



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
held in Leusdon Memorial Hall on
Thursday 7 May 2026 at 7.30pm

Members present: Councillors S Raynor (Chair for this meeting), J Bibby, D Edwards, A Fitzpatrick, C Partridge & J Welby

Also attending: District Cllr Rogers

Members of the Public: None

Clerk: Suzanna Hughes

5244 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Raynor, seconded by Cllr Edwards and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Elliott is re-elected as Chair.

5245 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr Raynor, seconded by Cllr Edwards and unanimously agreed by all members present and voting that Cllr Partridge is elected as Vice Chair.

5246 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cllr Elliott
- Cllr Guest
- Cllr Jonas
- County Cllr Morgan
- District Cllr Major
- District Cllr Nutley

5247 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 5256 (a)(ii).

5248 OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

5249 RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2 April 2026 which were approved as a true and correct record.

5250 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

It was agreed to maintain the Committee structure, and membership was agreed as follows:

- **Projects and Estates:** Cllrs Raynor, Edwards, Fitzpatrick, & Jonas
- **Planning/Local Liaison and Finance:** Cllrs Bibby, Partridge, Guest & Welby

5251 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following roles and representatives were agreed:

- Trees – Project & Estates Committee
- Widecombe Fair – Cllr Welby
- Widecombe & District Sports Group – Cllr Partridge
- Parish Field – Cllr Bibby and the Project & Estates Committee
- Snow Warden – Miles Fursdon
- Sandbag Co-ordinator – Cllr Guest
- Defibrillator – Cllr Edwards
- Highways and Footpaths – whole Council
- Parish email communication system – Tim Hassell (or Cllr Fitzpatrick if Tim preferred not to continue with this)
- Church House – Cllr Partridge
- Wildlife Warden – Michael Jonas
- Road Warden – Sue Raynor

5252 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

- (a) Members reviewed the Assets Register. It was noted that the equipment purchased for the Road Warden scheme has been added to the list.
- (b) No changes were required to other governance documents.

5253 REPORTS

(a) County Councillor

No report

(b) District Councillors

Cllr Rogers advised that the UK Government is expected to announce its decision on the future structure of local government in Devon by 16 July. The reorganisation will replace Devon's current two-tier system (county council plus district councils) with new unitary authorities.

Cllr Rogers reminded members that the meeting scheduled for 26 March to discuss assets did not go ahead. He therefore exercised his right to call a supplementary meeting and this will take place on 19 May. He will be attending along with TDC Councillors Steemson, Keeling and Palethorpe. He advised that he is also trying to arrange a meeting with Tom Surrey (Chief Executive, DNPA) about TDC's consideration of Dartmoor wards. In advance of these meetings, they hope to seek quotations for a new play park in Widecombe (and other rural communities) with a view to seeking grant funding (DEFRA) and support from TDC. He will report further in June's Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Raynor asked about a handbook written by County Cllr Louise Wainwright to help councillors navigate Highways services, and whether he had seen a copy. Cllr Rogers advised that he had only been made aware of it in the last week. She was surprised to learn that Devon Highways will now pay for the bitumen emulsion adhesive spray to seal potholes, having previously been told that they would not. She would cover this further at item 5257.

Cllr Rogers hand-delivered a copy of the Teignbridge Town and Parish Council Charter. He will also share details about the screening of the 'People's Emergency Briefing' in Ashburton about how climate change is impacting communities.

(c) DNPA Representative

No report

(d) Police Report

In the period 1 - 30 April 2026, there were 3 criminal offences recorded for the area:

- 1 x Assault
- 1 x Harassment
- 1 x Sexual (non-assault)

There were 2 non-crime incidents across the area.

(e) Delegate Reports

None

5254 PROJECTS AND ESTATES

(a) Parish Field

Cllr Bibby advised that the sheep are now in the field and the clerk confirmed that an email has been sent to the pre-school reminding them that the sheep are not to be petted by the children.

(b) **Village Signs**

Cllr Raynor reported that North Bovey Parish Council had submitted a planning application to replace their metal village signs with carved granite stones, and suggested that this is something that Widecombe could consider. Members were happy for this to be explored further; Cllr Raynor will speak to North Bovey Parish Council to find out more information about the process and report back at the next meeting.

5255 PLANNING/LOCAL LIAISON

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

- (i) 0118/26 & 0119/26 – Longhouse, Widecombe-in-the-Moor
Works to facilitate change of use of first floor of barn to form extended holiday let accommodation, plus internal and external alterations to farmhouse

Members of the Planning Committee would try and visit the site and would circulate their recommendation.

- (ii) DOC/0045/263 – Stone, Widecombe-in-the-Moor
Discharge of Conditions – Install new floor to dining room, associated drainage and minor external repairs

Members agreed to make no comment.

(b) **Planning Decisions/Withdrawals**

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

Members noted that DNPA has granted conditional consent.

- (ii) 0074/26 – Higher Tor Farm, Poundsgate
Structural repair to historic timber fireplace lintel, to stabilise existing historic crack

Members noted that DNPA has refused to grant Listed Building Consent.

(c) **Beating of the Bounds**

Update from Working Group (Cllrs Guest & Partridge)

Cllr Partridge advised that they are awaiting mock-ups of the two designs for the participation medal. She has spoken to local filmmakers about making a short film of the event, and they are fully on board. They have discussed making three versions of differing lengths. Cllr Partridge has spoken to the FIPL team about how best to approach a funding bid which she will submit in due course. Most of the land ownership information has been obtained, and they will soon be contacting all landowners for permission. It is intended that the event will take place over three consecutive weekends after Widecombe Fair. The Working Group will also be looking at the route, and drawing up a timetable which will include when to announce the event to the community.

5256 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

(a) **Cash Book**

Members received and noted the income and expenditure for 2026/27.

(b) **Payments**

Members approved the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & disbursements - £295.77
- Lee Accounting (SW) Ltd (internal audit of accounts) - £114
- Community First - insurance renewal - £215.77. It was agreed to commit to a 3-year long-term agreement.

(c) **Audit 2025/26**

- (i) Members received and noted the year-end bank reconciliation.,
- (ii) Members received and noted the internal auditor's report to agree that this Council is confident that the internal audit arrangements provided by Lee Accounting (South West) Ltd provides excellent reassurance for the public that the financial systems are robust and fit for purpose and to continue with their appointment as the Internal Auditor to the Parish Council
- (iii) Members agreed that this Council is exempt from a limited assurance review under s9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and to sign the Certificate of Exemption
- (iv) Members completed and approved Section 1 of the Annual Return (Annual Governance Statement 2025/26).
- (v) Members received, approved and signed Section 2 of the Annual Return (Accounting Statements 2025/26).

5257 HIGHWAYS

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

- (a) Road Warden Scheme – Cllr Raynor advised that the team have not had any sessions recently due to other commitments, but are hoping to get out again next week. She continues to urge everyone to let the team know of any potholes they are aware of; the team do not repair roadside breakage.

Cllr Raynor spoke to DCC Highways about the use of adhesive spray which was recommended in Cllr Wainwrights 'Highways Handbook' (discussed at item 5253 (b)). Having previously been told that DCC will not fund the purchase of this adhesive spray, the policy has now changed and they will now issue aerosol cans of tack spray with tubs of asphalt. She has therefore ordered 24 cans.

Cllr Raynor proposed that the funds remaining from County Cllr Morgan’s locality grant are used to purchase a wacker plate which would be hugely beneficial. This was supported by members. She hoped that any shortfall could be generated through local fund-raising (e.g. a quiz at The Old Inn). Cllr Raynor will explore costs and present these at a future meeting.

She has spoken to the Chair of Buckland-in-the-Moor Parish Council who is looking into setting up a Road Warden Scheme. He is concerned that they wouldn’t have a strong pool of volunteers in their community and they discussed the possibility of a reciprocal agreement between the two parishes. They will explore this further over the coming months.

5258 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Members received notification of the Hameldown Hammer trail running event on Saturday 27th February 2027. Noting the impact of the event held in 2026, it was agreed to write to the organiser and suggest that they write to the Church, businesses and residents in the centre of the village to make them aware of the possible impact of the event. It was also suggested that they put something in the Parish Link. It was agreed that the Sports Group would write to them about music being played.
- (b) A request was made by the Widecombe Events Group to hold a village fete on the green on 25 July. This was approved subject to the group arranging its own public liability insurance, carrying out a risk assessment prior to the event and ensuring the green is restored. They also asked whether the group could make an application to the Parish Council for a small grant. It was agreed that insurance is a running cost and therefore not something that would qualify under the Parish Council’s small grant scheme.

5259 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

5260 NEXT MEETINGS

- Annual Parish Meeting - 21 May 2026 (Leusdon Memorial Hall)
- Parish Council Meeting - 4 June 2026 (Leusdon Memorial Hall)

Signed Dated