

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

Present Cllrs: S Ayre (Chair), M Reeves (Vice Chair), R Kenshole, T Verney, S Tanton

Also present: , Daniel Bleasdale (Clerk) and 5 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllrs, S Whitby, H Knight, I Lavender, C Cllr Davis

104/25 Election of Chairman: Cllr Reeves was proposed by Cllr Verney, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, approval unanimous. Cllr Reeves signed his Acceptance of Office form.

105/25 Declarations of Interest: Cllr Ayre for planning application 79985

106/25 Public Participation: Amy Batstone spoke of the access to the community park (Garden Lane) being made more accessible to people with mobility issues. Amy believes that this path belongs to the Parish Council.

Amelia Bryant spoke of planning application 79985, stating the goal of the project was to transform the existing bungalow into a sustainable energy efficient home using locally sourced materials, Amelia addressed a few of the concerns raised, the balcony has been specifically designed to preserve privacy of the neighbours; the outdoor shower which is to be used for washing mud off boots and cleaning wetsuits, could be relocated if it's an issue. The proposed turf roof is a response to biodiversity considerations and they will work closely with a structural engineer to make sure it meets all structural requirements. Finally, on the subject of the new builds appearance, while the design is contemporary it is in line with the character of the area and several other properties have undergone similar extensions.

107/25 Minutes: Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 2nd April and the Extraordinary meeting of the 23rd 2025. Approval of the 2nd April Meeting was proposed by Cllr Ayre, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, approval unanimous. Approval of the 23rd April Meeting was proposed by Cllr Kenshole, seconded by Cllr Ayre, approval unanimous.

108/25 Matters Arising

Cllr Kenshole proposed that the font be the same throughout the document, that some of the format be more uniform and issued as a PDF document, seconded by Cllr Ayre decision unanimous.

109/25 Election of Officers 2025/2026

- a) Vice Chair: Cllr Ayre was proposed by Cllr Reeves , seconded by, Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous.
- b) Data Protection Officer: Cllr Kenshole was proposed by Cllr Reeves , seconded by Cllr Ayre, decision unanimous.
- c) Parish Council Auditor: It was agreed that this item would be moved over to the next meeting.
- d) P3 Scheme Co-ordinator: Cllr Verney was proposed by Cllr Reeves, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous.

- e) Parish Council Representatives (x2) on Parish Hall Committee. Cllr Reeves was willing to stay on that committee, proposed by Cllr Ayre, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous: It was agreed that this item would be moved over to the next meeting to try and appoint a second representative.

110/25 Police Report.

The Clerk reported that no crimes have been reported in April.

Cllr Ayre reported the crime figures for March, from the police website, for Morteheo, West Down and Bittadon: Violence and Sexual Assault 3; Other Theft 2 (it was noted that the crime map indicated 1 crime of Other Theft was for West Down); Public Order 2

111/25 Report from County Councillor

C Cllr Davis has only just been re-elected and has not made a report.

112/25 Report from District Councillor.

D Councillor Wilkinson reported that at the Strategy and resources meeting a new housing strategy was adopted, after 6 weeks of public consultation. This is aimed at preventing homelessness, to make homes healthy, provide a new housing supply. More enforcement procedures are being implemented at Willingcott Valley holiday cottages regarding breaches of occupancy planning approval conditions.

It was noted that Enforcement Officer Stacey Slater would be the contact to find out more information (past and present) on planning breach enforcements in our Parish.

The North Devon Community lottery gave away £25,500 to various local causes.

D Councillor Wilkinson attended a NDC planning committee meeting regarding the White Cross project, the planning was approved.

Waste and recycling; all councils are from 2027 to provide collection for hard and soft plastics, this is a statutory requirement. Holiday lets are still getting collected by the council and should be considered trade waste.

Cllr Kenshole asked for clarification regarding the cable at Saunton. The cable is for the pilot project only, the main cable will come in at Abbotsham.

D Cllr Wilkinson gave his apology in advance for not being able to attend our June meeting.

113/25 Reactive Speed Sign: The Clerk was instructed to order the poles. The Parish council is still waiting for hear from highways that utilities are not near the sites.

The Clerk will obtain a formal quote from Chis Wallis (a verbal figure of £250 was mentioned).

114/25 Planning Decisions: All approved

79596 Change of use of dependant relative annexe to separate residential unit at West Stowford Barton Barn, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8PJ

79918 Variation of condition to allow for extension of time to the 3 year completion date attached to Class Q prior approval 75554 (Prior Approval for change of use to dwelling) at West Stowford Barton, Lane past West Stowford Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8PJ.

79628 Erection of porch & associated works at The Oaks, Woodlane Farm, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NH.

115/25 Planning Applications to consider:

To comment on the following planning applications:

79985 Alterations and extension to dwelling to include conversion of garage to storage space, creation of roof terrace and associated works at Roughlea, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NF. The following comment was proposed by Cllr Reeves, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous. "The parish council has a slight concern over the location of the outdoor shower, which the applicant said she is willing to move. The parish council also has concerns regarding the roof coping with the weight of the environmentally friendly insulation type. There are also some concerns regarding privacy of neighbours".

116/25 Planning applications received after the Agenda was published:

80192 Demolition of barn and erection of a single storey dwelling and associated works (utilising the fallback approval 74312 and 76927) at The Barn Woodlane Farm West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NH

It was proposed to move this application to the next meeting by Cllr Kenshole, seconded by Cllr Verney, decision unanimous.

117/25 Car Park Lease:

The lease is completed. North Devon Council have not finished cutting the bushes, back nor addressed any weeding control, as agreed. The Clerk will chase them up on this. The Clerk had also asked NDC about the Business Rates due and was advised an invoice was to follow.

118/25 Road Warden Scheme:

The Chairman signed a document stating the Parish Council's interest.

119/25 Footpaths

- a) P3 Grant Funding update: All the forms have been submitted and the Clerk will chase this.
- b) Other Footpath matters: Cllr Kenshole reports that a full industrial generator has been craned in to an area near footpath 15. The pallets and a sofa still remain across part of this footpath near the entrance by Roborough Bridge. The footpath was also quite narrow alongside an electric fence near the beginning. It was agreed that the P3 Co-ordinator would contact the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Officer at DCC for advice on dealing with these issues.

At Stocklands a contractor from DCC is completing the work.

The Clerk will chase the contractor regarding the additional footpath work (Lee Rulton (A-ds tree and garden maintenance).

Cllr Ayre has spoken to the Landowner at Stocklands re Dave Trickett (DCC PROW contractor) plus Fly Tipping nearby – 13 tyres and strip lighting removed to date, but more to be reported.

120/25 Wooden Bus Shelter at Foxhunters:

Additional bus shelter quotes have been circulated by the Clerk, the original quote of £2300 seems to be the best option. This quote needs padding out with more details. Cllr Ayre contacted the landowner and permission was granted. Cllr Verney proposed we accept the quote of £2300; this was seconded by Cllr Kenshole. Cllr Verney would like to get some prices for painting for the other three bus shelters from Pete Starbuck.

121/25 Dog Fouling:

Amy Batstone has done a lot of work on this. Standing Orders suspended for an update from Amy, Poo bag dispensers have been put up and this has made a difference. The play area may also be fenced off and this will give North Devon Council more enforcement powers. A dog waste bin may be moved at some point and the Parish Council will be kept informed.

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122/25 Review Code of Conduct and Discuss Training:

The existing (Local Government Association) policy has not changed; the policy was reviewed and re-adopted. Proposed Cllr Verney, Seconded by Cllr Tanton. The Clerk to insert our standard 'header' showing review date in line with other policies. The whole Parish Council has been signed up to the free training webinar 03 July 2025 18:00 – 19:30. It is not mandatory but would be very useful to attend if possible.

123/25 Parish Council Insurance:

After reviewing quotes, the Parish Council decided to continue with the existing insurance, Proposal by Cllr Verney seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous. The Clerk noted that this insurance may not be adequate. The Clerk is having difficulty adding additional items to the insurance and will continue to chase them up.

124/25 SW Heritage Trust

The Parish Council agreed to pay a £100 donation in respect of storage of Parish Council archive documents, proposed by Cllr Kenshole seconded by Cllr Tanton.

125/25 Small Grants Fund

- a) To review the policy: The policy was discussed, no amendments needed, proposed by Cllr Ayre, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous. The application form will be updated for 2026/27 by Cllr Kenshole before the opening of the application process in August 2025.
- b) To confirm the first instalment of Grant Fund payments: This will be confirmed in payments.
- c) To receive any outstanding receipted invoices in respect of grants: This has been done.

126/25 Finances

a) Balances at 31/03/2025: Treasures Account: £26933.99

Business Bank Account £4930.66

b) Received invoices for payment:

Payments for authorisation April 2025

North Devon Council Clerks Salary	£399.62	
Admin Charge	£7.72	
		£407.34
Parish Hall:		£385
PTFA:		£350
St Calixtus:		£700
WDVGFA (Community Park):		£500
ATP		£398.90
Samuels Solicitors		£1,672
West Hill Farm		£3,276.00
South West Heritage		£100
Devon Communities Together		£50
Zurich Municipal	£369.67	
Total		£8208.91

Proposal for payments Cllr Verney seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous.
The Payments List will be in Excel with an auto sum from now on.

c) **To receive the Parish Council Final Accounts for the 2024/2025 financial year.**

The accounts were agreed, proposed by Cllr Kenshole, Seconded by Cllr Tanton decision unanimous.

d) **AGAR (Annual Governance Accountability Return)**

i) **To complete and sign the Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025.**

This was not fully completed, due the Clerk getting the dates wrong and the internal audit happening prior to this meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair registered their dissatisfaction at the order of events that the Clerk had conducted things. The Chair will contact the Internal Auditor to discuss this matter.

ii) **To complete and sign the Accounting Statements 2024/2025**

The accounting statement with revised figures was approved, proposed by Cllr Kenshole seconded by Cllr Tanton, agreed unanimously.

This will be signed by the Chair once the form is returned from the Internal Auditor.

e) **To claim VAT for the year 2024/2025.**

This was confirmed as correct, proposed by Cllr Tanton seconded by Cllr Verney, agreed unanimously.

f) **The updated Asset register:** The asset register needs changing, It needs to be brought up to date and also to look at moving it over to the Excel format to make the amount self-adding.

127/25 Correspondence.

Planning enforcement (ref No. 13856) have been in contact regarding investigation of an annex being used as an Airbnb, in breach of condition 3 of the approved planning permission ref 78881 for Peards House. Planning enforcement have requested that this no longer to be used as a holiday let.

Andrew Sutton contacted the Parish council regarding objections to planning app 79985.

128/25 Unresolved Questions.

Garden lane previously mentioned by Amy Batsone has been partly resurfaced by the Parish Council before and the air ambulance before that, however it is not owned by the Parish Council. The Parish Council would like to Community Park to put their future plans for the Park in writing where they might need help or advice from the Parish Council. The Chair will write to the Chair of the Community Park Trustees to request this.

129/25 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

- a) Review Standing Orders
- b) Review Statement of internal control and financial risk.
- c) Review financial regulations and check signatories.
- d) Review and update the diary.
- c) Internal quarterly Audit.
- d) Insurance update

130/25 Any Other Business.

Cllr Verney: Noted someone has cut the hedge on Dean Lane to provide more visibility, the Clerk was asked to contact highways to cut the whole of the verge visibility splay onto the A361.

Cllr Ayre: Reported that she had attended two Civic Services, one was in Ilfracombe (the other was in Braunton) and a discussion regarding the combined unitary authority and working more together in the future took place with more collaborative working and use of resources.

Cllr Reeves would like to know the cost of PKF Littlejohns External audit.

Cllr Ayre reminded the meeting about the West Down scarecrow competition (theme "Life at Sea") towards the end of June in the week prior to the Village Fete on 5th July. Entries to be registered by 16th June.

Cllr Ayre noted that the AED child pads expire in June and would find out the replacement cost and bring details to the June meeting.

Cllr Kenshole had been contacted about land being sold off in a field near footpath 15. The land is being filled with items and buildings and it was generally agreed that if the Parish council is contacted about this, we will report it to the Local Authority for investigation.

Cllr Reeves mentioned there is likely to be Parish Forum within the next month and the Parish Council support this.

The drains have been cleaned this month.

PART B – THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THIS PART OF THE MEETING.

131/25 To discuss setting up a sub-team of councillors to make arrangements for a meeting with the Clerk to address improving council communications and administration matters.

Cllr Reeves pointed out that things are not working the way the Parish Council would like and that they would like to see some changes and that they would be willing to help improve things.

The Clerk accepted that he was not adapting well to West Down Parish's way of doing things and handed Cllr Reeves his resignation letter.

The meeting closed at 10:37 p.m