

KPC Chairman's Report for Annual Meeting of the Parish 2025

Welcome again to our Annual Meeting of the Parish or, as I am informed it should be called, the Annual Elector's Meeting. You are all our constituents so, although you didn't actually have to vote for us (because nobody else wanted the job), we are here to represent and serve you. If we aren't doing that please tell us and remind us who we work for.

Currently the Parish has 6 councillors although we should ideally have 7 so if anyone would like to join us please come and speak to any of us for more information. You're probably aware that we currently meet every 2 months (on the 4th Tuesday of odd numbered months) so that's not a huge cost in terms of time.

This time last year we had just taken on a new clerk for a probationary period and I'm glad to say she is still with us and is no longer on a trial. Jane clerks for several councils and she keeps us on our toes here. Things are much more organised than when I was Chairman and acting clerk, and we appreciate what she does for us. She has instigated a newsletter which will be issued every 6 months with any relevant information.

I am now the Police Advocate for the Parish so I get regular updates on policing plans and statistics. If anyone has issues or questions regarding policing, please feel free to contact me.

Our share of your council tax bill was held at the same amount as the previous year in our recent budget. We are fortunate in having good reserves and are always looking for projects which will benefit the parish. For example, we made initial investigations into the purchase /lease of part of the field next to the Mason's Arms with a view to creating additional parking for the Village Hall. This idea has been temporarily shelved but we may yet return to it. We have given funds to the Hall for various events e.g. £250 given for VE day 80th anniversary celebration party.

During the year a question was asked from one of the administrative layers above us regarding whether the parish wished to change its boundaries but the council said no.

Our roads are a perennial problem. The winter weather did quite a lot of damage (again) and there are many potholes. Sadly, they often don't quite fit the parameters required for repair by Highways. Once again, I would ask people to report them online.

We also have an issue with faded road markings. The clerk will contact the new local County Councillor to see if Highways can be encouraged to repaint some of these as there are serious safety concerns. I actually spoke to Highways this morning after another incident at Wiston Cross. I am also aware that some HGV drivers are apparently unable to read road signs and some seem to think that the HGV route only applies in one direction. A couple of properties sustain regular damage from large lorries. One resident is considering installing CCTV cameras to monitor these vehicles! Hopefully, now that the East Hill development is nearly complete, there should be less large traffic.

One event which caused concern to quite a number of parishioners was a weekend festival held at the Wild Woods Bar. We raised the issue with North Devon Council licensing and I don't think it is likely that a similar event will happen in the future.

Back on the subject of weather, we were all affected by storm Darragh. This highlighted a few issues with the emergency plan which we are trying to sort out. I came down to the hall one morning to try to get it functioning as a warm space but found that the generator wouldn't start. We now have a schedule to test run it for a few minutes every month. Communication was also a problem with difficulty knowing how other parts of the community were fairing. I hadn't realised how many postcodes we covered! (23?!)

Planning is usually not too contentious, but we do try to respond to any consultation requests we receive. This was made easier during the year by agreeing that councillors could discuss consultations without having to publicise and then hold extraordinary meetings, although we will do so if we deem it necessary.

The development at East Hill is now nearly complete and we are pleased to have new residents in the Lower Barn there.

Sidemoor Picnic Areas

There has been considerable concern recently over the proposed sale of the 2 picnic areas at the A361 junction.

Of the members of the Land and Property Committee which met at the end of January and proposed the sale of the two picnic areas only one was re-elected in the recent elections.

Sharon Bacon, a resident of South Molton, who has been most vociferous in her opposition to the sale recently received a reply to her letter to the local MP Ian Roome.

The reply was as follows: (25th April.)

Dear Sharon

It is my understanding that the matter is to go back to the Devon County Council Land & Property Committee, following the concerns raised.

So in that respect, can only assume that for now at least, the land will not be marketed.

Warm Regards

Ian

Office of Ian Roome MP (North Devon)

ian.roome.mp@parliament.uk

The minutes of the meeting in January do say: **Moortown Picnic Site**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Biederman, **SECONDED** by Councillor Dewhirst and **RESOLVED** that Land at Moortown Picnic Site, South of South Molton on North Devon Link Road be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and disposed of and that best endeavours are used to ensure existing facilities are maintained or enhanced, failing which, the matter will be brought back to the Committee for further consideration. 3 LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE 31/01/25

This is repeated for the Sidemoor Picnic Site.

The council are monitoring the situation and have questions which will be sent to the new committee once we know who the members are. We will also contact our new County Councillor about this.

Please do contact any of us if you have concerns and come along to our meetings.

John Pomfret – Chairman Knowstone Parish Council

13th May 2025

Notes

Precept kept the same (our part) due to funds available for historic reasons.

We are looking at ideas which might benefit the village such as additional parking but haven't yet made any decisions. We would welcome suggestions from parishioners.

Planning is usually not too contentious, but we do try to respond to any consultation requests we receive. This was made easier during the year by agreeing that councillors could discuss consultations without having to publicise and then hold extraordinary meetings.

"Rave" last summer at Wild Woods. Complained to NDDC and expressed the concern felt by several parishioners regarding the event. Also queried the tree felling which appeared to have taken place in the area. (PRINT OUT RESPONSES)

Roads – Potholes and lack of road markings.

HGV's not using the correct routes.

Appointed new clerk who is keeping us on our toes.

Chairman appointed as Police Advocate for the parish.

Six-monthly newsletter to be circulated in the Parish with relevant information.

A question was asked regarding whether the parish wished to change its boundaries but the council said no.

£250 given to Village Hall for VE day 80th anniversary celebration party

Disputes between residents

Storm Darragh – Emergency Plan and Generator issues. **How many postcodes?**

Planning (check 80082)

Minutes

Moortown Picnic Site

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Sidemoor Picnic Site

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Biederman, **SECONDED** by Councillor Dewhirst and **RESOLVED** that Land at Sidemoor Picnic Site, South of South Molton on North Devon Link Road be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and disposed of, and that best endeavours are used to ensure existing facilities are maintained or enhanced, failing which, the matter will be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

Sidemoor Picnic Areas

Of the members of the Land and Property Committee which met at the end of January and proposed the sale of the two picnic areas only one was re-elected in the recent elections.

Sharon Bacon, a resident of South Molton, who has been most vociferous in her opposition to the sale recently received a reply to her letter to the local MP Ian Roome.

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Reply received from our MP Ian Roome

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Ian

Office of Ian Roome MP (North Devon)

ian.roome.mp@parliament.uk

(+44) 01271 410470

This is good news but questions that immediately spring to mind are:-

- 1) when will Devon County Council discuss this, will interested parties such as [Exmoor National Park](#), [Knowstone](#) Parish Council, [North Devon Unesco Biosphere](#) the Sidemoor and Moortown existing tenants, Edgemoor Communities, Peninsula Transport, South & North Molton Community representatives be invited?
- 2) What committee of Devon County Council will discuss?
- 3) Where will the proposed meeting take place?
- 4) Can the public attend said meeting and if the answer to that is no how will the public voice on the future of both sites be included in the decision making process?

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The council did speak at a committee meeting during an appeal following a refusal of planning permission by a parishioner.

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Disputes between residents

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Sidemoor Picnic Areas.

Councillors R Chesterton (Chair),

R Scott (Vice-Chair),

F Biederman,

A Dewhirst

C Slade

Asvachin

Hellyer

EX36 4QX
EX36 4QU
EX36 4QT
EX36 4RZ
EX36 4SA
EX36 4SB
EX36 4RY
EX36 4RW
EX36 4RP
EX36 4DY
EX36 4DZ
EX36 4EB
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EX36 4RT
EX36 3PT
EX36 3PH
EX16 8EH
EX16 9JT
EX19 9JU