

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held in Church House, Widecombe on

Thursday 3 July 2025 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillor S Raynor (Chair for this meeting), J Bibby, D Edwards, T Guest, C Partridge,

A Fitzgerald (from item 2) and J Welby (from item 2)

Also attending: District Cllr Rogers, County Cllr Morgan

Members of the Public: Two

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5145 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Elliott
- District Cllr Nutley
- District Cllr Major
- Rob Steemson (DNPA)

5146 CASUAL VACANCIES

Applications were received from Angus Fitzgerald and Jacqueline Welby. Having confirmed their eligibility for office, they both signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office and joined the Council as co-opted members with immediate effect. At the next meeting, it will be agreed which sub-group each will join.

5147 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.

5148 OPEN FORUM

No comments.

5149 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

(a) Members received the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2025 which were approved as a true and correct record.

(b) Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5 June 2025 which were approved as a true and correct record.

5150 REPORTS

(a) **County Councillor**

Cllr Morgan advised that she has raised the concerns of the Parish Council to Highways about the funding of Leotak (cold applied rapid-acting bitumen emulsion which seals pothole repairs) via the Road Warden Scheme. Currently this is not on Highways' list of funded products as they don't consider it necessary. To date, she has not received a favourable response.

The new administration is making roads and special educational needs a priority.

She reminded the Parish Council about her Locality Budget and invited the Council to make an application of £400 for tools and equipment for use by volunteers.

(b) **District Councillors**

Cllr Rogers advised that the District Council is working out how to distribute the Household Support Fund which the County Council has now signed off. There is a members' briefing on 16 July about the public toilets at which he will represent the concerns of parishes. The issue will be formally considered at a Full Council meeting on 29 July. Questions would need to be submitted in writing in advance of that meeting; a supplementary question can be asked at the meeting.

He has now been told that a new playpark will require planning permission. He continues to pursue the issue of funding with Cllr David Palethorpe. In the meantime, Cllr Partridge asked if the proposed design could be shared with the Parish Council.

He is still trying to seek confirmation from TDC that Widecombe Fair can have exclusive use of the car park (without charge) during Widecombe Fair.

He understands that capital funding is available for new Village Halls and will find out some more information and send it to the clerk.

He attended a Rural Crime Initiative at DCC and advised that there is now a Rural Crime contact who is keen to work with rural parishes. He will send details to the clerk. She is happy to come to a Parish Council meeting, and she will be attending Widecombe Fair.

Scamming is rife in rural Devon, and he is working with the County Council's Cabinet Member to try and tackle this. If you think you are being scammed, call 159 and you will be connected directly to your bank.

(c) **DNPA Representative**

Rob Steemson was unable to attend but sent a brief update advising that he is awaiting confirmation of the Public Rights of Way budget. Each Ranger is only currently allowed to price up one job for a contractor. He has been asked by the landowner at Ponsworthy to undertake more work on the Two Moors Way footpath, which is good news, particularly as the route will be celebrating its 50th year.

(d) **Police Report**

In the period 1 – 27 June 2025, there was 1 criminal offence recorded for this area:

1 x Criminal Damage to council toilets – graffiti

There were 7 non-crime incidents across the area which included Firearms Licensing checks and road-related incidents.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

Cllr Elliott sent a written report following a meeting she had attended at the school with the headteacher and a small number of parents interested in forming an action group to develop sustainable solutions for the parking issues outside the school. Steps have already been taken to address two major issues: location of the school bus-stop and parent parking. In summary, a formal request has been submitted to Devon County Council Highways for a dedicated school bus bay directly adjacent to the school entrance. The aim is to create a clearly marked, signposted bay that will allow the bus to stop safely during pick-up and drop-off times. For over a year, the school has also been working persistently with Teignbridge District Council to request free parking permits for parents in the village car park, allowing short-term use during school pick-up and drop-off times. This would reduce pressure on the road outside school and give parents a safe and legal alternative to stopping on the yellow line. Conversations have also been ongoing with the Widecombe Fair Committee to explore the possibility of creating a hardstanding inside the fair field for parent parking. There is general support for this idea, but the estimated costs are £20k which the school would have to fund

and planning permission for change of use would also be required. The school is not in a position to pursue this at present.

After discussion, the following answers to questions raised were agreed:

- Contact details of Scott Riddell and Meg Booth (DCC) are in the public domain, so there were no concerns about sharing those with the school
- Members agreed to support, in principle, the work of the action group. It is unclear if there is support from parents for parking permits and this should be established. Questions were raised about whether the route from the car park to the school is safe, and whether it is realistic to assume parents would walk from the car park to the school.
- District and County Councillors are also happy to add their support and pursue the matter with District and County
- Members were happy that information is shared on the mailing list to show that the school is taking steps to improve the situation
- It was agreed that the school needs to keep reiterating to parents that it is not acceptable to gather on the road chatting and letting younger children run around
- Members questioned how the figure of £20k had been calculated

5150 PROJECTS AND ESTATES

(Cllrs Raynor and Edwards)

- **Parish Field**

The income and expenditure report was noted.

- **Village Walkabout**

It was agreed that members will meet at 6pm on Monday 4 August at Church House for the annual walkabout of the village.

5151 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge & Guest)

- **New planning applications/appeals**

- 25/0039 – The Old Inn, Widecombe

Works to trees in Conservation Area

Members agreed not to comment.

- **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

- (i) 0488/24 – Lizwell Farm, Widecombe

Construction of a covered dung store and general-purpose building and resurfacing and extension of farm track

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- 0489/24 – Lizwell Farm, Widecombe

Construction of a covered dung store and storage area

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- 0490/24 – Lizwell Farm, Widedcombe

Construction of a covered feeding/loafing area and a covered handling area

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- 0141/25 – Cockingford Farm, Widecombe

Covering over livestock handling and feeding areas

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

- 0170/25 – Bowden Barn, Widecombe

Replacement garden store and construction of a parking/turning area

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional planning consent.

5152 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

- (a) **Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & disbursements – £562.84 (July & August)
- HMRC (PAYE Q1) – £196.40
- G Partridge – weed spraying – £100

5153 HIGHWAYS

- (a) Road Warden Scheme:

Cllr Raynor reported that the team has now filled 100 potholes. They will stop during the school holidays and will resume in September. Cllr Raynor has requested Road Warden Scheme funding for a new wheelbarrow which has been approved. She also requested reimbursement of £41.28 from surplus funds already held by the Parish Council for the Leotak sealer she had already purchased on behalf of the Road Warden team.

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

5154 CORRESPONDENCE

None

5155 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

It was suggested that the Parish Council looks into organising another First Aid session for the parish. It was agreed to discuss this in September's meeting. Cllr Edwards will research costs etc.

For information, Cllr Partridge advised that Spitchwick Manor will be beating their bounds in September (the weekend after Widecombe Fair). She also suggested that, having received an enquiry about whether sandbags were still available in the parish, a reminder is put in the Parish Link about the location of the sandbag store in the coach park.

5156 NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next Parish Council meeting will be held on 4 September 2025 in Church House, Widecombe.

Signed Dated