



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Leusdon Memorial Hall on Thursday 4 June 2026 at 7.30pm

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

Also attending: District Councillor Rogers and District Councillor Nutley

Members of the Public: One

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5244 RESIGNATION & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- (a) Members received the resignation of Cllr Tom Guest. The Chair advised that he had been hoping to attend this evening to say his goodbyes but had been called to an unexpected work commitment. Tom is happy to continue to help the community as a volunteer where he can, and will continue to work with Cllr Partridge organising the Beating of the Bounds event. Cllr Guest was thanked for his contribution to the Parish Council during his tenure.
- (b) Apologies were received from:
- Cllr Welby
 - District Cllr Major
 - County Cllr Morgan
 - Rob Steemson

5245 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

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 Elliott declared an interest in item 5251(c) (non-pecuniary interest).

Cllr Partridge declared an interest in item 5251(d).

Members were informed that from 29 June 2026, local authorities will not be required to publish an elected or co-opted member's home address in registers of interest unless the member has requested otherwise. Addresses will still remain available internally to authorities and will continue to prevent conflicts of interest. Members were asked to check that their Registers were up to date and inform the clerk of any amendments. All members supported the redaction of their home addresses.

5246 OPEN FORUM

There were no comments.

5247 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

- (a) Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7 May 2026 which were approved as a true and correct record.
- (b) Members received the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2026 which were approved as a true and correct record.

5248 REPORTS

- (a) **County Councillor**
No report

(b) **District Councillors**

Cllr Nutley reported that the expansion of the recycling centre is progressing well. He advised that he had recently attended a number of meetings about Local Government Reorganisation. The government is due to make a decision about the future structure of Devon's local authorities in July. He reported that questions have been asked within the Council about single-sex changing rooms, in particular those spaces in Broadmeadow Leisure Centre, Teignmouth. After an investigation across many local authorities, he reported that Teignbridge District Council was found to be compliant with the 2025 Supreme Court ruling.

Cllr Rogers will circulate guidance about funding for off-grid fuel tank or LPG storage. Guidance is also available to residents who are digitally excluded. The County Council has a list of households which are still connected to copper lines, and third-party providers are obliged to make more progress in providing fibre connections to those households using government funding. In terms of the Local Government Reorganisation, Cllr Rogers explained that once Government has announced its decision about the future structure of local government in Devon, Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 will be triggered, which means that spending by the existing authorities will be restricted. *[A Section 24 Direction can stop the existing councils from making significant financial commitments without approval from the incoming authority; it acts as a safeguard so that the outgoing councils do not make major commitments that the new authority would inherit without having a say.]* Authorities will only have to provide statutory services between the shadow authority and the new authority. He is therefore concerned and is asking questions about funding which has already been earmarked in future budgets and how this will be spent. He is also in touch with the new Chief Executive of DNPA and hopes to arrange a meeting with him within the parish to discuss investment in rural communities.

(c) **DNPA Representative**

No report

(d) **Police Report**

In the period 1 – 31 May 2026, there were 3 recorded offences: 1 x assault, 1 x harassment and 1 x fraud. Patrols have increased to try and reduce the number of thefts from cars.

(e) **Delegate Reports**

None

5249 PROJECTS & ESTATES

(Cllrs Raynor, Edwards, Fitzpatrick & Welby)

(a) **Parish Field**

There were no changes to the income and expenditure and there were no other matters to report.

(b) **North Hall Field Car Park**

Cllr Edwards advised that a parishioner had observed that the boundary of North Hall Field car park is in a poor state and requires some maintenance. Cllr Partridge informed members that she had already made some enquiries of DNPA; she understands that the trees are the responsibility of the DNPA and anything else is the responsibility of the Parish Council as tenants of the field, but only to maintain it in the order in which it was taken on. On discussion with DNPA, she advised that they would be inclined to make some improvements to the boundary which the Parish Council can then maintain to the same standard. Work would include fencing, casting up, replanting and hanging some new gates, making it a proper stock-proof boundary. It was agreed to formalise this by writing to DNPA. It was also agreed to include a request for work to be undertaken to the low-hanging branches over the tennis court.

(c) **Widcombe Fair**

It was agreed to maintain the fee of £1300, and the terms of the agreement would remain unchanged. The fee would be reviewed when the Parish Council sets its budget for 2027-28.

As last year, the Parish Council will arrange for the green to be clear of muck before the event.

(d) **Village Strimming/Weed spraying**

Members considered a quote of £150 from Geoff Partridge to strim and spray the village centre in advance of Widcombe Fair. It was agreed that the nettles and docks need to be treated and the quote of £150 was approved. There was a brief discussion about the type of product used; it was agreed to ask Geoff to look into whether there is an equally effective, but more environmentally friendly product offering the same value.

(e) **Village Walkabout**

It was suggested to have an evening walk during the last week in July. The Chair will suggest some dates outside the meeting.

5250 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON
(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge & Jonas)

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

- (i) 00163/26 – Little Meadow, Widecombe-in-the-Moor
Replacement dwelling and associated outbuilding, with variation of Condition 2 attached to planning permission ref: 0082/21 dated 21 April 2021

Members agreed to support the application. It is a sympathetic design and will not be as large as the previously approved building. It has energy efficiency measures built in, along with a heat pump and solar panels. Members would be pleased to see a new building on the site where it has remained empty for a number of years.

- (ii) 156/26 – Longhouse Farm, Widecombe-in-the-Moor
Change of use and conversion of cabin to camping barn

Members agreed to make no comment.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**
None

(c) **Planning Committee Leads**

The Chair proposed that the lead for planning is rotated each month so that the workload is shared amongst Committee members. It was noted that not all members had received the relevant planning training. It was agreed, therefore, that Cllr Jonas would swap committees with Cllr Welby until such time she had attended DALC's planning training. Cllrs Partridge and Jonas will lead on planning next month.

(d) **Beating of the Bounds**

Cllr Partridge updated members with details of progress so far. They are still speaking to landowners, and everyone so far is on board. They are going to make a proclamation in the Parish Link about the event and bookings will be taken from August. The event will take place over three consecutive weeks in September, and it was thought that 50 people per walk would be a manageable number. Priority would be given to residents and those who can do all three walks. A celebratory event will also be arranged in Widecombe at the end of the third walk. Designs for a commemorative medal will be presented for approval in July's meeting.

5251 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE
(Cllrs Bibby, Partridge & Jonas)

(a) **Cash Book**

Members noted the income and expenditure to date.

(b) **Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & disbursements - £307.47
- Refreshments Annual Parish Meeting (reimbursed to the clerk) - £61.67
- D Edwards – defibrillator pads - £73.19

(c) **CIL Funding – Community Hall**

Members considered a request from Widecombe Community Hall to work with them to put in a CIL Fund application to TDC for work on the community hall ahead of the deadline on 5th September. The application will be for match-funding and the Hall will be requesting around £10k. It will be used towards the external finish of the building.

The Hall has emailed the fund administrator to seek further clarity on whether the Parish Council could allow the Charity to administer the project and make all payments etc if a bid is successful, to reduce the administrative burden on the Parish Council. It has been agreed that the Parish Council would receive the grant in its bank account and then could delegate responsibility to the Community Hall for the management of the work provided there is a clear audit trail.

Members supported the request. The application will be drafted by Widecombe Community Hall and will come to September's meeting for final approval by the Parish Council in advance of the submission deadline.

Having an adopted Infrastructure Plan would add weight to the application, and it was agreed that the Chair would look at this with a view to presenting a document for approval in July's meeting.

(d) **Event Group insurance**

It was noted that at the last meeting of the Parish Council that it had been agreed that the Events Group's application for a small grant to cover the cost of insurance would not qualify under the terms of the grant scheme as it is a running cost. The Parish Council would, however, be open to considering an application for capital expenditure later in the year. It was suggested that the Events Group applies to the County and/or District Councillors for a grant from their respective locality budgets for the insurance.

5252 HIGHWAYS

- (a) Road Warden Scheme: Cllr Raynor advised that the weather had prevented the team from working that morning so they are looking to reschedule for some time next week.

For now, they are borrowing a second-hand wacker plate, but, as mentioned last month, they still intend to look into purchasing their own wacker plate. They also need a set of walkie-talkies which will cost around £40.

As always, 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

- (b) Cllr Raynor reported that a decision has not yet been made regarding the planning application made by North Bovey Parish Council for new village signs, though Devon Highways has been critical of the proposal, and it would therefore seem unlikely to be approved by DNPA. Either way, it was noted that the metal Widecombe signs are looking tired and the Parish Council may wish to look into ways to improve/replace them.

5253 CORRESPONDENCE

None

5254 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

- (a) The clerk advised that there is now an option to subscribe to the parish mailing list directly from the Parish Council's web site. <https://widecombeparishcouncil.gov.uk/>. Tim Hassell is happy to continue to manage the mailing list on behalf of the Parish Council.
- (b) It was noted that there is a lock on the gate on the outdoor classroom in the Jubilee Orchard. The Jubilee Orchard Committee has requested a key in order to maintain the boundaries. There is an ash tree within the boundaries of the orchard which needs to be felled and this will be undertaken by the Committee.
- (c) It was noted that all works to trees within the Conservation Area require the approval of DNPA. Trees within the Jubilee Orchard are not within the Conservation Area.
- (d) With Cllr Guest having now resigned, Cllr Fitzpatrick offered to become the Sandbag Co-ordinator.
- (e) Cllr Partridge reflected on the Rural Skip service which used to be provided annually to rural parishes by TDC. She proposed that this is something which the Parish Council may wish to consider providing in the future as a service to the community. Members agreed that this would be a great idea, but that the cost of hiring a skip could be a barrier. It was agreed that members would discuss the idea with members of the community to assess the level of need.

5255 NEXT MEETING

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

Signed Dated