

Knowstone Annual Meeting of the Parish

17th May 2022

Reports from

Local Committees, Groups, Clubs and Organisations

1. Knowstone Parish Council
2. St Peter's Knowstone PCC
3. Knowstone Parish Hall
4. Moors Management Association
5. Garden Club

KNOWSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Annual Report for the period 2021-2022

Due to lockdown there has been a gap in providing an annual report so I will include a brief summary of the intervening period since 2019. In the autumn of 2020 Tony Moore, the chairman, resigned and Reg Howe agreed to stand in as chairman for a 6 month period. The vice-chairman, Jeremy Filmer-Bennet left the parish, so also resigned from the Council.

At the start of the current council year there were 7 councillors: Reg Howe, John Stanbury, David Barrett, Debbie Maidment, John Clarke, Andrew Parry and John Pomfret with Wendy Sweet as the clerk of the council. (Lockdown taught most of the nation the importance of the relationship between a council and their clerk!)

At the AGM Reg resigned from the council. John Pomfret was elected as chairman and Andrew Parry as vice-chairman. During the year Natasha Vukic joined the council but sadly David Barrett resigned. Thus, there currently is a vacancy for another councillor so please feel free to volunteer – or ask one of us for more information. We have had monthly meetings until recently when we decided to change to every other month.

A quick search of “What are Parish Councils” on the internet indicates that it is the first (lowest) level of local government. Their aim is **to represent the local community, deliver services to meet local needs and to strive to improve quality of life and community well-being.**

Because Parishes differ widely in their size, population and location councils have a broad range of responsibilities. In the case of Knowstone, deprived as we are of a public bath, washhouse, or bathing hut to oversee, we are more often concerned with matters such as the maintenance of the Parish Graveyard, the pound, and Beaples Stone, monitoring the footpaths, liaising with the police and Highways Department, and commenting on local planning matters, as well as passing requests from parishioners to those at District or County Council level and attempting to elicit responses.

We historically have not had many planning applications in the Parish. Where these do happen, the County Planning Department are obliged to consider any comments we make, although they may not necessarily decide the application in agreement with our submission. In October 2019 the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted by the relevant councils. The website for this says “The North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 (the Local Plan) sets out the vision, strategies and policies to guide how northern Devon should develop over the coming years. It is one of the key documents that make up the development plan which provides the starting point for the determination of planning applications.”

Knowstone Parish Council are also responsible for the Emergency Plan, recently updated, which, should the need arise, will allow the community to be better at helping itself should outside help be temporarily unavailable.

The past year:

Recently the demand from Knowstone for the Community Bus has fallen to such a degree that it is no longer viable for the council to provide funds and thus the bus no longer passes through the village.

During the year the council funded the provision of several wooden planters next to the roads at the entrances to the communities in the Parish. These are kindly maintained by volunteers.

The council also has some litter picking equipment available for use on request by parishioners.

Looking Forward:

Knowstone Parish Council is fortunate in having a healthy bank balance and we are keen to use our funds to good local effect. We are always looking out for suitable local projects to support. Some of the funds will be used to help with the imminent celebration of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in June. We plan to plant some trees at Wiston Cross, Roachill, later in the year as a long-term reminder of this event. We are also investigating the possibility of installing an electric vehicle charging point at the Parish Hall.

When "East Hill Farm" is sold, and the development of the two affordable homes begins, the Parish will receive some funds and a parcel of land next to those homes. We are keen to hear from parishioners who have ideas about a suitable use for the land.

District Councillor Eric Ley and County Councillor Jeremy Yabsley offer great support and frequently manage to fit in attendances at our meetings for which we are very grateful.

As chairman, I would like to thank all our councillors for the hard work they do to support our community. My thanks also to our clerk and Responsible Financial Officer Wendy Sweet for keeping us on the straight and narrow and ensuring that we are able to fulfil our obligations as fully as possible.

Finally my thanks to those parishioners who come along to our meetings and remind us why we are there. All parishioners are most welcome to join us. The meetings are currently held every other month on the 4th Tuesday at the Parish Hall. Notices of the agenda for upcoming meetings are put on the three area noticeboards (Knowstone, East Knowstone and Roachill) in the week before each meeting.

John Pomfret – Chairman

ST. PETER'S CHURCH KNOWSTONE

REPORT TO ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

17 MAY 2022

The last meeting of our parish was about three years ago and a great deal has happened in the meantime. Church services were stopped by Covid 19 and in their place we had 'Zoom' sessions which were very well attended. Gradually the church doors are opening and parishioners are slowly coming back.

In the meantime work was carried on inside and outside of the church.

The church yard has never looked better. The wild flowers are delightful and the grass is neatly kept. The yew trees have had a great deal of attention and the lime trees were pollarded and are now full of growth.

The wall between the church and Knowstone Court has been repaired and the wall opposite the Masons Arms has been strengthened.

Also, work did not stop following the discovery of the Rood Loft steps which had been hidden since 1561. The steps, wall paintings and the texts are there for all to see and a light has been installed to illuminate them. Our architect, Mrs Alison Bunning, entered this into a country-wide competition for interesting and historic projects. The short list of five was on display at the church of St Magdalene in West London in late 2021 and to our amazement and delight St.Peter's won. Alison was presented with the gold ring of the King of Prussia and the church was given a cheque for £500.

Our Parish Church team works hard to keep St. Peter's clean and orderly and we welcome everyone to our services.

Our team is:-

Church Warden:	Reg Howe
Treasurer:	Wendy Sweet
Secretary:	Liz Barrett
Members:	Barbara Osborne and David Barrett

Reg Howe – Church Warden

Knowstone Parish Hall Annual Activity Report for the Annual Meeting of the Parish on 17th May 2022

It has been an extraordinary two+ years with the pandemic affecting all areas of life. Hence the last report was submitted in May 2019. All Parish Hall activities came to an abrupt halt at the end of March 2020. Until that point the activities mentioned in the previous report were all running effectively.

Over the pandemic period we have had some changes in the Committee membership. This year our long-standing Treasurer, Sheila Bray, retired after 25 years of committed service. I am sure that everyone will join me in thanking Sheila for her outstanding service and commitment to the community.

The current Committee members are:

Chairperson:	Tiina Paju-Pomfret
Treasurer:	Wendy Sweet
Secretary:	Liz Barrett
Members:	Ken Dykes – due to retire later this year David Barrett Catherine Whatcott Jeanie Hicks John Pomfret Phil Dey Gill Smith Martin Smith

In 2022 we have successfully restarted activities with some changes. Our current activities include:

- Coffee mornings – the charity events for Devon Air Ambulance and Ukraine were particularly well attended
- Pilates classes weekly
- Film Nights over winter months with a new concept introducing Hog Roast and a Bar
- Easter Bingo as we were not able to do a Christmas event
- A new idea of a Games Afternoon with lots of traditional games and Scalextric racing

Currently we are focused on delivering a memorable Platinum Jubilee Weekend for the Parishioners with a Community Walk and a Jubilee Street Party to celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 70 year-reign.

Our Hall is a great community asset providing seating for 94 people along with a fully functioning kitchen, WiFi and projection equipment. We also have tables and chairs for Parishioners to borrow.

We are fortunate to have committed members in our team who are willing to take time from their busy lives for the benefit of their community. Here's to a successful year full of fun and beneficial activities.

Tiina Paju-Pomfret
Chairperson

Haresdown and Knowstone Moors Management Association

Report prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting 16.05.22

The Haresdown and Knowstone Moors Management Association (the Association) was constituted at an inaugural meeting held on 16th February 1993. A constitution was approved at the meeting, and committee members were elected. To obtain funds from government schemes, it was deemed necessary to have an Association. You will find that many commons and moors across the UK have an Association of some form who manage its activities, expenditure, and income.

During the last 12 months the Association has held three committee meetings to which commoners with rights to the moors were invited. These ancient rights are linked to certain households in the parish and allow those households to exercise particular rights on the commonland, namely to take turbary (e.g. peat) or to graze stock. Being part of a Stewardship scheme means that these rights are curtailed so the commoners are recompensed for their inability to exercise their rights through whichever scheme the Association has joined.

Mr. John Stanbury was re-elected as Chairman of the Association at the AGM held in December 2021. The Association includes representatives from Knowstone Parish Council and the Devon Wildlife Trust both of whom own part of the moors. In terms of the KPC, this ownership arose after the link road was created in the late eighties. Since the last annual report, new members Rosemary Newton of East Knowstone, Debbie Maidment of Knowstone Parish Council and Steve Threlkeld of the Devon Wildlife Trust have joined the Association. James Siggs was appointed as the new Treasurer in 2020 and has been involved in ensuring that the Association continues to operate within the correct financial parameters.

On-going maintenance of the moors continues, all of which is necessary to meet the requirements of the Countryside Stewardship scheme into which the moors are entered and which is run by the Rural Payments Agency and Natural England. The gorse and bracken have been cut back on agreed sites. All hedging has been completed.

Rotten wooden posts will continue to be replaced by Devon Wildlife Trust who have also assisted with the removal of fly tipping wherever possible. Concerns over illegal parking on the moor continue. It is never an easy issue to resolve as trespass is deemed a civil matter by the police but the Association is grateful for all prompt reporting of such activities.

It is a key requirement of the Countryside Stewardship scheme that cattle are grazed on the moors from May to late September. The Association would remind pedestrians and vehicle drivers to take care when passing the cattle on the road or walking on the moors. The cattle owner will endeavour that the cattle stay on the moor but they are free to roam and can do so up to all cattle grids.

Dog fouling remains an issue, especially as it can cause neosporosis (primarily abortions) in grazing cattle and placing dog poo bins has been discussed but the Association has been advised that the bins can ironically increase littering. Instead, signs reminding people to pick up after their dogs will be placed on the moor.

A request was made by a parishioner to create a bridleway on the moor. However, this was deemed to be a costly exercise which would need funding and approval from Natural England. It was also noted that the open access across the moor provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act only provides for access on foot and does not include

access by horse. Therefore, the Association have noted that horses should stick to
bridleways only and are not permitted to ride wherever they wish on the moors.

Some of you may be aware that changes are afoot with environmental payments to
landowners and farmers. The current scheme for our moors runs until the end of 2023.
Discussion over which new scheme to join will be a key focus for the Association during the
coming year. Finally we hope that you continue to enjoy the moors and the difference they
make to our parish landscape.

Thank you.

Wendy Vigus (Secretary) - 01398 341159

John Stanbury (Chairman) - 01398 341546

**Report to Knowstone Parish Council
on behalf of Knowstone and Rose Ash Garden Club
April 2020-March 2022**

Committee members:

Mary Dalton (Chairperson)
Frances King (Vice Chairperson)
Barbara Pritchard (Treasurer)
Mandy Harper (Secretary)
Caro Hammick (Committee Member)

The Garden Club meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm, and the annual membership is £20 (reduced to £15 for 2022-3 in view of cancelled meetings over the last year). We hold the meetings in Knowstone and Rose Ash village Halls. During the winter months we have a variety of speakers, and in the summer visit gardens, nurseries and hold a BBQ. We also organise a plant sale and coffee morning and maintain the garden at the Mason's Arms in Knowstone. These activities boost our funds and help to pay for our speakers and an annual dinner at the Mason's Arms in January. In December we also have a wreath making get together, with lunch or evening snacks and wine.

Unfortunately most of these activities have been cancelled during 2020 and 2021 due to Covid 19. However there is a full programme for the next year, and all new members and visitors will be warmly welcomed.

Mandy Harper, secretary.
thefamilyharper@aol.com