitoring in 2025. In Kitley Woodland (Lodge Gate Field) the young trees were overcome by weeds during the summer of 2024 and these were brush cut.

Active travel We have given detailed responses to the South Hams Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan proposals but have not received information on the outcome of this exercise.

Linda Durman, Chair YEG

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held via Zoom on Tuesday 21 January 2025 at 5pm

Present:

Cllr Phillip Dredge	Ivybridge Town Council
Cllr George Beable	Ugborough Parish Council
Cllr Linda Osman	Cornwood Parish Council
Cllr Liz Hitchins	Brixton Parish Council
Cllr Glyn Richards	DALC Director

In Attendance:

Julie Gilbert	Secretary, IDALC
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1. Apologies

Cllr Michael Wills	Brixton Parish Council
Ian Bramble	Bigbury Parish Council
Sasha Walton-Jackman	Yealmpton Parish Council
Cllr Cathie Pannell	South Brent Parish Council

2. Minutes of Last AGM and Ordinary Meeting

The minutes of last meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Meeting Dates provided by Cllr Liz Hitchins, Brixton Parish Council

Cllr Hitchins requested the following dates be included:

Parish Forum on 27 March at Follaton House

Cllr Hitchins will enquire with the appropriate SHDC officer if IDALC can be added to the agenda in order to highlight its presence.

Four Rivers Dementia Alliance AGM

Four Rivers Dementia Alliance objective is for all parish councils and Ivybridge to become dementia friendly. The AGM will be held on 3 February at 2pm at Ivybridge Rugby Club.

Dementia Forum

The South Hams Dementia Forum has been resurrected, and every parish council is invited to attend. The next Dementia Forum is on 16 April from 1am to 3pm at Follaton House and they are looking at the possibility of it being a hybrid meeting.

4. Chairman's Report / Continuation of IDALC

The Treasurer had received notification from Lloyds Bank of their intention to levy a monthly handling charge of £4.25 on the bank account. However, no such levy has been made to date during an extended period when there was no transaction. It is hoped that if members will make IDALC subscription payments in a single month the handling charge could be kept to a minimum.

However, should this not be the case, it would be a disproportionate charge on the annual subscriptions, and they may have to be revised within the financial year.

Notwithstanding the above, it was **AGREED** to hold the membership fee at £7.00 for the current year. The Chairman will seek clarification from DALC concerning possible funding towards the honorarium paid to the Secretary.

It was **AGREED** to continue with the IDALC meetings, and for Cllr Beable, Ugborough Parish Council to invite the Devon County Council Vice Chairman to speak on devolution at the next IDALC meeting.

5. Financial Report Subscriptions

At the last meeting the cashbook balance was £306. Income of £91 from 13 subscriptions at £7 was received. The Secretary's Honorarium of £150 resulted in the balance going down to £247.74.

The Treasurer had received a letter from Lloyds Bank informing of a new policy to start charging £4.25 a month plus a handling fee for different types of transactions. The balance in the latest statement hadn't moved in the last 12 months, therefore they hadn't charged anything, however the Treasurer was unsure if the charges would be levied if there are transactions going through which could result in the entire membership subscription being swallowed up.

If everyone paid their subscriptions in March, for example, that could be one month where there were transactions and perhaps IDALC would be charged for each transaction plus the £4.25 and not charge the £4.25 again until there was movement on the account.

Until it is clear what the charges are and what they will be levied it will be difficult to make a decision. The Treasurer suggested requesting parishes to pay in March, the last month of the current financial year, so it would hopefully reduce the impact of any charges by the bank.

He was not in a position to say that at the moment whether the subscriptions should be changed. On that basis he suggested retaining the subscription as it is but revisit it in the year if things don't go to plan with Lloyds. A request may also be necessary for the subscriptions to be paid in March.

It was **AGREED** that the subscriptions remain at £7 per annum but could be revisited in the year if necessary, and a request could be sent to parishes for subscriptions to be paid in March.

6. Election of Chairman

Cllr Dredge was nominated and seconded

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Dredge is appointed as Chairman.

7. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Beable was nominated and seconded

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Beable is appointed as Vice Chairman.

8. Election of Treasurer

Cllr Dredge was nominated and seconded

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Dredge is appointed as Treasurer.

9. Appointment of Secretary and Approval of Honorarium

Julie Gilbert was nominated and seconded

In discussions with DALC previously, Cllr Dredge had been advised that they would support paying the secretary and this was aimed specifically at the secretary's honorarium. Cllr Dredge proposed seeking clarification to pursue that stance again.

It was **AGREED** that Julie Gilbert is appointed as Secretary and the honorarium is set at £150, and Cllr Dredge would seek a contribution from DALC.

10. Reports from Parishes

Brixton Parish Council

During the past year Brixton Parish Council (BPC) has continued to meet regularly, supported by many enthusiastic volunteers and a range of working groups.

Maintaining communication continues to be paramount using a variety of processes including the parish council website, regular newsletters, Facebook, and community notice boards located in Sherford, Carrollsland and Brixton Village. Parishioners can now subscribe to BPC newsletters via the BPC website.

Sherford

Planning and development of Sherford New Town continues to be a major feature on the monthly Parish Council agenda, with a regular report from the BPC nominated director on Sherford Community Land Trust. BPC monthly meetings are now held regularly in Sherford Community Hub.

Planning

BPC have been consulted by South Hams District Council and Devon County Council on numerous planning applications, most of which required a site visit attended by a minimum of three councillors. Planning continues to be a major item on our Council agendas. It is a critical issue for this community on the urban fringe of Plymouth.

Brixton Neighbourhood Plan

The adopted Brixton Neighbourhood Plan 2014 - 2034 provides guidance and informed support when considering planning applications and the modification was 'made' by SHDC on 7th March 2024.

Traffic Management

The Traffic Management Group attended by local people and parish councillors continues to meet quarterly with DCC Highways Officer, to address the issues of road and traffic safety across the parish.

Traffic calming on Stamps Hill is being discussed with DCC Highways and is a longer-term project subject to the release of s106 from the Sherford development. The plans for Quiet Lanes to the east of Sherford did not progress due to a change of policy by Devon County Council. BPC have been working with DCC to close Monkey Lane to vehicular traffic – this will be for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders only. This project should be completed by the end of the financial year and will allow access to the Sherford Country Park from Brixton.

The very poor condition of the road surface of the A379 remains outstanding and continues to be the subject of discussion with DCC. Two new solar powered VAS signs have been installed along A379 ensuring drivers keep within the speed limits. Regular Community Speedwatch is undertaken.

Brixton Parish Environment Working Group

During the year the Bee Wild Group, part of the Environment Working Group, have been busy planting and clearing the area around the bus shelter at the top of Winstone Lane, along A379. The Bee Friendly Group also ensured that the school in Brixton had a large bee and bug hotel.

The Parish Council has adopted a policy of 'No Mow May' to encourage insect life on our verges. On some verges wildflowers are being left to grow for the whole season.

Footpaths

The network of footpaths across the parish is walked quarterly by volunteer parishioners who give feedback on their condition. The restoration of the stone wall on FP26 has been completed.

The Green

Following a consultation exercise, a working group is being set up to look at improving safety and parking around the Green. These proposals will be the subject of further community consultation.

Village Improvements

Volunteers continue to meet on the first Saturday of month (except January and August) to sweep through the village which is looking much improved and receiving positive feedback.

River Yealm Water Quality

Brixton Parish Council continues to be one of the 7 riparian parishes located in the catchment of the River Yealm and is represented on the River Yealm Water Quality Working Group leading on the improvement of the water quality of the river in collaboration with the Yealm Estuary to Moor project.

Cofflete Mill

The Land at Cofflete Creek, formerly the Old Mill was purchased by BPC as a community amenity space. Wildlife and nature are important for the land at the Old Mill. An information board has been produced and a seat installed on the site so that the peace and tranquillity of the area can be enjoyed by all. Following a public consultation, plans are being drawn up for the second phase of the project.

Cost of Living Crisis

The Parish Council in collaboration with the Brixton Feoffee Trust, St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's School and 'The Foxhound' continues to respond to the cost-of-living crisis by providing a community box with free household

cleaning and basic personal hygiene items along with tinned food and a warm hub facility.

Brixton Community Book Swop

Following a grant from DCC there is a Brixton Community Book Swop at St Mary's Church.

Cornwood Parish Council

Cornwood Parish Council appointed a new clerk in October 2023 following the retirement of our previous clerk. The new clerk is doing a great job and we hope he is happy to stay for a good long while! We currently have 7 councillors and will go on a recruitment drive in the Spring. We are a very active PC but much of our Chair's time is currently sucked up in a battle with Devon County Council who we believe has wrongly given our village car park to the Church of England school – it's a long story.....

Highlights from the last 18 months include:

- Purchasing new equipment for the Cornwood play park (£18,000, covered by a grant and significant fund raising by the village hall).
- Purchase and installation of 2 vehicle activated speed signs which move between locations in Cornwood and Luton (cost £6,000) in an attempt to encourage drivers to stick to the 20mph limit. They are proving both effective and popular. We have 2 volunteers who change the batteries and download the data on a regular basis. The data is helping identify key times for the Community Speedwatch team to be out doing their stuff.
- Recruitment of a lengthsman to regularly clear gullies, ditches, buddles and vegetation (cost £2500 pa). We are so pleased we've done this, our lengthsman is very helpful and multiskilled and is doing a great job reducing flooding on our roads.
- Commissioned a new gov.uk website with email capability to comply with local government best practice (cost £350pa)
- Purchase of recycled plastic picnic benches and seating to replace old wooden one in a bid to cut down on maintenance costs. Plus recycled plastic fencing for the village green and a recycled plastic noticeboard (there's a theme here....).
- Running the public toilets, including utilities and consumables. We have just undertaken an asbestos survey and will need to have the identified material removed before some much needed repairs can be done.
- The Christmas lights event proved to be as popular as ever and raised £150 in donations for 4RDA.

Additional discussion

Hiring a lengthsman has made a big difference. A small grant has just been obtained from highways for buying a long specialist mechanical tool for

cleaning gulleys which the parish would be happy to share. They also have several volunteer wardens who have attended chapter 8 training.

Ugborough had found that initially the lengthsman costs were high because a lot of areas hadn't received attention for a long time and there was a huge amount of silt and rubbish to be cleared out. With knowledge of the tricky areas and regular maintenance they are finding that they are spending a lot less than initially.

Ivybridge Town Council

Events

In 2024 the Town Council held a spring festival in one of our parks and also the annual Christmas festival in the town centre. Both events were very successful with positive feedback received from the community. We have appointed a new marketing and communications manager and are recruiting a project and events officer. These roles will focus on community engagement and providing more events for the town.

Wood and Moor Project

Ivybridge Town Council are working with the Woodland Trust on a Wood N Moor project in conjunction with Dartmoor Peatland Partnership. Low value timber located within difficult to access woodland sites will be used to make dams to restore the peatlands on Dartmoor which have become degraded. This will benefit biodiversity by supporting wildlife and storing carbon, improving water quality, and managing flooding. The Woodland Trust has identified Longtimber Wood as one of these sites for extracting timber.

The Forestry Commission had served the Town Council with a Statutory Plant Health Notice relating to infected larch in Longtimber Wood. This project provides an opportunity to use this diseased larch which is milled on site so the infection is removed and can therefore be used, and at the same time do undertake woodland thinning which will help to restore the ancient woodland. The Dartmoor Horse Loggers will extract the wood and provide some public demonstration days.

Reservoir/Old Swimming Pool, Longtimber Wood

The old reservoir in Longtimber Wood is a historic site and was used as a swimming pool during the 2nd World War by the Bedford Boys, the American soldiers stationed in Ivybridge. The site was later converted into a dry picnic area. The drain mechanism has however collapsed causing the pool to fill up with rain water in wet weather and be retained until it slowly soaks into the ground. Despite this pool being next to the river the insurers are placing stringent conditions on the Town Council for the pool not to flood. Life saving measures have been installed and drainage improvements are being investigated.

Defra Access for All Project Funding **Longtimber Woods, Ivybridge – easy-access picnic area**

Funding from Defra (through Dartmoor National Park) has enabled us to create a new easy-access picnic area at the top end of the popular Longtimber Wood Miles Without Stiles route section.

Two bespoke, extended ended timber picnic benches now provide a great facility – the ideal spot to have a break and a packed lunch, or just sit down and enjoy the calming sounds of the birds and the river.

Quantified Tree Risk Assessment

A tree risk assessment survey was undertaken in the summer 2024. This resulted in extensive tree works being identified under a traffic light system of priorities, and a schedule of works is currently being carried out.

Play Areas

The Town Council's two play areas in Victoria Park and MacAndrews Field were completely refurbished last summer with new play equipment being installed, including some accessible items and also new fencing and surfacing. The feedback from the community has been very positive and they have been well received. The parks officers have recently attended a RoSPA one day routine play inspection course and will be monitoring and maintaining the equipment in-house.

Flexipave Trial

A section of bridlepath near the fishing lake in Filham Park has been selected as a site for Flexipave trials organised by DCC Public Rights of Way. In wet weather the water constantly flows from the park down the bridleway and pools on the permissive path north of the fishing lake disturbing the gravel causing it to form mounds and for silt to end up in the fishing lake.

DCC's contractors propose to install baffles underneath the path to reduce the energy of the water flowing down. The path will then be covered with Flexipave which is a porous surface made of rubber and tarmac. This surface is approved by the British Horse Society and is also leach tested and is clear of any chemicals that could drain into the lake. This forms part of an innovative funding scheme through DCC PROW.

Habitat Management Plan

A 10-year habitat management plan is being produced for all the Council's parks and open spaces. The consultants producing the plan will also include support for managing volunteering events to deliver the plan.

The Watermark

Live entertainment in The Watermark is doing well and in particular the Comedy Club is producing sell out shows. The coffee shop is also thriving despite the rising cost of products. Building maintenance budgets also face huge pressures as The Watermark is now over 16 years old and equipment and installations are coming to the end of their life.

Community Economic Plan

The Town Council has been working on the Ivybridge Community Economic Plan. The plan process has been led by South Hams District Council, working in partnership with the five town councils.

The Community Economic Plan will help all towns from across the South Hams to grow their understanding of their local economies, identify the aspirations of their residents and businesses, and develop a series of actions that can help the community realise these aspirations.

In terms of where we are currently, the consultation has been carried out, results analysed, focus groups set up to identify potential projects and relevant stakeholders, and we are now about to see the final plan being published. A Monitoring Group has been set up, and will work with the identified stakeholders to progress projects.

South Brent Parish Council

South Brent have faced challenges as the clerk resigned last year due to family circumstances. They have had to go through the process of appointing their fifth clerk in five years and Cllr Richards is now back in the Chair.

They have a lengthsman, a roadsweeper maintaining verges and now two members of staff, the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk and RFO and the huge workload is challenging.

Criminal damage is regularly reported. Last year there was some damage in the play park involving a machete. The outcome was that the individual responsible had to come to the parish council for a community resolution and apologise. That had a huge impact on the youth of the village for at least 6 months.

Community groups in South Brent are good at managing the railway woodland and have also partnered up with South Hams to plant a woodland of 25,000 trees.

Ugborough Parish Council

Like most parishes, we have received a number of concerns about speeding through the villages of Ugborough, Bittaford and Wrangaton. With help from our Devon County Councillor, Devon CC agreed that in Ugborough village, if the Parish Council were to fund the cost of the planning, the consultation process, the TROs and the erection of 20mph signs to replace the existing 30mph signs, then the speed limit could be lowered. The new, lowered speed limit became law in November and several positive comments have been made.

A new Speed Watch group was formed in November 2024 and, although led by a Parish Councillor, it includes several members of the public. As a result, a number of speeding motorists will receive warning letters pointing out the error of their ways.

The Aldi planning application was supported but the Parish Council felt that it should be subject to a number of conditions, which included that 106 monies be allocated towards the cycle lane on the Ivybridge to Bittaford road.

Bus shelters have also been a point of discussion. After much prodding, the developers of the Langford estate have finally erected a bus shelter for east bound travelling passengers. It was part of the planning agreement, but less luck, so far, with another of the conditions which was for a community building which could serve as a shop. The developers are trying to change its commitment in order to sell it as a flat, but the Parish Council is strongly opposed to this. A bus shelter is also needed for west travelling passengers outside the Filham Chase estate. So far, the developers have opposed this option and as there is no planning condition requiring them to put up one themselves, the Parish Council is now looking into nearby sites.

The Bittaford playpark has continued to be updated and water running off the adjoining highway, which had been causing damage to the footpath, is now being diverted. Flooding after heavy rainfall is also a problem in the Undertown area of Ugborough and it has occurred recently despite flood prevention measures having taken place.

A Climate Emergency and Sustainability meeting was also held during 2024.

Finally, the ongoing negotiations with the Ugborough Primary School and the West Country Trust, have had a very successful conclusion with a licence being granted for youngsters to be able to use the School Playing field after 4.30pm, weekends and during school holidays. As part of the deal, we had to pay for half the cost of a new perimeter fence and a coded lock gate. Only the parents would have knowledge of the combination of the lock. 106 monies from developments in the parish were used for our contribution to the fence. Needless to say, this has been very well received by both parents and youngsters.

DALC

No updates were provided due to staffing issues.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Ordinary Business Meeting will be scheduled for April after 6pm and is to be held as a zoom meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.10pm.