

# Southern Link

West Devon Southern Parish Link Committee

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**Notes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12 June 2014**  
**In the Council Chamber, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock at 7.00 pm**

**Present:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Cllr David Butland	Chair	Mr Alan Robinson	WDBC
Cllr Brian Lamb	Bere Ferrers	Mr Simon Kitchen	DCC
Cllr John Drury	Brentor	Ms Jo Rumble	DNPA
Cllr Lucy Wood	Buckland Monochorum	Insp Andy Oliver	Devon & Cornwall Police
Cllr Paul Turnbull	Dartmoor Forest	Mr Sia Mahmoodshahi	DCC Highways
Cllr Eric Hemsil	Horrabridge	Cllr Kevin Ball	DCC Okehampton Rural
Cllr Jessica Evans	Lamerton	Cllr Diana Moyse	WDBC Burrator Ward
Cllr Chris Edmonds	Lifton	Cllr Terry Pearce	WDBC Mary Tavy Ward
Cllr Ruth Tainsh	Lydford	Cllr David Cloke	WDBC Walkham Ward
Cllr Lorraine Beeley	Mary Tavy	Cllr Dr Michael Ireland	Destination Okehampton
Cllr Anita Prosser	Mary Tavy	Cllr Paul Vachon	Okehampton Town Council
Cllr Howard Asbridge	Milton Abbot Grouped	Ms Kate Royston	SW Devon Community Energy Partnership
Cllr Ray Brewer	Milton Abbot Grouped		
Cllr Bill Lane	Peter Tavy		
Cllr Graham Antcliffe	Plasterdown Grouped		
Cllr John Sheldon	Tavistock & WDBC Tavistock North	Mr Nigel Tigwell	Clerk

**Councils not represented:**

Bradstone Parish Meeting	Burrator Grouped	Gulworthy	Kelly Parish Meeting
Lewdown Grouped	Stowford	Sydenham Damerel	

**Apologies:**

Cllr Mike Benson	Bere Ferrers	Cllr Mandy Ewing	WDBC Tavistock South
Cllr Jim Chalcraft	Gulworthy		

1. Valedictory

The Chair expressed the Committee's thanks to the outgoing Clerk, Clare Chapman. She has done an excellent job for the Southern Link for many years and the Committee wished her well for the future.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2014/15

Cllr David Butland was nominated, seconded and elected as Chair.

Cllr Ruth Tainsh was nominated, seconded and elected as Vice-Chair.

3. Notes of the Last Meeting

The notes of the meeting of 6 March 2014 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Policing Issues

The Police LAG statistics were circulated as a briefing paper prior to the meeting. Insp Andy Oliver amplified these with reports from the Neighbourhood Beat areas. Theft from, and damage to, cars

had increased, but Police had identified serial culprits and these incidents had reduced significantly after Police had warned them against their behaviour. Anti-social behaviour letters had been issued to several offenders and Restorative Justice measures used. The Devon Drink campaign is underway to combat under-age drinking and illegal drug use in public houses, in particular during the World Cup. Photographs of serial shoplifters have been circulated to local shops. A Neighbourhood Policing event will be held in Horrbridge on 28 June.

In response to questions, Insp Oliver told the Committee the new Police structure introduced in April was working well. He also agreed to consider whether the names of those undertaking Restorative Justice should be published.

## 6. South West Devon Community Energy Partnership Update

Kate Royston explained the work of the South West Devon Community Energy Partnership, a copy of her presentation is attached. A key feature is the need to 'localise energy' as the majority of energy spend is lost to the local economy. This can be achieved by reducing energy consumption, by generating more locally and by capturing the benefits locally. Suitable alternative sources of heating are bio-mass boilers and air/ground heat pumps. Electrical generation can be via solar, wind or hydro power.

A new grant scheme called 'Cosy Devon' is planned to launch on 23 June and a Tamar Energy Community is to be established (membership £1) following the success of the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network [Link: <http://www.wren.uk.com/>].

Some new housing is being designated 'passive housing' which aims for annual energy bills to be less than £200, but this needs upfront investment. Communal schemes are encouraged and the South Brent community wind turbine was cited as a good example.

In response to questions about the rigours applied by Planning Authorities to alternative energy schemes, Kate explained that by moving towards community ownership schemes local opposition would be minimised although the planning regulations would remain the same.

## 7. Highways and Rural Speed Limits

Sia Mahmoodshahi explained that DCC was in the process of developing a new policy on rural speed limits in response to the Department of Transport Circular 01/2013 issued in January 2013 [Link: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf)]. However, he was unable to provide any details of the new policy as DCC procedures prevented disclosure or consultation before the draft policy had been considered by the DCC cabinet.

The Committee welcomed the progress made since the March meeting but expressed disappointment that DCC Highways were not taking advantage of local knowledge within the Borough and Parish Councils to assist in the policy development. It was suggested more effective dialogue and consultation is needed.

The Department for Transport provides a speed limit appraisal tool to help assess the full costs and benefits of any proposed schemes and make evidence-based decisions for speed limits that reflect the needs of all road users. Its use is free of charge and is not restricted to local authorities. [Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speed-limit-appraisal-tool>]. However, Sia stated he was unable to accept any assistance from Parish Councils owing to DCC's regulations for Health and Safety and liability issues in the event of personal injury.

With regards to pedestrian safety, Sia explained most local roads are too narrow for pavement footpaths to be installed, as a footpath required 1.8m width beside the road.

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Highways are a formal consultee for all planning applications but Sia was unable to comment on specific examples raised, in which Councillors suggested Highways had not identified all the consequential implications of some applications.

The Committee invited Sia to the next meeting, when he would be able to explain the new DCC policy in detail. Sia agreed to attend.

## 8. Update on 2013/14 TAP Fund Projects

Children & Young Peoples Support Network Tavistock £ 1,000  
The money has been spent as intended and has been well received by the youth groups.

Bus Fund for TASS Buckland £13,750  
A new vehicle has been ordered but owing to delays in the production line it will not be delivered until September.

Street & School Pastors Tavistock £ 769  
The funding has been given to the Street Pastors and is being used in support of local people.

Village Hall Wi-Fi Tavistock £ 1,500  
Brentor and Belstone have gone ahead with wifi contracts. Delays have been encountered with other parishes owing to Parish Council financial regulations concerning invoices. Cllr John Sheldon is attempting to resolve the issue.

West Devon Parish Development & Training Programme Bere Ferrers £2,000  
This is proving successful. Two courses have been held to date, with 204 people booked to receive the benefits of training. In addition to the published programme, it is intended to hold a one day Cemetery Management course for Parish Councils and Church officials. The organisers have been frustrated by some Parish Clerks not forwarding details of the training available to councillors. Cllr Brian Lamb is attempting to overcome this problem.

Ward & Chowen Digital Archive Gulworthy £3,001  
No update available as Gulworthy Parish Council were not represented.

Defibrillators & appropriate training Bere Ferrers £6,156  
The defibrillators have been purchased and training will take place on 21 June.

Questions were asked about the rules for the TAP fund, after they had been revised slightly at the start of the financial year; and about the previous year spend. The current rules for the TAP Fund are on the WDBC website at [Link: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1173&p=0>]. Details of the TAP Fund spend in 2013/14 are on the website at [Link: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=9420&p=0>].

The following points should be noted:

Payment of grants will usually be made retrospectively for future applications with flexibility to pay upfront or in instalments where needed or appropriate.

Feedback will be required on each project to demonstrate what had been delivered and a summary of all projects for which funding has been agreed will be published on the WDBC website annually

At the Southern Link Committee each town or parish will have one vote to support or oppose each project, but this is a recommendation by the Committee, not approval. The final decision whether to fund a project will be still made by the relevant Ward and County Members once Council officers have checked it is a legitimate spend.

The deadline for TAP Fund applications for the September meeting is 4 September.

9. Broadband Update

An update by Cllr John Sheldon had been circulated with briefing notes prior to the meeting. There were no questions about the brief.

10. The Argument to Re-Open the Okehampton Tavistock Railway Line

Cllr Dr Michael Ireland gave a presentation on the work done by Destination Okehampton, a working group of Okehampton Town Council, to develop the Business and Community Case for the Exeter to Plymouth Complementary Route via Okehampton. A copy of his presentation is attached, as is a draft copy of a Destination Okehampton report.

A key feature of this work is to articulate the additional benefits the re-establishment of this route would provide through the regeneration of Torridge, West Devon and North Cornwall. Currently this is outside the scope of the Network Rail study but could be highly relevant in identifying the optimum solution to achieve rail resilience in the Peninsular.

Destination Okehampton intend to proceed to develop the case, obtain and collate supporting objective evidence and to use this to build a consensus for the route's re-instatement. They plan to use a professional rail consultant, but the details are still in development. An appeal for funding and other support will be made to Town and Parish Councils who would benefit from this rail link in due course.

During questions, a difference of opinion was apparent whether the listed Meldon Viaduct could be upgraded for the quoted cost and whether the Okehampton Tavistock route would be capable of handling the volume of trains required. Cllr Kevin Ball agreed to clarify which assumptions were correct.

*Post Meeting Notes from Cllr Ball:*

*There is precedence for using a listed viaduct with traditional build for modern trains, including the Shillamill Viaduct and the Royal Albert Bridge. This was discussed at a Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation meeting at Plymouth University on 18 January 2014 by Matt Barnes of DCC. The cost of upgrading Meldon Viaduct was provided by the Meldon Viaduct Company bridge engineer. Once upgraded, a single track over the centre of the viaduct (as at Largin on the Cornish mainline) is achievable, spreading the weight of a train more evenly. The weight of a HST power car is 73 tonnes and a coach is half that, which is less than the locomotives that used to use the line.*

*If the specification of the complementary line was to include the suggested 170 trains per day, it could be accommodated if the double track option was selected; or if there were only limited single track sections: for example for Meldon Viaduct, Cowley Bridge and St Budeaux Junction.*

Debate was cut short owing to time constraints and the Committee requested this topic be included on the agenda for the September meeting. Cllr Ireland agreed to return and offered to answer any questions posed before then [email: [mireland501@gmail.com](mailto:mireland501@gmail.com)].

11. Dartmoor National Park Authority Grant Funding

Jo Rumble briefed the Committee that the Authority had received funding from the WDBC S106 Housing budget and was launching two new grant schemes: 'Your Dartmoor Fund' and 'Dartmoor Communities Fund'. Town and Parish Councils will be consulted on applications received to ensure decision making was fully inclusive. A leaflet was circulated, a copy of which is attached.

*Jo Rumble briefed the Committee that the Authority was launching two new grant schemes: 'Your Dartmoor Fund' and 'Dartmoor Communities Fund'. The 'Your Dartmoor Fund' replaces the Dartmoor Sustainable Development Fund and the Dartmoor Communities Fund is new, funded by an allocation of New Homes Bonus monies provided by WDBC. Town and Parish Councils will be*

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*consulted on 'Dartmoor Communities Fund' applications received to ensure decision making was fully inclusive. A leaflet was circulated, a copy of which is attached.*

## 12. West Devon Borough Council Update

Alan Robinson reminded the Committee that the consultation period for 'Our Plan' ends on 20 June. WDBC would like to be invited to as many community events as possible to promote the plan and solicit views from the public.

The Boundary Commission consultation on revised ward boundaries ends on 21 July. Alan Robinson reminded Councillors that well-reasoned alternative proposals were required, not merely objections. Revised ward names have not been finalised. [Link: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-west/devon/west-devon-fer>].

In discussion reservations were expressed about the proposed multi-member ward of Dartmoor. While superficially it looked logical geographically, the road network was such that it was 21 miles from Lydford to Postbridge or Dartmeet. This represents a potential 50 minute drive each way for a Councillor visiting electors, which was considered unreasonable.

## 13. Devon County Council Update

Simon Kitchen briefed the Committee on the current status of DCC consultations. The outcome of the Youth Centres consultation had significantly changed the original DCC proposals and the cabinet has now approved the revised plan.

The consultations on Children Centres, Day Care and Residential Care have completed and DCC are assessing the responses and impacts before taking decisions. DCC have been working with Devon Clinical Commissioning Group for the best use of resources to deliver community services, and have been pleased with the level of expressions of interest from other organisations potentially capable of delivering these services.

The Library consultation is ongoing until 17 July: under DCC proposals Tavistock Library will be retained as a Devon Centre, but communities are being asked for proposals over the smaller libraries.

Simon concluded by emphasising that DCC was committed to delivering services differently, making better use of resources across County, Borough and Parish Councils and other public bodies such as the Police.

14. At this point the Chair closed the meeting, which had overrun to 2120, as the venue needed to be vacated.

15. The next meeting will be held at 1900 on Thursday 18 September 2014, with an opportunity to network over refreshments from 1830. **The meeting venue has been changed** due to budget constraints. It will now be held at the **Coronation Hall in Mary Tavy**. A map is attached below.



Nigel Tigwell

Clerk to the West Devon  
Southern Parish Link Committee

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Enclosures:

1. South West Devon Community Energy Partnership Update Presentation.
2. The Business and Community Case for the Exeter to Plymouth Complementary Route via Okehampton Presentation.
3. Rail Resilience Option II – a draft report by Destination Okehampton.
4. New Dartmoor Grants for 2014/15.

## Location

The Coronation Hall is easy to find and access is directly opposite the Post Office and Stores on the A386 Tavistock–Okehampton road.

