

WIDECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Church House, Widecombe on Thursday 5 March 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Also attending: County Councillor Morgan and District Councillor Rogers

Members of the Public: Three

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5220 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

5221 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 Bibby declared an interest in item 5226 (a)(i).

5222 OPEN FORUM

Nigel Kenneison confirmed that his application to become the Town Crier for Widecombe has been accepted by the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers. They will cover his public liability insurance. He has also drafted a Widecombe 'shout' which he circulated to members for information. He also talked about the livery and badges that would be displayed. Nigel was invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 21 May in Leusdon Memorial Hall so that he can introduce himself to the community.

5223 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5 February 2026 which were approved as a true and correct record.

5224 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

Cllr Morgan reported that the County's budget has been approved. 80% of the budget is allocated to social care. The government has written off the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) deficit accumulated by DCC which has helped to alleviate financial pressures. Despite there being a little more allocated to highways, it is widely acknowledged that they are in a very poor state of repair. Cllr Morgan suggested that parishes involved in the Road Warden Scheme could work together with neighbouring parishes to obtain/share equipment and/or negotiated better prices etc. Cllr Raynor would be happy to discuss this with those parishes to see how it could work.

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Rogers reported that a meeting has been arranged for 26 March to discuss assets. TDC has allocated £1m over 2 years for playparks. All Dartmoor ward members will attend the meeting. At the meeting, he will pursue funding for new equipment in the Widecombe. TDC has also allocated £800k over 4 years to match fund community projects. The criteria is yet to be set but he thinks that priority should be given to parishes not in receipt of CIL.

(c) DNPA Representative

No updates.

(d) Police Report

In the period 1 January – 28 February 2026, there were 6 recorded offences:

Assault x 1
Burglary x 1
Criminal Damage x 1
Harassment x 1
Sexual offence x 1
Theft x 1

Police responded to approximately 6 non-offence incidents in the same period.

The team is being led by Inspector Sean Roper. Sgt Ryan Cook is the Neighbourhood Team Leader and PC Claire Hurrell is the Neighbourhood Beat Manager. At this time, there is no Police Community Support Officer specifically assigned to the Ashburton Neighbourhood team that covers Widecombe, so PCSO Paul Wilson and PCSO Tina Jordan are supporting the area when necessary.

Cllr Partridge advised that there is a 'Meet your Policing Team' event at the Information Centre in Ashburton on 16 March at 11am.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

The Chair advised that she attended TDC's online Local Leaders' Event. Notes were circulated to members. In summary, the following subjects were covered: funding opportunities (including CIL community match funding as mentioned by Cllr Rogers in his report), emergency planning and community resilience, town and parish charter, the upgrading of the waste transfer and recycling centre in Newton Abbot and various events including a community network event, planning drop-in sessions and community safety forum, anti-social behaviour event and community resilience forum.

It was agreed that the Chair would write an article for the Parish Newsletter about the Priority Register Service (PSR). This is a free service aimed at vulnerable residents, including those with children under 5 years, disabilities etc, and it supports them if there is an interruption to electricity/water/gas supply. Residents are encouraged to sign up at www.thepsr.co.uk.

5225 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Raynor, Edwards and Fitzpatrick)

(a) **Parish Field**

(i) The cultivated horse chestnut sapling has now been planted in the Orchard. The tree has been grown by Greg Wheadon from a conker taken from the horse chestnut tree that was removed from the Green in 2022 after it became infected with Honey Fungus. A small planting ceremony, attended by Greg and his family, was held at the end of February and it is hoped that it will now thrive in its new home.

Cllr Bibby reported that a leaning sycamore tree has been taken down in the Orchard and a rotten ash tree on the bank of the outdoor classroom is also going to be removed.

It was agreed that contact needs to be made with the landowner of the adjacent field about their trees which require attention due to the proximity to the outdoor classroom.

(ii) One application has been received for the sheep grazing licence offering £50 for the season. This was accepted. The clerk will forward the licence document for signature.

5226 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge, Guest & Welby)

(a) **New planning applications/appeals**

(i) 0045/26 – Stone, Widecombe-in-the-Moor
Install new floor to dining room, associated drainage and minor external repairs

Members agreed to support this application.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

(i) 0262/25 & 0263/25 – Higher Tor Farm, Poundsgate
Variation of condition 2 of approved planning ref: 0131/24 for internal remodelling of existing farmhouse, replacement windows and replacement of existing corrugated metal cladding. Refurbishment of existing cottage. Internal alterations to existing barn to create private yoga studio. Ancillary works to existing garage to create plant room and store. Landscape enhancement.

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional consent.

- (c) **Beating of the Bounds**
Cllr Guest has shared maps and proposed elevations for the three different dates over which the walk will be taking place. Cllr Partridge advised that Cllr Guest is also looking at a design for a commemorative medal. She has also been looking at routes, and gathering a list of landowners from whom permission will need to be sought.

5227 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE
(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge, Guest & Welby)

- (a) **Cash Book & Parish Field**
Members noted the income and expenditure to date.
- (b) **Payments**
Members approved the following payments:
- Clerk's salary & disbursements - £295.77 (March)
- (c) **Small Grants Scheme**
Members considered additional information from two applicants and agreed to allocate small grants as follows:
- Spitchwick Cricket Club towards providing an electrical supply to their equipment store - £250
 - Widecombe PCC about the proposed internal uplighters - £250

Members also considered and discussed a new application from Widecombe Pre-School towards the cost of converting to a charity. It was agreed to grant a sum of £500.

- (d) **Digital and Data Compliance – Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return**
- (i) Members agreed to adopt an IT policy which incorporates a 'Bring Your Own Device' policy.
 - (ii) Members agreed adopt a Data Protection Policy which incorporates a Data Retention Schedule.
 - (iii) Members noted the data audit

Together, these policies and documents support compliance with Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance.

It was also noted that members now have their own .gov.uk email address to use for Parish Council business.

The website is currently being worked on and a draft would be circulated to members when ready.

- (e) **Local Government Review**
Parish Councils and residents are encouraged to take part in the government's consultation – <https://www.devonlgr.co.uk/> Comments to be submitted by 26 March.

5228 HIGHWAYS

- (a) **Road Warden Scheme:**
Cllr Raynor advised that there has been one session since the last meeting. They are hoping to have another session in March.

Everyone is encouraged to continue to report potholes on DCC's website:

Online: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>
Telephone: 0345 155 1004
Email: customer@devon.gov.uk

5229 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Members noted the following response from the DNPA Archaeologist regarding the whereabouts of archaeological artefacts excavated from North Hall/Glebe Farm:

Since the excavation was completed, the artefacts have been safely deposited in the stores of Oakford Archaeology in Taunton. Oakford have been kindly storing the artefacts, free of charge, until the future of the finds has been settled and they can be returned to the landowner.

I have supported the landowner with the proposal for the potential creation of a local heritage space but have not been informed of the progress to date.

Several years ago, I also heard that there was also a possibility for the finds to be displayed in the Church, again I have not been informed of progress, if any in this direction.

At anytime should the landowner wish the return of the finds, as is their right I would be more than happy to help facilitate this.

- (b) An email was received from a church warden asking members to discuss the fun run last Saturday. It appears that the church had not been informed of the event and she was very concerned that, had there been a wedding or funeral booked for that Saturday, there would have been a huge parking problem. She has asked if the PC could ensure that the organisers of the event give ample warning if they intend running the event again, and that she or one of the other wardens is informed of the date. Other business owners were also not informed of the event.

It was noted that the Parish Council had not been contacted directly about the event. Cllr Partridge offered to feedback local concerns, about parking in particular, to DNPA, and would request that the Parish Council is included in the list of consultees for future events.

- (c) An email was received from TDC raising concerns about overnight camping in the kiosk car park and the lack of provision for litter collection and other facilities. It was agreed to forward the email to the owners of the car park.

5230 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

Cllr Jonas advised that the pub has been gifted some apple trees from Thatchers Cider and wondered whether it would be appropriate for them to be planted in the Jubilee Orchard. Cllr Bibby replied that it depended on the variety, as the trees that have already been planted were very carefully selected for cross-pollination. Space may also be an issue. Cllr Jonas will send the details to Cllr Bibby for the Orchard Committee to look at.

5231 NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next Parish Council meeting will be held on 2 April 2026 in Leusdon Memorial Hall.

Signed

Dated