

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 5th November 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs M Reeves (Chair), R Kenshole and T Verney.

Also present: D Cllr Wilkinson, John Barnett (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

Apologies for absence: C Cllr Andrea Davis due to vacation, Cllr Ayre and Cllr Whitby due to work commitments, Cllr Lavender & Cllr Knight unwell/family commitment (Apologies accepted).
Cllr Tanton no reason given.

250/25 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Reeves reference Agenda item 18 (part) Declaration of Interest Small Grant application from the Parish Hall Management Committee.

251/25 Public Participation

None

252/25 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 1st October 2025.

The Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Only two of the three Councillors present attended the meeting of 1st October so a proposal that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st October 2025 be accepted was not permitted due to this compliment of Councillors being inquorate.

Therefore the proposal to accept the minutes of 1st October was deferred to the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 3rd December.

253/25 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 1st October 2025.

- a) Reference minute 228/25 of the October meeting. On 12th October Cllr Kenshole received confirmation from the previous Clerk that there is no data related to West Down Parish Council business stored on any devices in his possession.
- b) The quarterly Financial Audit was completed satisfactorily.

254/25 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

The crime figures for August 2025 for Morteohoe, Woolacombe, & West Down (including Mullacott & Bittadon) were:-

Violence and sexual offences	4
Anti-Social behaviour	2
Other crime (Burglary)	2

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Of these 8 crimes 1 was in the West Down Parish; 1 Violence and sexual offence.

Source : www.police.uk

255/25 Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis provided a written report in her absence. Copy attached Appendix A.

256/25 Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson reported that:-

1. There are plans to increase on-street parking fees by 50% but as yet no plan to increase on-street parking fines.
2. Ilfracombe RNLI will be replacing their Lifeboat. The current Lifeboat "Shannon" class is relocating to Appledore and a new smaller vessel "Atlantic" class will be based in Ilfracombe. The Ilfracombe Harbour Board will be consulted. "Atlantic" can do 90% of "Shannon"'s capabilities but significantly faster. There is a need to clarify the benefits of this change. It is not known whether crew numbers will stay the same.
3. North Devon Council is planning to provide a healthy homes grant of £1.3m to convert the former Royal Mail building in Ilfracombe High Street into residential homes. A proposed development in Braunton for 9 houses was refused by the Planning Committee due to concerns that the site is part of the medieval Braunton Great Field.
4. An application by Amy Batstone on behalf of the West Down Village Green Field Association (WDVGFA) has been successful for a Community Cllr Grant of £350 to support ongoing projects.

257/25 Reactive Speed Signs

Cllr Reeves reported that the battery was charged up but there was a technical issue with the Bluetooth connection. Westcotec Technical support was unable to resolve the problem remotely so the display sign is going to be returned to Westcotec for testing/repair.

Cllr Reeves continues chasing full responses from utilities providers, especially in relation to the preferred location on Ilfracombe Road.

A Residents letter has been distributed to residents [plus School headteachers & PCC Secretary (Iron room)] in the School area and along Dean Lane to inform them of the plan to locate the Reactive Speed Sign poles in these vicinities.

Cllr Reeves confirmed that Chris Wallis (contractor) has kindly agreed to dig the third pole hole at a later date than the first two without any additional cost to the Parish Council from his original quote.

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258/25 Planning Decisions

Approved

80857 Trimstone Farm West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NR Prior notification for the erection of one agricultural barn 29/9/2025. Prior Approval Not Required Decision 20/10/2025
80721 to Increase the height of detached garage at front of house from 2.5m 4m to install secure garage door and increase storage space at 4 Thorne Park West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NG

80555 Equestrian sand school at Land Adj B3343 Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NY

80398 Demolition of dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling at 8 Thorne Park, West Down, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 8NG

Refused

80606 Planning application 80606 for retrospective retention of a livestock shelter at Land known as Part Beef Park Buttercombe Lane Ilfracombe EX34 8NU refused due to inadequate evidence to demonstrate that the retrospective development has a strong functional link to local agriculture, forestry or other existing rural activity.

Withdrawn

80256 Buttercombe Meadow Camp Site Prior approval for a 60 day Temporary Recreational Campsite

Cllr Kenshole commented that we should be checking for any Conditions imposed on Approved planning applications so that the Parish Council is aware and can monitor for any breaches.

259/25 Planning Applications

a) To comment on the following planning applications:

80923 Ilfracombe Park West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NE Application for a lawful development certificate for existing operation as a caravan site without the need to comply with Conditions A and B attached to the original planning permission NI8302

Cllr Reeves confirmed that West Down Parish Council is not an official consultee but it was useful for Councillors to be familiar with the history of this Caravan site for future reference.

b) To comment on any planning applications received after the Agenda was published :

None

260/25 Footpaths

a) Review Grass Cutting & Bus Shelter cleaning Works Description & Schedule.

Prior to the meeting Cllr Verney & Cllr Reeves had updated the Works Description & Schedule and it had been circulated to Councillors for their review. Cllr Verney proposed acceptance of the new Works Description & Schedule and Cllr Kenshole seconded. Decision unanimous.

The Clerk was asked to create a Notice to invite quotations against the new Works Description and Schedule with a closing date of 30th November. Cllr Verney offered to assist with any questions from potential contractors.

b) Update on both new and outstanding P3 grant claims

The Clerk expressed his disappointment at the lack of response from any of the individuals contacted at DCC regarding the P3 Grant Application originally acknowledged as received by Jon Boyd in March 2025.

Cllr Reeves suggested that he will write to Rob Taylor cc C Cllr Davis requesting clarification of the availability of P3 funding per the West Down Parish Council application in March. Cllr Kenshole proposed acceptance of this suggestion and Cllr Reeves seconded. Decision unanimous.

c) Any other footpath matters. (Including National Grid/Hi-Line Tree work in Garden Lane.)

1. Cllr Verney will ask Mr Knight to quote for repair of the stonework to Pulland bridge, and to clear the entrance to FP12 at Aylescott Lane.
2. Hi-Line have advised that the Tree Work in Garden Lane is scheduled for Friday 14th November. National Grid have written to residents likely to be affected by the power outage.
3. Regarding the hedges overhanging Footpath 12 in Garden Lane Cllr Verney suggested that he will inspect them after the Tree Work has been completed and then letters can be sent to any residents in need of reminding of their responsibilities to keep the hedges in order. Cllr Verney plans to inspect this footpath in January.
4. Cllr Reeves informed the meeting that he has made enquiries at both NDC and DCC regarding guidelines for the type of weed killer they might use, as requested by Jon Knight, our current contractor.
5. Footpath survey forms have been distributed to the Parish Councillors in readiness for path checking during the next 2 months. Clerk to remind Councillors in a few weeks time.

261/25 Road Warden Scheme: To discuss the next steps, including Road Warden Training.

Cllr Verney, Road Warden, will undertake the free basic e-training course run by DCC. Other councillors will also be invited to volunteer to do this so that they can assist in the event that Cllr Verney was unavailable or needed additional assistance from time to time. Also noted is that DCC can provide free enhanced training for work carried out on the live carriageway (open to traffic) for up to 3 representatives per organisation.

262/25 Review of Health and Safety Policy

Cllrs Kenshole & Reeves have reviewed the policy and consider it up-to-date but recommend some additions:

1. The policy should specify that Contractors be given a copy.
2. The Parish Council needs an Accident Incident Report Form which must also be completed by Contractors if necessary, and where someone is hospitalised then HSE must be informed immediately.
3. Cllr Ayre be named as our First Aider.
4. To add the newly acquired Defibrillator located at the Parish Hall.

Cllr Kenshole offered to update the Policy and also expand the section detailing how to "Lift" safely, and to create an Accident Incident Report Form.

The revised Policy and Accident Incident Form will then be added to the West Down Parish Council website.

263/25 Bus shelter: Foxhunters Replacement update on wooden shelter & Paint the interior of the other 3 bus shelters.

The Clerk sent the replacement shelter estimate to DCC BSIP for consideration and they requested the addition of a window or some other enhancement that would improve customer safety and/or comfort. In particular they require a traveller to be able to see an approaching bus from within the bus shelter.

Unfortunately, there is a residential property boundary fence each side of the shelter so the only place for a window would be in the front panels. However, this would not help a traveller to see an approaching bus.

Consequently, the application for a Bus Service Improvement Grant of 50% of the cost was potentially going to be declined.

However, Devon County Council Integrated Public Transport Department offered to discuss other options, such as the use of mirrors, and suggested that this could be discussed with the Neighbourhood Officer (NBO) on-site.

Cllr Verney confirmed that he plans to paint the other bus shelters in the spring 2026 as soon as the weather is suitable.

264/25 Car Park Lease: To receive an update on the Village Car Park weed control.

Cllr Verney and Jon Knight plan to clear the weeds in the car park later in the month, tentatively 24th November.

As mentioned under 260/25 c) 4., Both NDC and DCC have been contacted for advice regarding potential future use of weedkillers.

265/25 Emergency Plan review update

Andy Odell (CERT Co-ordinator) has a meeting planned for 11th November in the Iron Room to review the Community Emergency Plan and to discuss anything learnt from activating the first stages of the Emergency Plan last December due to the forecast of high winds. This review will include use of communication channels including WhatsApp and the Village Website/Facebook and to update any changes to the 9 people on the CERT and other contact information detailed in the Plan.

266/25 Small Grant Applications: To review small grant applications and decide on funding awards

West Down Parish Hall

Unfortunately, the Parish Council was unable to discuss the Parish Hall Management Committee Small Grant Application because the Council was not quorate. (Cllr Reeves Declaration of Interest because he is a member of the Parish Hall Management Committee.)

Consequently, this application will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday 3rd December.

West Down Boule Club

The Parish Council concluded that whilst they support the idea of a public shelter in principle, they are unable to allocate a requested grant of £1,000 at this stage.

The main concerns were the lack of real detail of the design, precise location, and whether ongoing maintenance would be necessary. In addition, the Councillors felt that it was difficult at this stage to know the likely total cost and therefore the proportion of the cost that the requested grant would reflect. However, the Council will be pleased to review an application if the Boule Club makes a further Small Grant Application next year when the invitation to apply for Small Grants opens again.

Cllr Verney proposed to decline grant and Cllr Kenshole seconded. Decision unanimous.

St Calixtus Church

The Parish Council voted to approve the application for the sum of £1,440 towards the churchyard grass cutting costs. Cllr Verney proposed to grant in full, and Cllr Kenshole seconded. Decision unanimous.

West Down Village Green Field Association (WDVGFA)

The Parish Council voted to approve this application for the sum of £1,000 towards overheads and running costs rather than the sum requested of £1,500.

Unfortunately, the Councillors didn't have any information about the budget plan after March 2026, and they felt that the most recent bank balance of £10,000 in February gave some contingency and that a 50% increase on last year's grant was unjustified.

Cllr Verney proposed to grant £1,000 and Cllr Kenshole seconded. Decision unanimous.

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West Down School PTFA

The Parish Council voted to approve this application in principle for the sum of £700 subject to receiving some additional information about the 3D Printer Model and supplies.

Cllr Kenshole proposed grant in principle and Cllr Verney seconded. Decision unanimous.

267/25 Insurance: To receive an update on the Insurance.

a) Update on notifying insurers of additional items for cover, particularly the car park.

Following NDC's request to include a value for the Car Park in the Insurance Schedule we are waiting on a response from the Properties & Estates Team at NDC. It has been in their hands since 5th September.

The Clerk reported that he had chased this up via email on 30th October to the NDC Manager of Insurance but there had not been a response. However, the Manager of Insurance is also managing the Precept process and he has requested the Precept amount be submitted by 15th December. The Clerk will request the insurance information urgently because this could have a material impact on the Precept amount.

268/25 Purchase of Salt supplies – update

Salt was delivered in October and John Hookway will be placing an initial 6 bags outside of the Village Shop in the next few weeks.

269/25 Budget Proposals: To review budget proposals for 2026/27.

Mid-Term Accounts [see 270/25 d)] and a draft budget for 2026-2027 were circulated together ahead of the meeting. Cllr Kenshole requested the Clerk check the historical amount spent on Ink Cartridges to ensure this budget line is accurate.

Cllr Reeves confirmed that the Election budget of £1,000 was the recommended amount to hold in the reserve. However, a check would be made on the cumulative effect of this over the last few years and discussed further at our next meeting.

Councillors agreed that the budget will be finalised at the next meeting on 3rd December in time to submit the Precept figure to NDC by 15th December.

270/25 Finances:

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 31/10/2025

Treasuries Account

Opening	£19,805.35
Received	£ 220.00
Outgoings	£12,819.99
Closing	£ 7,205.36

Business Bank Account

Opening	£14,943.95
Received	£10,008.68
Outgoings	£ 0.00
Closing	£24,952.63

b) To receive and agree the invoices received for payment.

Creditor	Invoice number	Amount
North Devon Council (Non-Domestic Rates - Car Park)	93625504	£ 115.00 (via DD)
DALC Clerk Essential 1 Training Course	6967	£ 36.00
NDC - Bin Services	11634860	£ 169.10
Lloyds Bank - Account Charges	468433601	£ 4.25
North Devon Council Clerks Salary (John Barnett)	SD11635960	£ 397.86
NDC Admin Charge		£ 7.72
DALC Course Writing Grant Applications & Sourcing Funding & Clerks Essentials 2 Webinar	7011	£ 78.00
J P Knight (Footpath & Bus Shelter works October 2025)	0124	£ 323.33
Total Payment		£1,131.26

Cllr Verney proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Reeves.
Decision unanimous.

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £1,131.26 SHOULD BE PAID.

c) Small Grant Stage 2 payments for 2025/26 have been paid out.

d) The Mid-Term accounts were presented under 269/25 above.

Cllr Reeves proposed acceptance of the Mid-Term accounts and Cllr Kenshole seconded. Decision unanimous.

271/25 Obtain a copy of Parish Hall insurance certificate as West Down Parish Council is a Custodian Trustee

A copy of the Parish Hall Certificate of Insurance has been received and was deemed in order.

272/25 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

1. Terry King, Chair West Down Parish Hall wrote to inform the Parish Councillors that the AGM of West Down Parish Hall is scheduled for Wednesday 19th November 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Hall. When a Parish Councillor is elected, they have the privilege of automatically becoming a Custodial Trustee of the Parish Hall for the duration of their time as a Parish Councillor. A Custodial Trustee has no duties to perform unless the Management Trustees fails or disbands when the Charity Commission would take over and work with all the Parish Councillors to rectify the situation. It is therefore advisable that a number of Parish Councillors are fully aware of the procedures and requirements to manage the Parish Hall in order to maintain it as a very beneficial asset in our community.

One of the privileges of being a Custodial Trustee is that they have an automatic right to appoint two Parish Councillors to the Management Committee each year which makes them Management Trustees who have the sole right to manage the Parish Hall. The Management Committee meets about 10 times a year to manage the hall and in addition to that arranges and attends fund raising events. The appointees will find both the meetings and the fundraising events enjoyable.

The appointment and election of Management Trustees takes place at the AGM which only usually takes about 30 minutes and it is followed by our regular committee meeting.

2. NDC have arranged a Teams Meeting for 6th November to update Councillors regarding the plans for unitarisation. Cllr Reeves confirmed that he intends to participate.

3. NDC have sent the Precept Application Form which must be submitted by 15th December. NDC will then respond with news about the impact on Band D Council Tax along with a formal precept form that is to be completed and returned by 26 January 2026.

4. NDC and Torridge DC (combined) sent a link (see below) to a newly published updated Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement.

North Devon and Torridge Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement

<https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/6540442>

273/25 Unresolved Questions:

None

274/25 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 3rd December. Items for the Agenda so far include:-

- a) Review West Down Parish Hall Small Grant Application
- b) Finalise the budget 2026-2027
- c) Agree Precept Application amount
- d) Reactive Speed Sign update
- e) Footpaths, including P3 Funding & Walking of Footpaths (October to December)

- f) Road Warden Scheme – Training
- g) Bus Shelter update
- h) Insurance – car park
- i) Review the grass cutting and bus shelter cleaning contract quotes
- j) Emergency Plan review update
- k) Standing Order 3W : meeting duration

275/25 Any Other Business:

1. Cllr Kenshole suggested the consideration of a change to the Standing Orders reference 3W to limit meetings to 2.5 hours rather than 4 hours.
2. Cllr Reeves attended a training webinar on 15th October provided by DALC “Writing Grant Applications and Sourcing Funding”.
3. Cllr Reeves and the Clerk attended the West Down Parish Forum on 14th October and The Forum have placed meeting notes on the village website <http://www.westdown.org.uk/west-down-forum-notes/>
4. The Clerk will be attending free training webinars on Local Insurance Risk on 2nd December and VAT on 4th December.
5. Latest Air Ambulance Beacon testing schedule has been received from Ben Hookes who continues to do a great job in testing the Beacon every month.
6. The Clerk has amended the PC Diary to update the IT Policy review from November to February.

Part B: Confidential Matters:

276/25 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A:

None

The meeting closed at 21.48 pm