

DOWN ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 9th December 2025 in the Village Hall

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

[2025/11/1] Apologies: Mr M. Austin, Mrs. N. Letch.

[2] There were no disclosures of interest

[3] The **Minutes** of the meeting held on 11th November 2025 which had been circulated were approved and signed.

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

[5] **Public Conveniences:** Mr Clark reported on the site visit held on 8th December. The conveniences were in a better condition than expected. A couple of roof tiles did need replacing.

It was agreed that a list of repairs needed to be submitted with details of costing. An initial report had been received. The business rate on the car park needed to be reassessed. The council might need to get legal advice. Steve Densham was looking into the possible agreement. The Council would need to know the cleaning costs.

Mr Cox commented that the waste bins were being emptied although they were often full.

Mrs Cridland pointed out that there was no sign indicating that this was a bus stop. It was also noted that leaves tended to pile up in the bus shelter.

The wall by the bus stop had been knocked down recently. This was a job for DCC.

Mrs Cridland said that there was a bush that blocked part of the sightline by the exit. Mr Jones reminded the council that the nearby pub sign blocked the view from a tractor.

The Parish Council only wanted to keep one toilet in use. The others could be used for storage.

[6] **Village Green:** Mrs Cridland had met Tom Samson. He was happy to prune the trees and clear the grass around them. She reported that two trees were dead and that three new trees would be needed in the spring. One tree was 6 foot high and would need a long stake.

Signed

Date

Mr Jones had helped cutting back the trees and bushes on the green. The hydrant signs were now visible.

It was pointed out that there was ash dieback in the trees behind the cottages. One of the trees was in a perilous condition and needed attention.

Action Point: Clerk to send a warning letter to draw the attention of the owners to the problem.

Mrs Bennett had produced a price list for flower planters and had found a gardener who was willing to do the work. These would be placed at Morchard Road, the bus shelter and on the green. Photos should be taken before and after they were installed.

[7] **Bus Shelter:** The refurbishment had been postponed until March 2026.

[8] **Roads:** Mr Baker had found volunteers to take the online course. There was a more intensive course for the Road Warden. There was a need to check if DCC had arranged public liability insurance. The Council considered that the possible insurance costs made it too risky to adopt the plan so decided not to proceed with the scheme.

[9] **Finance:**

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

RECEIPTS

None

PAYMENTS MADE

Mr M. Leach [Grasscutting July] £220.00

Current Account Balance as at 1/10/2025£25,090

Business Reserve Account Balance as at 31/10/2025£12,016.27

Interest:

November£8.76

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

REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT:

Information Commissioner£52.00

Signed

Date

MDDC [Public Conveniences]£830.00

[This request has been put on hold]

Awaiting further invoice from Mr. Leach

The Clerk circulated a provisional budget for 2026/7

The Council agreed to increase the precept by 6%.

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[10] **Planning: A}** Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 15/01612/FULL (Variation of condition (1) of planning permission 12/01306/MFUL the solar pv facility shall cease to generate electricity on or before 28th March 2043) to allow for an extension to the cessation in the production of renewable energy for an indefinite period. Ellicombe Limited Solar Farm at NGR 274160 105292 Morchard Road Ref. No: 25/01598/MFULNo Comments

B] Erection of an extension: Waterbridge House Copplestone EX17 5LF. Ref. No: 25/01671/HOUSE..... No objections.

[11] **Emergency Planning:** Mrs Cridland said that one problem was the reluctance of the Village Hall Committee to install a keypad. It was suggested that there should be an additional keyholder. This would need to be referred back to the Village Hall Committee. A Community Response Team had been formed consisting of Mrs Cridland, Mrs Bennett, Mr Austin and Mr Cox. Designated First Aiders were Mark Stone & Jo Jones. A list of possible risks has been compiled. Emergency Hubs should be the Village Hall and the Devonshire Dumpling.

Action Point: Mr Cox to contact the Dumpling.

[12] **Defibrillators and First Aid:** Six people had applied to attend a first aid course in the New Year. With South West Ambulance ending their supervision of defibrillators, another company needed to be sought. Mr Cox volunteered to be responsible for checking the defibrillator at Morchard Road. Mr Cox volunteered to take on the Village Green defibrillator if Mr Sellar moved away.

[13] **Reports from Councillors:**

It was reported that the footpath to the station was collapsing. It needed to be restored and its original width reinstated. Mr Keable said he would look into this.

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Signed

Date

Mr Clark was to arrange payment for work done on cutting hedges and bushes by Mr Jones and Mr Baker.

Mr Clark had obtained two quotes for creating an e-mail system. A third quote would be needed.

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

[15] **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 13th January 2026

Proposed dates for 2026:

Tuesday 10th February, Tuesday 10th March, Tuesday 14th April, Tuesday 12th May, Tuesday 14th July, Tuesday 8th September, Tuesday 13th October, Tuesday 10th November and Tuesday 8th December.

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Signed

Date