

**DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on  
Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in the Blackawton Primary School Hall**

**Present:** There were 16 people present, including Parish & South Hams District Cllr Rake (Chair), Parish Cllrs Oughton (Vice-Chair), Luckens, and Thomas, two guest speakers, and A. Thom (Clerk).

**1. Report from Blackawton Parish Council Chair**

Cllr Rake discussed what the Parish Council (PC) has been working on during the year since the last Annual Parish Meeting.

Four Parish Councillors were elected unopposed in the May 2023 elections. Since then a further three Councillors have been co-opted to join the Council.

The biggest change has been the ongoing relationship with the Churchyard. The PC has been acting as if it is in charge of the Churchyard's maintenance. However, it has been advised that for legal reasons it is not. The PC is not trying to get out of the responsibility but wants to put it on a firm footing. If a request to take on the maintenance responsibility is received, the PC will then have the option to transfer liability and responsibility to the District Council. It has not yet decided what to do. Even if transferred the PC still has a degree of control over the maintenance work done.

The PC has carried out several community surveys. The management of the Churchyard's avenue of cherry trees is in abeyance. There was a mixed response to the street lighting survey. Most respondents were open to a degree of change.

The work towards the French Furze developer finishing and transferring to the final owners the Business Units and the community land at the School end of the development consumes PC time and their lack of progress is enormously frustrating.

Work to carry out maintenance to the Blackawton Cemetery's wall has been booked. Back Lane will be closed while the work is done.

**2. Report from Blackawton's South Hams District Councillor**

SHDC is very policy oriented and it takes a while for change to happen. There is a new Council Plan and a related Delivery Plan.

£45,000 was granted to Sustainable South Hams. SHDC is keen to work in partnership.

SHDC is in the process of purchasing 300 acres of land to plant trees and create publicly accessible woodland.

Waste collection is being sorted out. There is a very impressive team working on the project.

The national missed bin target is less than 80 in a 100,000. The rate was 1,700/100,00. There has been a downward trend since bringing the service back into SHDC and it is now 125/100,00.

SHDC has had some big enforcement wins. SHDC prosecuted the unauthorised removal of two trees in Hope Cove which were protected by a tree protection order and a £15,000 fine was issued. In Kingsbridge a developer's appeal against a planning decision was refused. In the appeal case partial costs were awarded to SHDC, which is unusual. SHDC is working to improve enforcement.

There followed questions and discussion about the French Furze Business Units and the incomplete work on the community areas at the School end of the development. Cllr Rake said that the developer has said that their plan is to complete drainage and their other outstanding work and to submit a tie up final planning application. However that hasn't happened. The related S106 doesn't have penalty clauses for non-compliance.

There was a question about the footpath which will be installed behind the village from Greenslade Road under another S106 agreement. Cllr Rake confirmed that it will be joined up by the developers to the existing footpath. How that happens is currently under discussion. There might be a boardwalk bridge.

**Guest Speakers**

### **3. Sustainable South Hams - The marvel of Community Composting**

The speaker explained how community composting schemes are set up and run, and discussed the process and benefits of composting.

The community composting schemes can compost anything that once lived - especially garden waste. Residents help to turn the compost. The schemes produce compost of high quality and high biological activity for use by residents.

A tablespoon of compost contains nearly a billion microbes. Placing a community composting site on impoverished soil improves the quality of the soil. For example an impoverished farmer's field could be used over several years and then returned to the farmer improved.

Community composting has community benefits, it's fun, waste becomes a resource, soil is a carbon sink, and the high proportion of biological matter means that more moisture is held by soil containing the compost produced.

The speaker noted that SHDC said, when it removed the free discretionary green waste collection and introduced a chargeable service, that it would provide £200,000 to support composting. Sustainable South Hams is helping to ensure that happens. SHDC is offering grants of up to £7,500 per community composting group. SHDC will shred garden waste. Community composting groups can be simple, unincorporated associations with a treasurer and a chair. There is support available to help to set new community composting schemes up. There is a composting demonstration site at South Brent.

There are four current funded projects: community composting projects, wheelie bin conversions, composting roadshow, and food waste compost club.

### **4. Mole Energy - Solar Panels and Battery Storage**

The speaker discussed solar panel installation, battery storage, and EV chargers. They said solar panels alone will provide daytime energy, adding battery storage provides night time energy, and residences can be self-sufficient, at least in the spring and summer.

Around one in one in ten to two in every ten installations choose ground mounted solar panels. They have the advantages of not needing scaffolding and are easier to access. They can be a good solution for listed buildings.

Panels have a warranty of 15 to 25 years. At 25 years panels will be 85% efficient. The payback period is three to four years.

Powerwall batteries are available.

Mole Energy have a supply of free pallets if that's useful to people, for example for setting up composting.

As panels increase in efficiency fewer panels are required and less surface area is needed. A smart export guarantee has replaced the previous feed in tariffs.

Excess energy that's not stored feeds back into the grid to be used locally, with the consumer charged at the energy company's supply charge.