

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held in Church House, Widecombe

on Thursday 8 January 2026 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor Elliott (Chair), J Bibby, D Edwards, A Fitpatrick, M Jonas, C Partridge & S Raynor

Also attending: Miles Fursdon (Snow Warden)

Members of the Public: Two

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5195 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Guest
- Cllr Welby
- District Cllr Major
- District Cllr Rogers
- District Cllr Nutley
- County Cllr Morgan

5196 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Members were reminded of their responsibility to continually update their Notice of Registerable Interests and invited to state whether they have any interest in the items to be discussed during this meeting in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Unforeseen requests for a Dispensation to be considered at this point only if there was no way a Councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.

Cllr Partridge declared an interest in item 5200(b).

5197 OPEN FORUM

Miles Fursdon (Snow Warden) asked if the Parish Council could identify who is responsible for the hedge opposite the entrance to the new hall site as it needs uprighting. It is thought that this is the responsibility of Teign Housing and it was agreed that the clerk will write to them. He also advised members that he has ordered three pallets of salt and that the grit bin at Cockingford has been replaced. Miles was thanked for finding an unused grit bin and moving it to Lower Blackaton.

5198 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6 November 2025 which were approved

as a true and correct record.

5199 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

The Chair advised that the three District Councillors and County Cllr Morgan have been working hard with members of DNPA to try and save the toilet facilities in Widecombe and to come up with a plan for their future. The Parish Council will be kept informed of any progress.

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Rogers

Cllr Rogers is continuing to seek funding for the new play equipment in the sportsfield. There was a meeting of Teignbridge's Executive Committee this week at which provisional sums were allocated towards playparks.

(c) DNPA Representative

Rob Steemson was not present at the meeting but, as a matter arising from November's minutes, he has informed the clerk that he can potentially help and lead on the 'Beating of the Bounds' walks. He asked whether there is a delegated Council Working Party with whom he could discuss the idea further. It was agreed that Cllrs Partridge and Guest would contact Rob to continue discussions about this.

(d) Police Report

No report

(e) Delegate Reports

Cllr Partridge attended the Dartmoor Forum and will share her notes with members.

5200 PROJECTS AND ESTATES

(Cllrs Raynor, Edwards and Fitzpatrick)

- **Parish Field**
- **Report & Update**

Cllr Bibby advised that there was a maintenance afternoon at the beginning of November. The trees have been topped and pruned, and manure has been spread around them. It was disappointing that, despite publicising it, the event was poorly attended. She suggested that a sign is put up to encourage people to use and visit the orchard. This can be taken down when the sheep are grazing. This was agreed.

- **Grazing Licence**

It was agreed that no changes were required to the terms of the grazing licence and the tendering process will remain the same. An advert will be sent to the Parish Link inviting tenders, and these will be considered in March's meeting.

- **Tree survey**

Goeff Partridge provided a quote of £400 to complete a visual inspection of all the trees from the ground and a climbing inspection on the Horse Chestnut and provide a written report on their

condition. He will also advise on any suggested works should they be required. It was agreed to accept this quotation.

- **Parking area/tree in front of Church House**

Cllr Raynor and Bibby advised that the land in front of Church House does not appear to be registered. It is understood that the stone surround to the yew tree is medieval and is Grade 2 listed. They expressed an interest in carrying out some additional research into its ownership. The Parish Council had no objections to them doing this. Cllr Partridge also offered to speak to DNPA's Historic Buildings' Officer/Archaeologist to see if they have any extra information.

5201 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge, Guest & Welby)

- **New planning applications/appeals**

None

- **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

(i) 0350/25 & 0351/25 – Higher Tor Farm, Poundsgate, Newton Abbot

Refurbishment of the cottage including replacement windows, external doors, porch, rainwater goods and chimney flue. PV slates on roof. New underfloor heating and floor finishes throughout.

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

(ii) 0361/25 – Shop on the Green, Widecombe

Extension of a residential dwelling through the change of use of part commercial ground floor (Class E) to residential use (C3)

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

5202 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge, Guest & Welby)

- **Cash Book & Parish Field**

Members noted the income and expenditure to date.

(b) **Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & disbursements (Jan) – £295.77 (Jan) + £4 heating
- 20i (reimbursed to the clerk) – new domain name – £30
- JKE Web Design Ltd – 25% upfront cost of website design and development – £134.40
- M Brown – replacement tree in Orchard + tree ties – £48.98

(c) **Budget 2026-27**

Members received and considered draft budget proposals for 2026/27. After discussion, the budget proposals and the level of precept to be demanded were approved. The precept was set at £7707 representing an increase of 5%.

5203 HIGHWAYS

(a) Road Warden Scheme:

Cllr Raynor advised that the weather has scuppered recent plans. She advised that she has had a sign made for the sandbag store (as discussed during the walkabout) and some stickers for the waste bins.

It was thought that the large pothole at Cockingford has been filled by DCC Highways but others have now formed around it. There is also a nasty one forming at the Shallowford turning. The one on the Natsworthy road which was filled before Christmas has now failed leaving a large hole with sharp edges.

Cllr Edwards advised that she has written a small piece for the Parish Link about reporting potholes.

(b) As reported in the open forum, it was noted that the Snow Warden has relocated an unused grit bin to the bottom of the hill at Lower Blackaton. This was very much appreciated by residents in that area.

Potholes and other highways maintenance issues can be reported direct to DCC:

Online: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

Telephone: 0345 155 1004

Email: customer@devon.gov.uk

5204 CORRESPONDENCE

It was noted that some correspondence had been exchanged between meetings about the Widecombe Trial

Running event on 28 February. The Parish Council had not been directly informed of the event. Information

has now been shared and members had no objections.

On Saturday 26 September, a fund-raising event is being organised (walking half marathon) which will pass

through Widecombe. DNPA has advised the organiser to consult with the Parish Council in case it has any

issues. There could be up to 200 participants. No concerns were raised by members.

5205 MEMBERS' ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR GENERAL DISCUSSION, FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS AND/OR ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

Members are reminded that they have not received the statutory notice of this business to be transacted and should therefore recognise that any decision made may be taken to be unlawful if challenged in the future

None

5206 NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next Parish Council meeting will be held on 5 February 2026 in Church House, Widecombe.

Signed Dated