

Ermington Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 6 May 2025 at 7.00 pm

in the

Reading Rooms, Ermington

Present: Cllrs Denis Onley (Chair), Robert Owens Ian Creese, Cliff Sumner, Nicholas Toms, John Messham, Andrew Savery and Margaret Grafton

District Councillor Alison Dewynte
Devon County Councillor Dan Thomas
Teresa Drew (Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

Parishioners: 8

WELCOME

Cllr Onley welcomed the guest speaker - Claire Puckey (Community Liaison & Support Lead) from The Four Rivers Dementia Alliance

TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies accepted from Cllrs John Dunlop.

GUEST SPEAKER

Dementia Friendly Parisher – local charity set up 13 years ago to help people with dementia and their families.

Self-funded charity which supports 5 rural communities around the Yealm. The charity enables people to stay within their communities and to support them. Support comes in various forms e.g. regular home visits, advice when needed, for example looking up things on the computer. Also, practical and emotional support and making referrals to other communities.

Weekly and monthly events take place which can be viewed on the website <https://www.4riversdementia.org.uk>

People living with dementia often worry about the stigma and the numbers of those diagnosed is increasing, 1 in 2 of us will be affected by dementia.

There is free support to parish councils to help promote the parish to be dementia friendly.

TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MAY 2024

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting which took place Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 7.00 pm, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR DENIS ONLEY

The last year has brought many challenges, but also important achievements, the most significant being that after many years of encouraging more parishioners to join us, we have succeeded over the last year, to increase the number of Parish Councillors, to a nearly full complement.

Following a By-election in November 2024 we had several applications for Co-option around Christmas & New Year, and later tonight we will consider another, so we are now much better placed to reflect and represent a range of opinions when considering issues effecting the Parish.

The impact of the political change at a national level following the summer 2024 election, and most recently at last weeks County Council elections, is already having a profound effect on how the Parish Council relates to other authorities. The pace and scale of planning for Local Government Reorganisation over the last few months has been ambitious, and I am grateful to Cllr Robert Owens for attending the numerous meetings and distilling the various proposals into manageable information we can all understand and share with parishioners.

Some examples of our decisions and work during this last year are:

We have kept our portion of the Council Tax, at the same level to continue to return surplus reserves to parishioners. The full accounts can be seen on our website.

There has been a lot of interest in planning applications. We are only allowed to comment on these within the planning regulations and timescales. However, we have consistently represented parishioners views submitted through the South Hams District Council (SHDC) planning website or by letter to SHDC, and copied to the Parish Council prior to our meeting.

We have continued to do everything within our power to slow traffic through the village, we have now installed and monitor two vehicle activated speed cameras which collect data & warn speeding motorists. My thanks to Cllr. Ian Creese for installing and maintaining the cameras and managing the data. We have also worked with the local Community Speedwatch Team, and our thanks go to all involved in the speed monitoring sessions.

Our campaign to make the A3121, Totnes Road safer for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, by reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph between the river walk footpaths, is agreed in principle but has been held up by a lack of support from Devon County Council (DCC) in agreeing the details of how and where to slow the traffic. Hopefully, the new leadership at Devon County Council will help facilitate the implementation of this project.

Several parishioners have told us about speeding motorists and dangerous driving, along the A3121, also through Westlake, Cadleigh and along Hunsdon Road. All motoring offences need to be reported to the Police direct through Police contact at the time, or using the Operation Snap website, as the Police tell us they get very few reports from Ermington residents, and therefore we are not considered a priority.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR DENIS ONLEY (continued)

Other highways issues including regular flooding, the increased number and repeated re-appearance of potholes, worn road markings, and blocked drains, have been pursued on behalf of parishioners. These are all Devon County Council responsibilities; however, we have chased up those reported on the DCC website and resolved several complaints by working with the local Highways Team.

We funded repairs to the footpath from The Square to the Church during the autumn 2024, to provide a safe alternative pedestrian route from the Square to the Church, and Shop & Hub.

We have continued to campaign for improved bus services & commissioned a Community Transport Survey which was undertaken during the spring, from which we are awaiting the results.

We have agreed grants to the Church, to fund clock repairs, also the Village Fund, the new Ermington Local History Group, Ermington Environmental Group (EE), and South Hams Citizens Advice.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR DENIS ONLEY (continued)

Together with Ermington Environmental we added Swift boxes to the Reading Room walls, and continued to support local litter pickers. My thanks to Ermington Environmental volunteers who give their time to help improve the environment and clean the River banks and footpaths, also to Sarah & all the volunteers who collect litter along our lanes and hedgerows.

We have installed a temporary toilet on the park for the summer months, for parishioners' convenience, my thanks to Cllr Nick Toms for leading on this project.

This report can only be a short summary of our work, much more is ongoing, information about which is available on our website: <https://www.ermingtonparish.com>, or parishioners can speak to any Councillor, attend our meetings, or contact us via our website, email, or post.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Teresa Drew, our Parish Clerk for her hard work and dedication in supporting the work of the Parish Council.

After 6 years as Chair, I have reached a point where I'm ready for something different and the Council being almost complete, is now in a strong place and ready for new leadership, so I do not intend seeking re-election as Chair.

Finally, I think it worth reminding ourselves that Parish Councillors are volunteers, all striving to ensure that Ermington continues to be a great place to live and as the first tier of Local Government, our role in representing the parish is vital to our democracy, so I wish to finish by thanking my fellow Parish Councillors.

Thank you.

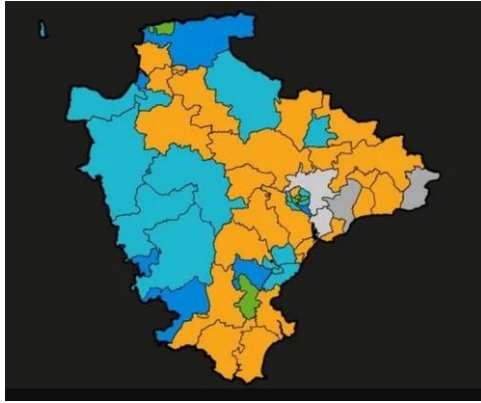
ANNUAL REPORT FROM DEVON COUNTY COUNCILLOR DANIEL THOMAS

Continuing action for A3121 reduction in speed from 40 mph to 30 mph.

There is now an action plan to rectify the flooding in Westlake.

Election Results

Last week's election saw the political map of Devon dramatically redrawn. The Lib Dems went from 9 to 27 Cllrs (4 short of an outright majority). The Conservatives went from 40 to 7 Cllrs. The Green Party gained 4 members, from 2 to 6 Cllrs. The Independents are now at 2, down from 3 Cllrs. Reform UK are the official opposition, with 18 Cllrs. The South Hams is the only authority area in Devon with no Reform members.



Julian Brazil has been elected Leader of the Lib Dems and will become Leader at County later this month. He has announced that he will be resigning from his position as leader at SHDC.

Paul Arnott, the Leader of East Devon District Council, will be his county deputy. A new county cabinet will be selected over the next couple of weeks, prior to the annual meeting on May 22nd.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ALISON DEWYNTE

Largest challenge for SHDC is reduction in funding from government and the council needs to counteract the changes by increasing car parking charges.

SHDC has supported various biodiversity projects.

QUESTIONS ARISING FROM ANNUAL REPORTS

Cllr Messham asked what the next steps are to reduce the speed on the A3121. Cllr Thomas There will be a new cabinet, so we will have to wait and see.

Parishioner – what is going to happen with speed and volume through the village? Cllr Onley pointed out it is a partnership between Devon County Council and the parish council. Please report to the police any issues that you see.

The meeting finished at 7.45 pm.

Signed:
(Chair)

Date: