

WASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 16th July 2025 in Washfield Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr's Mrs A Taylor-Ross (Chair), M Balment, J Boundy, J Mock, R Webber and W Wood.

In attendance: County Cllr S Lodge, District Cllr M Stratton, two members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

15/07/25. To receive apologies. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mrs A Wych. Apologies were received from Cllr C Adcock.

16/07/25. Disclosure of interest in item on the agenda. Cllr Mock declared a personal and pecuniary interest in planning application 25/00646/FULL as the applicant. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the payment of the Churchyard Grant as she is a member of the PCC. Cllr Balment declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the Churchyard Grant as he is paid to cut the grass in the Churchyard.

17/07/25. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

18/07/25. Matters arising from the minutes (not already covered by the agenda). None.

19/07/25. Public questions. A member of the public again asked if a sign was going to be put on Footpath 4. It was made clear that the Parish Council would not be doing this. With regard to issues raised about Footpath 2 Mousebeare Lane the Chair made it very clear that the Parish Council have reached a good compromise and will not be taking any further suggestions. The Parish Council takes into account the views of parishioners but in this case, it is the view of just two people who are choosing to constantly bring it up. There is a perfectly acceptable alternative and even if more people bring it up the decision will be the same. Both matters are now closed.

In response to a complaint about a councillor allegedly not declaring his interests the Clerk explained that any complaint should be sent to MDDC's Monitoring Officer. The Clerk expressed her concerns that long emails and comments from these two members of the public were becoming vexatious.

20/07/25. Footpaths

a) P3 Report. A gate post on Footpath 3 between Winbow and Ennerleigh is wobbly.

Part of Footpath 1 is impossible because yet again the farmer has chosen to plant a crop over a footpath which crosses their land. There was an issue with the footpath at Slade when someone didn't put a clip back properly and cows got out.

b) Update on payment of P3 Grant. The Purchase Order has been received and an invoice for £440 has been sent to DCC. This is for the P£ grant for 2024-25 and 2025-26.

c) Any other footpaths matters. None.

21/07/25. Planning

a) To make a recommendation on any planning applications received before the meeting. No applications received.

b) To note any decisions on planning applications made by MDDC. Noted.

25/00583/HOUSE Erection of a indoor swimming pool with gym, sauna, steam room, plant room, changing facilities and outdoor kitchen area. Location: Worth House, Washfield. Decision: conditional approval.

25/00646/FULL Erection of extension to an existing agricultural livestock building. Location: Land and Building at NGR 294444 118992 Emmerford Farm, Stoodleigh. Decision: conditional approval.

25/00670/PNAG Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Location: Land at NGR 294360 115010 Cotleigh, Washfield. Prior approval not required.

c) Any other planning matters. Councillors were reminded about the Town and Parish Planning Briefing due to be held on 28 July 2025.

The MDDC local validation checklist has been produced to inform applicants/agents of the type of documents and level of information required to be submitted with planning applications.

22/07/25. Highways

a) To report on any highways work carried out in the parish and to note any highways work needed. The culvert at Emmerford has finally been repaired and the piece of concrete that was in the road has been removed. Three or four potholes have been repaired and quite a lot have been marked for repair.

The poor quality of the repairs on the road from the Village Hall to Stoodleigh was reported. There is an issue with the contract and the contractors.

Small trees are growing out of the concrete at Worth.

b) To discuss issues with the condition of the pavement from opposite the Village Hall to the path to the Church by The Weeches. Cllr Lodge asked for this item to be added to the agenda following correspondence from a concerned parishioner. Even though the hedge has been cut back and cleared the footpath is still extremely narrow. The parishioner has raised this because of how dangerous they feel it is for older and less abled people, particularly as there is a blind corner. Fortunately, no accidents have been reported yet. Cllr Lodge has raised this matter with highways who have said there is a pinch point in the road and neither the road or pavement can be widened. The pavement is felt to be a danger in itself. It was felt it wouldn't be safe to remove the pavement. There was a suggestion of painting warning signs in the road. Councillors felt it would be helpful if someone from Highways would come and have a look. Cllr Lodge will raise this again with highways.

c) Any other highways matters. None.

23/07/25. Reports

a) County Cllr. A written report from Cllr Lodge was circulated prior to the meeting. The report included information on DCC's determination to transform its SEND support; its fresh approach to highways including a £83million blitz on potholes in a new pilot scheme; plans for surface dressing on the road between Tiverton and Bampton; a new long term plan to improve the outcomes for Devon's most vulnerable young people; finance and the Essential Skills Devon Grant Scheme. A fresh approach is being taken to highways. The contract with the current contractor runs until 2027 but the contract is so poor there is nothing DCC can do to improve things.

Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross reported that she had spoken to Cllr Alex Wilson. Morebath Parish Council's Road Warden, about the DCC Road Warden Scheme, which they have signed up to and are finding a benefit. Information has been put on the village Facebook page to see if a parishioner/s is willing to become a Road Warden and undertake the training. No one on the Council is willing or able to become one. Following discussion councillors agreed they would like to get a quote for a contractor to carry out three days of verge ploughing in the parish. Cllr Webber will contact Dan Woollacott.

b) District Cllr. The Clare & Shuttern Ward Report was circulated prior to the meeting. In addition to the update on planning and enforcement issues there was information on the State of the District Debate which has been Postponed until the evening of 17th September. This event to be held at Phoenix House, primarily for Town and Parish Councillors will include the subject of Local Government Reorganisation. MDDC has launched two grant schemes under the Government Shared Prosperity Fund for 2025. MDDC's Economic Officers are keen to point out funding opportunities for local businesses

24/07/25. Finance:

a) To approve any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments:
Washfield Village Hall - £120.00 hire of meeting room (Payment ref: 2526/05)
Washfield PCC - £700 Churchyard Grant (Payment ref 2526/06). Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross and Cllr Balment repeated their declarations and left the room while this payment was approved.

Mrs J Larcombe - £106.76 Clerk's salary (Payment ref 2526/07)

HM Revenue & Customs - £26.80 PAYE (Payment ref: 2526/08)

Bank fees of £6.00 were paid on 31/05/25 and 30/06/25. They are due again on 31/07/25.

b) To report any receipts and the bank balances. Since the last meeting bank interest of £10.30 has been received:

Unity Trust Bank Current Account balance is £500.00

Unity Trust Bank Instant Access balance - £4550.79

c) Update on the renewal of the annual insurance cover for 2025-26. The insurance has been renewed with Zurich Municipal as even with the increase for the new policy they were the most competitive. The premium was £196.00 (Payment ref

2526/04).

d) Bank reconciliations. Noted.

25/07/25. Water pressure at Cotleigh, When water pressure became too high between the village and Cotleigh it blew a pipe and four properties at Cotleigh ended up with low water pressure and no water when the weather was hot. Residents included young children and an elderly person. South West Water put the properties on the minimum water pressure to stop the pipes breaking but that pressure was not enough to get the water up into the header tanks. This is yet another incident of water leaks due to the condition of the water pipe from Cotleigh to the village which has had many repairs over a number of years. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has tried to contact SWW.

26/07/25. Arrangements for broadband connectivity meeting with Connecting Devon & Somerset. Cllr Lodge reported that he has spoken to Matt Barrow, Stakeholder Engagement Officer for Connecting Devon & Somerset. Mr Barrow has told him there are two potential broadband providers, although one is less keen. There is a possibility of a voucher scheme in the future. There is no point holding a public meeting at present as there is little that can be done until the Government reinstates the voucher scheme.

27/07/25. Chair's Announcements and Correspondence. Ian Thompson, DCC Senior Project Manager for Electric Vehicles, has emailed Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross to inform her that DCC will soon be appointing charge point operators to scale up the provision of electric vehicle charging points across Devon. One of the projects involves installation of standard charging points both in third party car parks and on street. DCC had a call for sites in 2023 to which Washfield Parish Council were keen for a charging point to be located at the Memorial Hall. As part of their invitation to tender this site was included as a 'mandatory site.' This means subject to the Parish Council agreeing an exact location and signing a lease with the supplier they will provide a charge point without charge. Mr Thompson will be in touch with the Parish Council once the contract has been signed with the supplier to progress the scheme further.

28/07/25. Date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 17th September 2025.

Signed:
Chair

Date: