

Minutes of the Council Meeting held 06/02/25, 19:00 at Witheridge Parish Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr Harvey	Chairman	Cllr Bibby	Cllr Fox	Cllr Richardson
Cllr Northam	Vice Chairman	Cllr Cunningham	Cllr Goodwin	
		Cllr Dorow		

In Attendance:

County Cllr J Yabsley – part meeting	3 Members of the public
District Cllr P Jones	Parish Clerk

“Minutes of proceedings of a council and of its committees must be kept. They are intended to be formal records of official acts and decisions, not reports, still less verbatim reports of speeches...” Local Council Administration.

1. To receive the following Reports (strictly maximum 15 minutes – long reports should be submitted in advance to allow circulation to councillors prior to the meeting– submitted reports will be appended to meeting minutes):-

1.1. County and District.

1.2. Police Advocate update.

<https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/councillor-advocate-scheme>
<https://www.police.uk/your-area/devon-and-cornwall-police/south-molton/>

1.3. Parish Groups with Council Representatives.

2. Public Session (maximum 3 mins per subject overall max. 15 minutes).

(Please note in accordance with Council Standing Order 3(h) a question shall not give rise to a debate or require an immediate response).

- Representations made concerning planning application no. 79764.
- Updates requested from Cllr Yabsley.

Cllr Bibby arrived.

Council Session – No public participation

3. To Approve Apologies for Absence.

RESOLVED: Apologies approved from Cllr Smith.

4. Minutes.

4.1. 02/01/25. To sign if approved, minutes of the Council.

RESOLVED: Cllr Cunningham proposed, Cllr Richardson seconded and all were in favour approval.

5. To consider Code of Conduct Matters:-

5.1. Written councillor dispensation requests arising.

None.

5.2. Declarations of Interests.

(Code of Conduct available on website under Finance & Policy*).

Agenda	Councillor	Reason	Dispensation
8.2	Cllr Bibby	Quoting for works	n/a

5.3. To consider any application(s) Co-Option to fill councillor vacancy.

None.

6. To consider the following Planning & Licensing Matters.

6.1. Planning list.

See report appended.

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6.2. Planning applications received following agenda publication.

None.

6.3. Enforcement Issues Arising.

None.

7. To consider the following Finance & Policy matters:-**7.1. Finance update circulated to councillors' for review.**

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Dorow seconded and all were in favour to note 04/02/25 Report and Bank Reconciliation including online banking payments raised reviewed with no issues.

7.2. Sanction payment schedule appended & instruct signatories.

RESOLVED: Cllr Cunningham proposed, Cllr Northam seconded and all were in favour settlement accounts 7.2.1 through 7.2.14, **clerk to setup online payments, Cllr Goodwin to authorise.**

7.3. Finance & General Purposes Committee – Ratify Recommendations (see FGP draft minutes online).

RESOLVED: Cllr Goodwin proposed, Cllr Cunningham seconded and all were in favour ratification subject to amendments:-

- Grounds Maintenance Specification: Update of pavement photo adjacent to Adventure Playground.
- Finance Regulations: Inclusion of Standing Order reference missing in the Appendix.

Clerk to make changes and undertake necessary actions resulting from approved documents updates.

7.4. Bank mandate amendment – two authorised signatories to approve electronic payments.

RESOLVED: The Chairman proposed, Cllr Fox seconded and all were in favour. **Clerk to action.**

7.5. Parish Council Section 106 Working Group Update – to include draft landowners' letter approval (Chairman).

RESOLVED: Cllr Dorow proposed, Cllr Harvey seconded approval landowners' letter carried by 7 votes for and 1 against (Cllr Northam documented as requested). To be sent to local landowners once address list compiled. **Chairman and clerk to action.**

Cllr Cunningham reported a positive meeting with a skate park provider. Cllr Cunningham reported he was awaiting outstanding responses from Allison Homes concerning the BMX Track.

The Chairman stepped down from the Working Group due to commitments.

7.6. NDC - Parish Boundary Review.

Revised governance with neighbouring parish discussed.

RESOLVED: Cllr Dorow proposed, Cllr Richardson seconded and the majority were in favour extending an invitation to East Worlington Parish Council Chairman to attend the next council meeting to discuss further. **Clerk to action.**

8. To consider the following Property/Environment matters:-**8.1. Highways, Drainage & Public Rights of Ways Issues.**

<https://devon.roadworks.org/> | <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

Cllr Dorow confirmed submission of PRoW walked and reported to the clerk. **Clerk to obtain up to date version of the definitive parish map detailing approved diversions.**

8.2. Public Toilet Block – Roof replacement quotes.

Cllr Bibby left for this item.

Three estimates were discussed and it was agreed **Cllrs Dorow, Cunningham and Richards to document variances between the specification and estimates and produce a list of queries to be raised with contractors by the clerk.**

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Following review matters to be addressed:-

- Cable run (Clerk).
- Old benches (Cllr Dorow).
- Overgrown foliage at pedestrian gate entrance (Grounds Maint. contractor).
- Review playground signage (Cllr Cunningham).
- Clean “wobble board” and “rotating beam” (Playground caretaker).

Actions as detailed above.

8.3.2. Adventure Playground Footpath update.

Contractor correspondence and RAMMS dated 22/01/25 reviewed.

RESOLVED: To request the works commence following the school half term to mitigate potential for works to over-run into half-term. ***Clerk to action.***

8.3.3. Skateramps repair quote (Cllr Dorow).

Revised quote dated 22/01/25 reviewed.

RESOLVED: Cllr Goodwin proposed, Cllr Dorow seconded carried by 7 votes for 0 against and 1 abstention (Cllr Richardson document as requested). ***Clerk to action.***

8.3.4. Adventure Playground – BMX Track Restorations Update (Cllr Cunningham).

See item 7.5.

8.3.5. Parish Hall Playground – Lease progress update.

No further updates.

8.4. Defibrillator Provision - NDC Defib Funding Offer – Contract for signing.

RESOLVED: Cllr Northam proposed, Cllr Dorow seconded and all were in favour signed NDC Community Grant offer CCG 2024-25 99 dated 10/01/25. ***Clerk to action.***

9. Correspondence / Consultations Received for consideration:-**9.1. SWR British Cycling - planned race.**

Correspondence dated 01/02/25 noted. ***Clerk to acknowledge.***

10. Dates of Next meetings recommended:-

10.1. Parish Council - 06/03/25 – agenda deadline noon 21/01/25.

Noted.

10.2. Agenda Items for consideration by the next meeting.

Parish noticeboards.

Cllr Fox requested and it was agreed thanks be recorded to all those volunteers who helped undertake the clear up following recent storms.

Meeting closed 21:30.

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Planning

Application No.	Description
79764	Prior approval for change of use of agricultural building to x2 dwellings (class Q a & c) at Barn at West Hilltown Rackenford Tiverton Devon EX16 8DX Grid Ref: 285208; 116540 Recommended: To respond with the following observations:- Buldings not redundant, currently being used for farming purposes. Overdevelopment of site. Proposed single track access with no passing places inadequate for traffic likely generated by the proposed development.

Payments

Item	Ref	Payee	Purpose	£
7.2.1.	DD	EDF Energy	Electricity Supply Charges *007	129.42
7.2.2.	OB	Information Commissioner	Data protection fee renewal *25a	40.00
7.2.3.	OB	North Devon District Council	Dog Waste Bin Service *626	262.08
7.2.4.	OB	Dart Electrics Ltd	Xmas Tree lights installation *109	354.00
7.2.5.	OB	Dart Electrics Ltd	Xmas Tree lights testing/replacement bulbs	243.05
7.2.6.	OB	S Sandland	Toilet Management & Cleaning Contract	220.00
** Staff Salaries & Expenses **				
7.2.7.	OB	Devon County Council Pension Fund	Employer & Employee Contributions – Jan	216.79
7.2.8.	CC	HMRC	PAYE Tax & NI – Jan	4.67
7.2.9.	SO	D Williams	Salary – Jan	74.36
7.2.10.	SO	P Dunn	Salary – Jan	747.68
To Ratify:-				
7.2.11.	OB	Hooper Services (SW) Ltd	Grounds Maintenance *311	108.00

Invoices Received after Agenda compilation - To Be Ratified

7.2.12.	OB	Source for Business	Water & Sewerage Charges	109.01
7.2.13.	DD	EDF Energy	Electricity Charges *008	127.29
7.2.14.	OB	Wicksteed Leisure	Oct 24 Playgrounds Inspection *575	338.58

Agenda Item 3 – Reports

District & County Cllrs.

District Cllr Jones:-

- First tranche of housing release at Juniper Rise.
- Following revised government housing number requirements the District no longer has a five year land supply.
- Unitary and Devolution proposals update.
- Local Governance Review.
- Parish Hall seeking to draw down Juniper Rise S106 monies however likely monies will not be allocated until all bids received and reviewed.

County Cllr Yabsley:-

- Issues concerning Speedwatch protocols for monitoring traffic speeds impacted by location of 30mph signage on B3137 and B3042 approaches at the triangle discussed. Cllr Yabsley to raise with Highways.
- Concerns over cars parking in the bus lay0bye at the school discussed.
- Works to Lakelands bus shelter still awaited.
- Increase in government Highways budget for Devon.
- County elections will proceed May 2025.

The Chairman requested a response to emailed queries on land ownership.

Cllr Dorow raised issues with drainage in Post Office Lane. Cllr Yabsley to discuss with Highways again.

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The performance of the Devon and Cornwall Police has continued to improve.

Council Tax precept has risen by £13.40 together with an extra £6m a year largely com In addition the Commissioner is proposing a 4.99% increase on the police precept – the element of council tax which part funds policing. Currently Band D households in Devon and Cornwall pay £27.45 a month over 10 months (if paid monthly) this will rise to £28.82.

“The second homes windfall, combined with this increase to the monies raised locally, will enable us to mitigate against the rising cost of policing and challenges like the increase in national insurance which will have to be met.

This windfall, and the fact we have one of the highest proportions of second homes in the country, presents an opportunity to invest in the types of policing that is right for residents and visitors. The greatest appeal has been to tackle Anti-social Behaviour.

“Other forces are making the difficult decision to cut police staff numbers and put more sworn officers in back-office positions, that is not where they should be and it’s not where the public want them. These officers need to be on our streets where they can bear down on crime and antisocial behaviour.”

There are more sworn officers in the force area than at any time in its history and reopened 13 police station front desks, with five more of these planned. The public do not want police officers sitting behind desks. That’s why Chief Constable James Vaughan announced plans to cut the number of senior ranks in the force to boost the number of constables out in the community. He will do this by reducing the number of officers at ranks including Assistant Chief Constables, Chief Superintendents and Chief Inspectors. This is because, in the Chief Constables view, the organisation is top heavy.

Devon & Cornwall Police has significantly improved the speed at which the Force answers 999 calls and 101 contacts. The rapid improvement of services within the Force’s control room placed Devon & Cornwall Police as ninth fastest to respond to emergency calls in November 2024 compared to 44 other forces.

In 2024, 94.2 per cent of 999 calls were answered within the threshold of 10 seconds, an improvement of 5.8% compared to 2023. In the second half of the year, the average wait time for 101 calls was 3 minutes 43 seconds, almost 27 minutes quicker than same period the previous year.

Last September the Force was formally discharged by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services from the Engage phase of enhanced monitoring. In discharging the Force, the Inspectorate noted that Devon & Cornwall Police had made significant and sustainable improvements.

Parish Hall Committee:-

- Request NDC trade waste bin removed from car park. **Clerk to action.**
- Request road sweeper dustcart removed from shed. **Clerk to action.**