

WITHERIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Council Meeting held 04/12/25, 19:00 at Witheridge Parish Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr Harvey Chairman
Cllr Cunningham Vice Chairman Cllr Dorow Cllr Fox Cllr Northam
Cllr Richardson
Cllr Smith

In Attendance:

District Cllr P Jones

3 Members of the public
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/pu/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).

Taken prior to item 1 recorded here. Representations concerning:-

- Boundary between Willow Rise Southern Public Open Space and Benson Grange. **Clerk to respond to resident's representations under item 9.3 06/11/25 meeting.**

Council Session – No public participation

3. To Approve Apologies for Absence.

RESOLVED: Apologies approved from Cllrs Bibby and Goodwin.

4. Minutes.

- 4.1. 06/11/25. To sign if approved, minutes of the Council.

RESOLVED: Cllr Cunningham proposed, Cllr Fox 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
7.2.10	Cllr Northam	Chairman of receiving organisation	n/a
7.2.11	Cllr Cunningham	Committee member of receiving organisation	n/a

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

None.

Initialled:

Chairman.

Minutes of the Council Meeting held 04/12/25, 19:00 at Witheridge Parish Hall**6. To consider the following Planning & Licensing Matters.****6.1. Planning applications received following agenda publication.**

None.

6.2. Enforcement Issues Arising.

None.

6.3. Local Plan – Settlement Study Parish & Town Survey.

Cllrs to review and respond.

6.4. Local Plan – Updated five year housing land supply statement (October 2025).

Noted.

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

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Cunningham seconded and all were in favour to note 03/12/25 Report and Bank Reconciliation including online banking payments raised reviewed with no issues.

7.2. Sanction payment schedule appended & instruct signatories.

RESOLVED: Cllr Dorow proposed, Cllr Fox seconded and all were in favour settlement accounts 7.2.1 through 7.2.25, **clerk to setup online payments, Chairman and Cllr Smith to authorise.**

7.3. Acquisition of NDC land adjacent to Adventure Playground (redundant allotment land).

See reports.

7.4. DCC - LGPS 2025 Actuarial Valuation and Funding Strategy Statement Consultation.

Noted.

7.5. Pensions Regulator – Employer Re-enrolment and Re-declaration Duties.

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Smith seconded completion of re-declaration. **Clerk to action.**

7.6. 2026 – Council Meeting Dates (www.witheridgepc.org).

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

7.7. Finance & General Purposes 20/11/25 recommendations.

RESOLVED: Cllr Dorow proposed, Cllr Richardson seconded and all were in favour ratification.

Clerk to action.

7.8. Financial Year 2026/27 – Approve Budget & Set Precept.

RESOLVED: Cllr Dorow proposed, Cllr Richardson seconded and all were in favour a budget of £57366 and setting a Precept of £50000 for 2026/27, with difference funded from General Reserve, subject to review of notification from NDC Band D impact. **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/>

None.

8.2. Grounds Maintenance.**8.2.1. Reports.**

Fly tipping Bradford Mill Bridge and road to Meshaw. **Cllr Jones to report.**

Cutting of Northern Public Open Space road hedge cutting outstanding. **Cllr Jones to raise with developer.**

8.3. Public Toilet Building.**8.3.1. Tenant proposed change in services provided update (Vice-Chairman).**

None. **Clerk to re-agenda.**

Minutes of the Council Meeting held 04/12/25, 19:00 at Witheridge Parish Hall**8.3.2. CCTV.**

Provision was considered and the nature of the veranda walkway roof around the property and the regulatory requirements governing such installations was discussed. **Cllr Cunningham to forward guidelines to the clerk for the next meeting. Clerk to re-agenda.**

8.4. Medical Centre Defibrillator Installation update.

The Chairman reported meeting with Cllr Northam to review in detail the Amicas Medical's requirements regulating the proposed installation. A response from the council's insurers was awaited to clarify public liability requirements for the proposed installation. **Clerk to re-agenda.**

8.5. Playgrounds.**8.5.1. Qltly Playgrounds Inspection Report 27/10/25.**

Reviewed. **Minor actions agreed to be undertaken by Cllr Cunningham.**

8.5.2. Parish Hall Playground.**8.5.2.1. Lease Update.**

None. **Clerk to re-agenda.**

8.5.2.2. Bennock Fencing railings update.

The Chairman reported further works to correct outstanding issues with installation were scheduled for 10/12/25. **Chairman and clerk to review.**

8.5.3. Adventure Playground.**8.5.3.1. BMX Track Restorations Update.**

None. **Cllr Jones to follow-up with building contractor. Clerk to re-agenda.**

8.5.3.2. Skatepark Tender Update.

Cllr Cunningham reported discussions with Chris Searles and currently reviewing recommendations. **Clerk to re-agenda**

8.5.3.3. Skateramp Repairs Update.

Clerk to follow up contractor.

8.5.3.4. NPOS Transfer Update.

The clerk reported the council's solicitor had written to Allison Homes' solicitor to re-establish communications. **Clerk to re-agenda.**

8.6. Parish Council Section 106 Working Group Update.

None.

9. Correspondence / Consultations Received for consideration.

None.

10. Dates of Next meetings recommended:-

10.1.Parish Council - 08/01/26 - agenda deadline noon 19/12/25.

Noted.

10.2.Agenda Items for consideration by the next meeting.

Further grant application considerations. **Clerk to action.**

Meeting closed 21:00

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Payments

Item	Ref	Payee	Purpose	£
7.2.1.	OB	S Sandland	Toilet Management & Cleaning Contract	220.00
7.2.2.	OB	Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	Qtly Playground Inspections *052	395.28
7.2.3.	OB	Hooper Services	Grounds Maintenance *480	964.20
7.2.4.	CC	Easily Ltd	Website Domain Registration *123	20.80
7.2.5.	OB*	Rest A While Day Centre	Donation – FGP Meeting Venue 20/11/25	25.00
7.2.6.	2692*	RBL Poppy Appeal	Poppy Wreath	22.00
7.2.7.	OB	Witheridge Voice	Grant	200.00
7.2.8.	OB	Mid Devon Mobility	Donation	50.00
7.2.9.	OB	North Devon Records Office	Donation	100.00
7.2.10.	OB	Witheridge in Bloom	Grant	625.00
7.2.11.	OB	St Johns Fair	Grant	500.00
** Staff Salaries & Expenses Nov **				
7.2.12.		Redacted under GDPR	Total:-	1390.68
7.2.13.				
7.2.14.				
7.2.15.				
7.2.16.				
To Ratify:-				
7.2.17.	OB	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit yr end 31/03/25 *504	252.00
7.2.18.	CC	Giffgaff	Chairs Mobile 1/11	6.00
7.2.19.	OB	J Harvey	Chairs Expenses – Xmas Tree	38.80
7.2.20.	DD	EDF Energy	Public Toilet Block Electricity Charges *017	115.53

Invoices Received after Agenda compilation - To Be Ratified

7.2.21.	CC	Microsoft	Office 365 Annual Fee *655	84.99
7.2.22.	OB	Source for Business	Public Toilet Building Water & Sewerage Charges *122	235.16
7.2.23.	CC	Giffgaff	Council Mobile – Chairman *319	6.00
7.2.24.	DD	EDF	Public Toilet Building Electricity Charges *018	127.31
7.2.25.	CC	The Workplace Depot	Youth Shelter Litter Bin *003	347.99

Signed:

Chairman. Date:

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Agenda Item 1 – Reports

District & County Cllrs.

District Cllr Jones:-

- The purchaser of the Cannington Road Public Open Space to the rear of Drayford Lane would commence grounds maintenance once the purchase was completed.
- The verge adjacent to the front of the school was the school's responsibility.
- ASB in the village appears to have settled down with regular police patrols.
- NDC preparing a proposal for the transfer of Merryside Villas redundant allotment land to parish council for consideration
- The Benson Grange development projected be completed by February.
- Concerns NDC looking to cease provision commercial waste collection services.

Advocate Report

Cllr Smith reported:-

1. The devastating mass train stabbings in Cambridgeshire and shocking incidents at stations in this police force area have highlighted an urgent need to improve safety for those using public transport. Moves are being made towards making the transport network safer, including improved CCTV and facial recognition technology. The force has already invested in facial recognition technology, including a police van that is in development.
2. Regarding shoplifting Devon & Cornwall Police took part in a national week of action in a bid to tackle business crime and continue to strengthen relationships with retail outlets, employees and security staff.
3. Knife amnesty bins were being advertised during the past few weeks with more than 45 knives being taken off the streets. It is estimated that 1 in 1000 people carry knives. The local facility via the advocate surgeries has ceased.
4. Hotspot Policing began in Devon and Cornwall 18 months ago, with the aim of reducing antisocial behaviour (ASB) and making communities feel safer through extra foot patrols. Of all crime recorded, 58 per cent of it happens in the top 10 per cent of places with the most serious crime. A review of international studies also indicates that hotspot policing is effective and has reduced offending by 17 per cent.
5. The Commissioner has launched a new monthly podcast series called Your VIP (Your Voice in Policing) with the first episode now available to hear and watch.
6. A report has been published detailing the findings of scrutiny carried out on detainees and the conditions that they are held in.
7. A map has been produced showing the position of road traffic accidents on the force areas roads and the age of those involved.
8. The news that the office of the Police Commissioner is being abolished in 2027 comes as a sad blow. Here in our force area Alison Hernandez has been very proactive and it will be a shame to see her position go. I personally cannot see how a mayoral scheme would work especially when there are many mayors in the two counties, all presumably wishing to have their say in policing. I have written to her to pass on my sympathies and feelings.
9. Devon & Cornwall Police have introduced a new system which marks a huge step forward in the way the Force handles digital media evidence like videos from CCTV cameras. Officers can manage all digital media files for their investigations in one secure place and request evidence from businesses and communities across the force area. Businesses and members of the public can register the location of their recording devices on the community portal. When a crime is committed, officers can see if there are any cameras in the area that might have captured footage and request it by email.
10. Police forces in the Southwest teamed up to make roads safer for horses and riders as part of a recent operation in Devon. In 2024, the British Horse Society recorded 3,118 road incidents involving horses, resulting in 97 horses becoming injured and 58 horses sadly losing their lives. "When approaching horses and riders on the road, drivers should slow down to no more than ten miles per hour, avoid revving their engine or honking their horn and then pass slowly when safe to do so, allowing least two meters of space between the horse and vehicle."
11. Teenagers from across the Southwest are being told to 'Spot the signs' of child exploitation amid the growing threat of county lines in a targeted TikTok and snapchat advertising campaign. Criminal gangs are increasingly targeting children to transport drugs and cash across county boundaries, using coercion, intimidation and violence. This exploitation can have devastating consequences for young people and their families.
12. D & C Police are starting a trial of using Rottweilers as general purpose dogs to work alongside the traditional German Shepherds and other breeds.