

## WASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 18th March 2026 in Washfield Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

**Present:** Cllr's W Wood (Chair), M Balment, J Boundy, J Mock and R Webber.

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Lodge, District Cllrs C Adcock and M Stratton, one member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe,

**60/03/26. To receive apologies.** There were no apologies.

**61/03/26. Disclosure of interest in item on the agenda.** No disclosures.

**62/03/26. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2026 as an accurate record of the meeting.** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**63/03/26. Matters arising from the minutes (not already covered by the agenda).** None.

**64/03/26. Public questions.** The agenda has stated that questions from members of the public needed to be sent to the Clerk by the day before the meeting. A member of the public was not aware of that and was unable to ask his question at this point. Mrs Taylor-Ross volunteered to become the Footpath Warden for the P3 Scheme.

**65/03/26. Footpaths:**

**a) Completion of annual forms.** The Clerk to complete the forms.

**b) Any other footpaths matters.** A footpath report was received from Mrs Taylor-Ross. Ongoing issues are:

Footpath 1. Charterhouse - Cuckoo's Nest. Path across open field needs to be clearly defined in maize and grass. Landowner needs to be requested to keep path defined through crops and to provide route when fenced round sheep. "New" timber planks at top near Long Lane are extremely slippery. Fence with field broken and could be trip hazard. Path along Haydon will need strimming after spring growth. Footpath 4. Village to Pound House, Long Lane. FP4 is ok until the entrance gate – all the spring water that pops up along Brook Lane plus all the rain has made it very boggy. Could drainage be put in or a ditch? One option would be to add a ditch into which this water can be diverted into the brook, this would make the path much more passable.

Footpath 6. Slade Farm. Cutting and steps across existing stile over ditch work needed this summer where it joins footpath 7. Additional signage needed to help walkers travelling westward up the slope so that they don't automatically follow the old route and extra signage roughly at the point where the recent diversion veers from the original route (where the kink sits within the blue oval on this map).

Travelling east is fine because the field funnels you down in the right direction but travelling west up the hill is confusing. You can't see the point you are heading for, and the natural route takes you along the original path towards Slade Farm. Ideally we need a post in the middle of the field that walkers can see as they come up the slope. That would point them towards the gate that is hidden beyond the brow of

the hill, and hopefully stop them walking in the logical line towards the lane that leads to Slade Farm.

Footpath 7 (Bridleway) – Pylemoor to Parkhouse Water via Smiths Farm. A decent bridge required over the stream in the bottom would make it safer to cross especially after rain. Farmer needs to be asked to keep path defined through crops this season.

Footpath 8. Nibbs to Lower Washfield. Gate needs mending behind Nibbs – need to keep cattle separate on either side.

Footpath 9. Beeches to south of Stagstile. Stile gets overgrown. Vegetation needs cutting back in summer.

New Bridleway Lower Dryhill to Springfield Cottage. 2nd stile towards Stagstile needs a handrail

### **66/03/26. Planning**

#### **a) To make a recommendation on any planning applications received before the meeting.**

26/00234/FULL Retention of reinstated and altered field access. Location: Land at NGR 292488 118336 Adj Wildwood House, Stoodleigh. Comments from a member of the public were noted. No comment to be made.

#### **b) To note any decisions on planning applications made by MDDC. No decisions received.**

#### **c) To note the planning training session organised by MDDC on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.** Details had been circulated. The Clerk is planning to attend online.

#### **d) Any other planning matters.** No other planning matters.

### **67/03/26. Highways**

**a) To report on any highways work carried out in the parish and to note any highways work needed.** Verge clearance from Swinesbridge to Cotleigh noted. Cllr Balment has tried to report blocked drains on Cotleigh Hill on the DCC website but found it too difficult. One was missed completely when the rest were done in December 2025 and that is the one that is blocked. Cllr Balment will give Cllr Lodge the What3Words reference.

**b) To discuss traffic calming in Washfield and the Twenty is Plenty scheme.** Cllr Lodge to find out the process for 'Twenty is plenty'.

**c) Any other highways matters.** Councillors queried whether the roads in the Rackenford Meadow development have been adopted by DCC as there is still an issue with parked cars blocking visibility at the Washfield Lane entrance.

### **68/03/26. Reports**

**a) County Cllr.** A written report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. Cllr Lodge was asked about the outcome from the pilot project where, when a crew attended a safety defect, they were instructed to repair any other potholes within a 500-meter radius, rather than leaving smaller holes untouched. With current funding this isn't feasible. There is new funding being allocated. Councillors asked what was happening about the priorities they had decided on for repairs to roads in Washfield.

The government allocated £5 billion to a national infrastructure project called Project Gigabit. Managed by Building Digital UK (BDUK), this scheme provides subsidies to broadband suppliers to build lightning-fast, gigabit-capable networks (speeds of  $\geq$  1000 Mbps) in the hardest-to-reach 20% of the country that commercial providers would otherwise ignore. The voucher scheme has reopened but is very limited as many people are applying for the £2billion allocated. The government's priority is to upgrade superfast to gigabyte but there are people in hard to reach areas who are at risk of losing communication when analogue phone lines are retired, who would be satisfied to receive something less.

**b) District Cllr.** A written report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. MDDC will shortly announce a scheme to help vulnerable people with the cost of heating oil. MDDC, DCC and the Environment Agency are dealing with an issue at Oakfordbridge where lorry loads of soil have been dumped on a field next to the river and the owner of the field plans to spread this across the field putting a local fishery and property at risk when there is flooding and the soil is washed into the river. A Stop Notice has been issued.

Details about a councillor surgery to be held in Bampton Town Council's office were given.

#### **69/03/26. Finance.**

**a) To approve any payments.** It was resolved to pay the Clerk's salary and PAYE. Bank fees of £6.00 were paid on 31/01/26 and 28/02/26. Bank fees of £7.00 are due on 31/03/26.

**b) To report any receipts and the bank balances.** There were no receipts since the last meeting. The Unity Trust Bank Current Account balance is £500.00 and the Unity Trust Bank Instant Access balance is £3577.52.

**c) Bank reconciliation for 28.02.26.** Noted.

**d) Appointment of internal auditor.** The Clerk is seeking quotes.

**e) Review of Business Risk Assessment.** The document was reviewed and approved.

**f) Review of Internal Controls and Internal Audit.** The document was reviewed and approved,

**g) Annual Governance Statement new assertion 10 requirements.** The Clerk explained the new Digital and Data Compliance requirement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for local parish and town councils in England and Wales. It requires councils to formally confirm they meet strict digital security, transparency, and data protection standards. To confidently answer "Yes" to Assertion 10 during the internal and external audit process, councils must meet the following core requirements:

- All official business must be conducted using a dedicated, council-owned domain email address, either .gov.uk or .org.uk
- Have an IT Policy to cover acceptable use of technology, email management, password requirements, and data handling protocols
- The council's website must comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations. Sites must meet WCAG 2.2 AA standards and feature an up-to-date Accessibility Statement.
- Data Protection (UK GDPR & DPA 2018): Councils must act as compliant

Data Controllers. This requires having a Data Protection Policy in place and maintaining a record of what personal data is held, processed, and when it is securely destroyed.

- Councils must adhere to the Local Government Transparency Code. This includes maintaining a compliant Freedom of Information (FOI) Publication Scheme and keeping all statutory documents (agendas, minutes, and financial reports) publicly available online.
- Regular data protection and cyber security training must be provided to all councillors and staff, and regular data audits must be completed.

The Clerk will arrange for the Parish Council to have a .org.uk domain for the Council email address. Many of the other requirements will be met following adoption of policies tonight.

**70/03/26. Review of Data Protection Policy and adoption of IT Policy.** The Data Protection Policy has been reviewed and updated and it was approved. It was resolved to adopt the IT Policy.

**71/03/26. Update on co-option of a councillor.** No applications received. The poster will be updated.

**72/03/26. To discuss arrangements for the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting.** Councillors were asked for suggestions but none were given at the meeting.

**73/03/26. Chair's Announcements and Correspondence.**

**74/03/26. Date of the next meeting.** 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Signed:  
Chair

Date: