

## Minutes, SCEnSus, 23 March 2021

### 1. Welcome.

Joy Tucker, Marion Pratt, Janet Palmer, Veronica Matthews, Robin and Jill Bevis, David Botting-Page, Phillip Collins.

### 2. Apologies.

Tony Leech, Ruth Testa.

3. Approval of the minutes and any matters arising not covered below. Minutes approved by all. Robin raised the issue of the proposed reopening of the train line between Okehampton and Exeter. There is at present no plans for the trains to stop at Sampford Courtenay station and Robin feels that as a group we should raise this issue with Network rail especially in view of cutting down car travel in the future. Veronica feels that a large number of people would probably not want to drive into Okehampton through traffic lights and queuing traffic when you could have been halfway to Exeter in that time so they would miss out on a lot of potential customers. Janet thought that the local news had stated that this was the first stage of reopening and wondered whether future stations would be looked at at a later date. David thinks that it will be an unmanned station at Okehampton and questioned whether halts are still used. These are thought to be request stops along the lines. Robin said we should find out who is responsible for deciding the route and try and make contact with them and discuss the concerns that the already in place station we have here will not be put to good use. Accessibility to Exeter College was thought to be a large focus of the plans.

Marion said that this issue should go into the SCPC agenda for the next meeting and decide the best way forward and if we should lobby Network rail as both SCEnSus and parish council; a referendum of parishioners as to how much they think they may use the line would be useful. It was thought that to combine it with Parish views along with SCEnSus views would have more clout in view of the fact we are a small and new group. Robin feels that a request stop at Sampford station would serve us best. Also is it worth raising the issue with Mel Stride as he was championing the reopening of the rail line to Okehampton and supported Sampford Station being used. Robin and Jill are going to tweak the letter they have written, highlighting the environmental issues, and send it to Mel Stride. The letter will also be circulated to councillors. Robin wished to point out that his letter was more along the lines of why people would not use Okehampton station.

4. Ongoing Initiatives. i. Community garden. There was a lot of positive feedback from the recent SCPC open meeting Q&A evening. Marion asked if we are happy that she puts the poll on the website for everyone to have their say bearing in mind it covers all aspects of the village green, not just environmental issues, although the emphasis is along those lines. Responses will be sought within the next month so that progress can be made this season.

The churchyard at St Andrews is what is known as a live burial ground as it is still used for burials at present as opposed to St Peters at North Tawton whose last burial in it's grounds were over 100 years ago. Therefore relatives of the deceased need to be thought of when any plans to not cut grass or other environmentally friendly practices take place. Malcom Craig has said that we are lucky to have quite a diverse and abundant amount of wildlife already at Sampford Courtenay. The

practice of replacing any tree that dies with a new one has been going on for many years. The family of Tim Edwards has kindly said that they would like to donate daffodil bulbs to be planted on the village green in his memory. Those from North Tawton wishing to attend the memorial planting this coming autumn will be invited. Tom Parsons from Devon Wildlife trust said that we need to consider when using willow for sculptures that they require quite a lot of maintenance as they can rapidly take over areas. Veronica said she is picking up some willow from cllr Tony Leach and will try and make the goal posts with it. She also wonders whether putting her drawing plan for the village green would be useful to give people a clear idea of what or group is hoping to achieve and this may spark more interest and other ideas. There should hopefully be a decision by April's PC meeting.

ii. Peat free initiatives. Jill says that all the peat free compost has sold and all the money is in. They have been out of internet connection recently so have been unable to put an update on the website but thanks everyone who has taken part in purchasing it. David said he spoke to the owner at Linfields garden centre at Sampford station and he sold out of peat free and is having to order more as it's been so popular.

iii. Community hub. update on feedback on boards. The notice board at the plant stand in the square is getting some use at present and it is felt that the best additional options may be the bus shelters at the New Inn and SC station and have a notice on them saying they are the community hub points. He asked if the parish council be able to fund the boards. David said it is quite difficult to find boards that are made of environmental friendly materials.

iv. Litter/Recycling: report on spring clean-up. There was an excellent response of 25 people that turned out on 20th March for the spring clean and a large quantity was cleared from the roadside and hedges. It was mentioned if it is worth getting in contact with Mel Stride and WDBC about the amount of rubbish throughout the whole of the county and that government should be doing more to put pressure on supermarkets and fast food takeouts. Joy will contact WDBC and local supermarkets to ask about recycling soft plastics (as available at Tesco in Crediton).

v. Monthly challenges. Veronica has said that the bug hotel and grass cutting are the latest challenges and hope that there will be plenty of interest in these. Jill wonders if people could take photos of a flower/plant with a bee or a bug on them and enter them into the flower show for the photo section. Also the photo could go on the notice boards.

Veronica said that June could be used as a time to reflect on what challenges have been achieved on the New years resolutions.

Devon wildlife trust have a website on which you can record what wildlife you are seeing in your area. They already have 11 local parishes which are monitored due to them being remote or are not very populated.

5. Co-ordination of SCEnSus publicity/information. Joy said the publicity email from Bondligh was very good and informative. Jill said at the moment she is not in a good position to put anything on the website until back online, but will do so then.

6. Local collaboration, climate/environmental page in the Roundabout magazine. Waiting to hear back from Ruth Testa on what she hopes will come to fruition. Joy asked if 2 members were able to be nominated to liaise with North Tawton and Bondliegh and any other wildlife groups. Veronica and Janet have volunteered to take this roll on. Veronica says she has contact with Tom Parson through her farm

conservation rolls and also Ruth Testa is also on Devon wildlife trust . There are several free sessions that can be joined via zoom from DWLT and also Youtube videos to watch and find out more of what they are doing and Veronica said she can circulate the links to the meetings; most are free.

7. There is the possibility of chipper hire for the village for anyone wanting to bring their waste to recycle. Phillip questioned the fact that it would be using fuel or electricity to run it makes it environmentally unfriendly and would there be better options instead. Jill and Robin say they make a dead hedge out of all of their brash which rots down and have been doing so for 15 years now. They just add to it year on year and will send pictures of it to the group. The chipper could be used just to clear the village hall pile of cuttings as it's been there 5 years and not rotted down yet.

8. Draft resource and waste management document : comments. Joy will re circulate the resource and waste management document again as not everyone has read it or got it yet and comments for future meetings can be gained.

9. Any other business.

David said on a personal note he and his wife Gaynor have now got themselves electric bikes which help them greatly with shopping trips and days out. (Also the big hills)

Daffodil planting in and around the parish to be thought about for Autumn and Veronica said that she is very proud of how she has managed to cultivate from seed the native variety in her farm lane and wondered if that is something that could be worked on. The triangle at Honeychurch was looked at for wildflowers but daffodils have been planted there and its not known if the two species can co grow there succesfully.

10. Date of next meeting 21st April 7.30pm via zoom.

## **Proposals**

1. That SCPC takes into consideration the points raise in the letter sent by parishioners to Mel Stride MP when it discusses any action to be taken regarding the proposed reopening of the railway line. It is hoped that SCPC and SCEnSus can be more effective working together on this issue.

2. That SCPC supports and offers funding for the community notice boards, as per the draft outline submitted by David Botting-Page.