

**DOWN ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr A. Clark, Mr M. Austin, Mr W. Jones, Mr D. Cox, Mrs D. Cridland, Mrs J Bennett, Mr S. Keable and Mr A. Martin [Clerk]

[2026/1/1] Apologies: Mr A. Baker, Mr A. White, Mrs. N. Letch.

Mr Baker had recently had an accident and will not be able to contribute to the council until further notice.

[2] There were no disclosures of interest

[3] The **Minutes** of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December which had been circulated were amended, approved and will be signed later.

[4] **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:** None

[5] **Public Conveniences:** Mr Keable said that Mr Densham had the key to the locked area. He had been informed that the Parish Council were anxious to get this issue resolved. They still needed to know what was happening with the business rates.

[6] **Village Green:** Mrs Cridland had purchased three new trees. Tom Samson had pruned the trees and trimmed the grass around them. He would plant the three new trees in the spring. One tree was 6 foot high and a long stake had also been purchased. The Council wished to thank Mr Samson.

Mr Clark had now paid Mike Leach’s last bill for mowing in 2025. He was awaiting an invoice from Mr Jones.

A letter had been sent to the cottages about the diseased ash tree.

[7] **Bus Shelter:** The refurbishment had been postponed until March 2026. The builder was recovering from his accident.

[8] **Roads:** Mr Jones as snow warden had gritted Union Hill after the recent icy spell. He has further salt in store.

[9] **Finance:**

Current Account Balance as at 1/9/2025 ..... £25,310.73

Signed .....

Date .....

RECEIPTS

None

PAYMENTS MADE

Mr M. Leach [Grasscutting July] ..... £220.00

Current Account Balance as at 1/10/2025 .....£25,090.73

The Clerk is waiting for an update on this account.

Business Reserve Account Balance as at 1/12/2025 .....£12,025.03

Interest:

December .....£10.33

Business Reserve Account Balance as at 31/12/2025 .....£12,035.36

REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT:

Information Commissioner .....£52.00

MDDC [Public Conveniences] .....£830.00

[This request has been put on hold]

A new signatory would be needed once the chairman had moved away.

[10] **Planning:** No new applications

[11] **Emergency Planning and First Aid:** The Village Hall Committee were against installing a keypad. Mr Clark would be surrendering his key and it could be reissued to one of the Council. Mr Austin was willing to be a keyholder. Mrs Cridland had recruited a response team and had two first aiders lined up.

It was necessary to have a relief station at Morchard Road and the Devonshire Dumping and Waterbridge Golf Course to be approached. List of four-wheel drives, generators and other useful equipment to be compiled.

[12] **Defibrillators and First Aid:** The contract with South Western Ambulance would end on 16th November 2026. Mr Austin volunteered to investigate other companies and would report back at the next meeting. It was important to arrange a smooth changeover. Mr Cox would require training.



Signed .....

Date .....

Mrs Bennett was arranging a first aid course. There were eight volunteers. It was hoped this could be arranged for March or April. A notice would be posted.

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[13] **Tarka Line:** Mr Clark declared an interest in this item as he is Railfuture Devon and Cornwall branch Secretary and Treasurer of the North Devon Line Rail Promotion Group. He said that Torrridge and North Devon District Council are founder members of the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance along with the two organisations he had already mentioned. The alliance is campaigning to have the line extended to Bideford. There were plans to install more passing places so that more trains could be timetabled. It was hoped to increase to a half-hour service. There had been a lot of passenger growth. He would arrange for the council to join the Alliance subject to members' approval in order that they could be consulted on their future plans. The members approved this item.

00There have been complaints about overcrowding and difficulties in getting the trains to stop at request stops.

[14] **Quotes for E-mail services:** Three quotes were being obtained. Morchard Bishop PC has expressed their satisfaction with their provider [Active Council]

[15] **Concerns raised by Councillors:** It was reported that the gritting on the A377 had not been sufficient. There had been a series of accidents.

Mr Jones reported that the condition of Barn Hill was still atrocious.

Mrs Bennett reported that the pothole outside the village hall was getting dangerous and presented a risk of pedestrians falling.

Repairs to potholes had not been sealed.

Mr Clark reported that there was a survey out on caravans and mobile homes.

[16] There were no members of the public to comment.

[17] **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February

Proposed dates for 2026:  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November and Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

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Signed .....

Date .....



Signed .....

Date .....