

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs M Reeves (Chair), S Ayre (Vice-Chair), R Kenshole, T Verney, S Whitby, I Lavender and S Tanton.

Also present: C Cllr Davis, D Cllr Wilkinson, John Barnett (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Knight due to a Family health issue. (Apology accepted).

277/25 Declarations of Interest

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

278/25 Public Participation

None

279/25 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 1st October 2025 and 5th November 2025.

Both sets of Minutes had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Cllr Lavender proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st October 2025 be accepted, subject to a minor grammatical correction to Minute 227/25, as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

Cllr Verney proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5th November 2025 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE 1ST OCTOBER AND 5TH NOVEMBER 2025 BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED BY THE CHAIR AT THE END OF THE MEETING.

280/25 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 5th November 2025.

- a) Cllr Kenshole confirmed that he and Cllr Reeves had completed the Review of the Health and Safety Policy and Cllr Kenshole had created an Accident Incident Form. Both documents have been uploaded to the Parish Council web site.

281/25 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

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

Violence and sexual offences	4
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M Reeves
08/01/2026

Drugs	2
Anti-Social behaviour	1
Other crime (Burglary)	2

Of these 9 crimes none were in West Down village.

Source : www.police.uk

282/25 Report from County Councillor.

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

283/25 Report from District Councillor.

a) D Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson informed us that NDC were re-instating their Climate & Environment Grant for the 2026/27 financial year. There will be £20,000 available (probably 2 x £10,000 tranches as before with applications due by end of August 2026 and January 2027 respectively). He believes that the criteria for applications will not have changed from previous years.

This grant is only available to parish councils with parish populations below 1,000. Application forms are not normally available for the 1st tranche until April (2026).

b) North Devon Council Trade Waste Services are operating at a significant loss and a current urgent review is underway. It seems there is a distinct possibility that this service could be discontinued in the future.

Local businesses utilising NDC Trade waste Services are encouraged to urgently email Mark Kentell (NDC Head of Environmental Enhancement) on mark.kentell@northdevon.gov.uk and voice their concerns. Mark's NDC phone number is 01271 388200 if businesses wanted to speak about this in person.

Cllr Reeves offered to contact West Down village local businesses to inform them of the situation.

c) "Verity" is to stay for ever! Verity is a striking 20-meter (66-foot) tall bronze statue created by renowned artist Damien Hirst. Unveiled in 2012, this monumental sculpture has become one of Ilfracombe's most iconic and talked-about landmarks, drawing visitors from near and far. Originally it was loaned to Ilfracombe for a period of 20 years.

284/25 Reactive Speed Sign

Cllr Reeves reported that the Reactive Speed Sign support poles were installed on 19th November on Stang Lane (near the School) and in Dean Lane. The Reactive Speed Sign was successfully installed on 26th November on Stang Lane and has been collecting traffic volume and speed data. The intention is to download and analyse this data weekly. The Reactive Speed Sign will rotate between the 3 locations approximately every 3 weeks i.e. it will collect data for 3 consecutive weeks at each location.

The 3rd location on Ilfracombe Road will be confirmed subject to receiving the full responses from utility providers.

On behalf of the Parish Council Cllr Reeves thanked John Hookway personally for his help in providing the location for the support pole on Dean Lane.

285/25 Planning Decisions

Approved/Refused/Withdrawn - None

286/25 Planning Applications

a) To comment on the following planning applications:

81057 Retrospective application for temporary extension to mobile home for 12 months at The Oaks Woodlane Farm West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NH

Cllr Lavender proposed recommendation for approval, Cllr Kenshole seconded, decision unanimous.

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

81103 at The Old Stables Buttercombe Barton West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8JZ
Single storey extension and alterations to dwelling

Cllr Whitby proposed recommendation for approval, Cllr Tanton seconded, decision unanimous.

287/25 Footpaths

a) Update on outstanding P3 grant claim.

Cllr Reeves intends to ask C Cllr Davis to investigate reasons for the lack of any helpful response from any member of the Highways PROW Department to the Parish Council's email communications since August regarding the application for P3 funds back in March.

b) Any other footpath matters, including outstanding extra work required.

Cllr Verney will ask Jon Knight to cut Garden Lane grass areas once more due to unusual continued growth, and to invoice for this additional work.

The Clerk reported that Hi-Line completed the Tree Work in Garden Lane as scheduled on Friday 14th November.

Cllr Ayre reported that several residents had not received notice in advance that their electricity supply would be disconnected for several hours on the day.

Cllr Ayre will speak to those households and provide details of the National Grid compensation claim process together with their contact details.

Cllr Verney volunteered to trim the hedges overhanging in to Garden Lane from several of the neighbouring properties. Then in the Spring the Parish Council will send out a letter to

householders reminding them of their responsibilities regarding shrubbery and tree overhang onto public footpaths.

Cllr Reeves reported that NDC Parks Department confirmed they only use glyphosate in their parks/ car park areas for weed control and they have moved from knapsack sprayers to CDA (controlled droplet applicator) lances. DCC advised that they do not treat their rural paths with weedkiller, neither do the Neighbourhood Highways Officers within built up areas (footpaths/pavements).

Cllr Verney will discuss with Jon Knight the use of weedkiller including whether it is necessary to use any form of weedkiller. Any final decision on this will need our council approval.

c) P3 walking of footpaths (October to December).

To be reviewed at the next meeting.

288/25 Review the grass cutting and bus shelter cleaning contract quotations.

The Clerk had circulated to the Parish Councillors the two quotations received :

a) Jon Knight, total price £3,000. (Bus Shelter cleaning included in Part 2)

b) North Devon Tree and Garden Services (Alex Jefferis) total price £3,720.

Based on the excellent job Jon Knight has been doing since he undertook this work at short notice in the middle of 2025, and his competitive pricing, it was decided to award the contract for 2026 to Jon Knight.

Cllr Ayre proposed recommendation to accept Jon Knight's quotation, Cllr Kenshole seconded, decision unanimous.

289/25 Road Warden Scheme: To discuss the next steps, including Road Warden Training.

Cllr Verney, Road Warden, confirmed that he wishes to book the Highway Safety Awareness e-learning module.

Cllrs Whitby, Kenshole and Reeves have also volunteered to attend this training module which is provided free of charge by Devon County Council.

Cllr Reeves also noted that the Snow Warden needs to be added to the Emergency Plan which also needs some volunteers. Cllr Ayre agreed to continue as Snow Warden.

290/25 Bus shelter: Foxhunters Replacement update on wooden shelter.

Cllr Reeves to write to C Cllr Davis to arrange an on-site meeting with our Neighbourhood Office (NBO) to discuss possible ways to improve the bus shelter so that the replacement Shelter will be eligible for the 50% grant under the Bus Shelter Improvement Plan (BSIP).

291/25 Car Park: To receive an update on the Village Car Park shrubbery trimming and weed control.

Cllr Verney and Jon Knight completed this work in the car park on 26th November. Chair Cllr Reeves thanked them both on behalf of the Council.

292/25 Emergency Plan review update

The CERT met on 11th November to review the Emergency plan. Cllr Reeves, Cllr Ayre and Cllr Kenshole are members of CERT. The review concluded that the plan is still fine and it only required updates to some of the contact details.

Andy Odell (CERT Co-ordinator) will update and publish the amended version in the New Year.

The CERT are planning a practical Emergency Exercise to take place next June which will include some of the major incident Public Emergency Services.

293/25 Small Grant Applications: To review outstanding small grant applications and decide on funding awards

West Down Parish Hall

Cllr Reeves made a Declaration of Interest because he is a member of the Parish Hall Management Committee so Cllr Ayre acted as Chair and described the Parish Hall's application.

The Parish Council voted to approve this Small Grant Application from the Parish Hall Management Committee in full for the sum of £1,074.

Cllr Verney proposed to recommend the grant in full, and Cllr Tanton seconded. Decision unanimous.

West Down School PTFA

As requested West Down School PTFA have provided the details of the Make and Model of the 3D Printer and supplies they have in mind for the use of the grant. Cllr Kenshole confirmed that these were acceptable which was also supported by Cllrs Reeves & Verney, who were the only other Cllrs present at the November meeting when this was discussed.

294/25 Insurance: To receive an update on the Insurance.

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

The Clerk reported that there has not been any response from NDC regarding a valuation of the Car Park first requested on 5th September. Zurich Insurance (current Policy provider) requested this information so that they could create a quotation to cover the terms of the Lease Agreement between NDC and West Down Parish Council i.e. to insure against:

risk of fire, lightning, explosion, earthquake, landslip, subsidence, heave, riot, civil commotion, aircraft, aerial devices, storm, flood, water, theft, impact by vehicles, damage by malicious persons and vandals and third party liability and other risks so far as cover is available at normal insurance rates for the locality and subject to reasonable excesses and exclusions;

Zurich Underwriting, via our Intermediary, also requested written confirmation from West Down Parish Council that it acknowledged that Zurich would be quoting from some risks that are very unlikely to occur e.g. theft. Consequently this would mean paying a higher premium than necessary.

If necessary, Cllr Ayre suggested that the Council considers seeking legal advice with a view to negotiating removal of some of these risks from the lease in order to minimise the cost to the community.

Cllr Whitby suggested that the Council should review the signage necessary at the Car Park in order to mitigate some risks. Cllr Kenshole will research appropriate signage and report his findings at the January meeting.

For background information Cllr Kenshole had obtained a quotation from ECS to resurface the Car Park which was £12,591 plus VAT. It was felt that accruing £1000 per year over the expected lifetime of the current surface of 20 years is likely to be sufficient to cover this cost. However, it will be necessary to review resurfacing costs regularly, probably every few years, to be confident that this will be the case.

295/25 Budget Proposals: To review budget proposals for 2026/27.

An amended draft budget v2 was circulated on 27th November. Following review of several of the line items it was agreed that no further changes were necessary.

Cllr Kenshole proposed acceptance of the draft budget v2 and Cllr Whitby seconded, decision unanimous.

296/25 Precept: To decide the 2026/2027 Precept.

Having reviewed the budget for 2026/27, together with a projection of total expenditure and income for the current year, the Precept figure of £22,000 was considered appropriate.

Cllr Kenshole proposed recommendation of a Precept Fund application sum of £22,000 and Cllr Whitby seconded, decision unanimous.

297/25 Finances:

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 30/11/2025

Community Account

Opening £ 7,205.36

Received £ 0.00

Outgoings	£ 1,131.26
Closing	£ 6,074.10

Treasuries Account

Opening	£24,952.63
Received	£ 13.13
Outgoings	£ 0.00
Closing	£24,965.76

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)
Lloyds Bank - Account Charges	470880673	£ 4.25 (via DD)
Westcotec	17319	£ 66.00
J Barnett (Black & Colour Ink Cartridges)	N/A	£ 47.46
J P Knight (Footpath & Bus Shelter works November 2025)	0125	£ 323.33
J P Knight (Footpath & Bus Shelter works December 2025)	TBA	£ 323.33
J P Knight (Car Park Tidy)	0126	£ 120.00
North Devon Council Clerks Salary (John Barnett)	SD11642003	£ 397.86
NDC Admin Charge		£ 7.72
Chris Wallis (2 x reactive speed sign poles install)	79	£ 166.00
North Devon Council (Dog Waste Bin handling Q1)	SD11594497	£ 205.14
Total Payment December 2025		£1,776.09

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

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £1,776.09 SHOULD BE PAID.

298/25 Agree 2026 Parish Council Meeting Dates.

Prior to the meeting Cllr Reeves circulated a list of dates for Parish Council Meetings in 2026 proposing the first Wednesday in each month, with August as a Summer Recess when a meeting would be necessary only if there was a crucial planning application to review.

Cllr Verney proposed agreement to the list of dates and this was seconded by Cllr Lavender. Decision unanimous.

299/25 Review Standing Order 3W : Parish Council meeting duration.

Cllr Kenshole proposed a change to the Standing Orders, specifically item 3W, limiting Council Meetings to a maximum duration of 3 hours rather than the current 4 hours.

Cllr Kenshole proposed agreement to amend item 3W accordingly, this was seconded by Cllr Lavender. Decision unanimous.

300/25 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

- a) NDC have requested completion of a Snow Warden Form to ensure details are up-to-date.
- b) NDC have requested completion of a Settlement Services Form for West Down and Mullacott by 30th January. They have been informed that there is no Settlement known as Mullacott.
- c) WDVGFA acknowledged award of the Small Grant and Susi Batstone, Trustee and Secretary to West Down Village Green Field Association, thanked the Parish Council on their behalf.
- d) Election Services at NDC advised to keep £1500 in reserve for election potential.
- e) Paul Burton at NDC has confirmed the latest arrangements for dog waste collections and invoicing.

301/25 Unresolved Questions:

None

302/25 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 7th January. Items for the Agenda so far include:

- a) Signs for car park
- b) Internal Audit to 31st December
- c) Update on Precept Application amount
- d) Reactive Speed Sign update
- e) Footpaths, including P3 Funding & Walking of Footpaths (October to December)
- f) Road Warden Scheme – Training update
- g) Wooden Bus Shelter update
- h) Insurance – car park
- i) Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid & West Devon request for a financial donation

303/25 Any Other Business:

1. Cllr Reeves received verbal representation from a member of the public that the Laurel bush hedge along The Old Vicarage boundary was very overgrown such that the Car Park sign on Stang Lane was now completely obscured. Pedestrians are having to step in to the road at one point to pass each other. Cllr Lavender observed that it is now impossible to see across

the corner to see oncoming traffic, thus making the junction more dangerous than it used to be.

Cllr Reeves will contact the property owners to ask them if they could trim the hedge and other areas where there is significant ivy/bramble overgrowth onto the pavement.

2. Cllr Reeves noted that the Clerk had successfully completed his 3-month probation period and thanked him for making an excellent start in the role.

Part B: Confidential Matters:

304/25 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A:

None

The meeting closed at 21.43 pm