

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 7th January 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs M Reeves (Chair), S Ayre (Vice-Chair), T Verney.

Also present: C Cllr Davis, D Cllr Wilkinson, John Barnett (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllrs R Kenshole, S Whitby, I Lavender and S Tanton due to work commitments, Cllr Knight due to a Family bereavement. (Apologies accepted).

1/26 Declarations of Interest

None

2/26 Public Participation

None

3/26 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 3rd December 2025.

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

Cllr Ayre proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd December 2025 be accepted as a true record with 3 small amendments which was seconded by Cllr Verney. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 3RD DECEMBER 2025 BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED BY THE CHAIR AFTER THE MEETING.

4/26 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd December 2025.

- a) Cllr Wilkinson confirmed that North Devon Council Trade Waste Services will cease operation from April 2026. Written communication will follow in due course. Local businesses will need to find an alternative waste collection service.
- b) C Cllr Davis will follow up our application for a P3 grant; outstanding since March 2025.
- c) Reference Minute 287/25 Cllr Ayre confirmed all households affected by the electricity power cut on 14th November have received the information required to claim compensation from National Grid.
- d) Reference Minute 289/25- Cllr Reeves confirmed that the Snow Warden details are in the Emergency Plan – in the event of Snow, with help from the CERT.
- e) Reference Minute 292/25 the CERT plan was updated on 26th December and is available on the Village and Parish Council websites.

- f) Reference Minute 300/25 Cllr Ayre verified the Snow Warden details when ordering Salt supplies in October.
- g) Reference Minute 300/25 Cllr Reeves confirmed that the Settlement Services Form for West Down has been returned to NDC.
- h) Reference Minute 303/25 Cllr Reeves confirmed that he has discussed the overgrown Laurel, Ivy and Bramble with the owners of The Vicarage and they advised that this will be trimmed in the near future.

5/26 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

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

Violence and sexual offences	1
Drugs	1
Anti-Social behaviour	1
Other crime (Burglary)	1

Of these 4 crimes 2 were in West Down.

Source : www.police.uk

6/26 Report from County Councillor.

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

Cllr Reeves commented on the recent flooding along Dean Lane and that this had subsequently been addressed. C Cllr Davis encouraged reporting of such issues via the NDC website and they will then be prioritised.

The Clerk asked whether anything could be done to elicit a quicker response from Devon County Council to repair the Street Light near Bartons Lodge (first reported in May 2025, and again in October) and to replace the road markings at the junction of Stang Lane and Ilfracombe Road ?

C Cllr Davis requested the details so that she could investigate, they are :

a) The Street Light not working is UNIT ID : 43346 26th May 2025 & 16th October 2025, 7th January 2026 (Local residents report never repaired during this period.)

A second street light that had not been working for several months (outside Kingsclose in the 'Square') was also reported.

b) The Defective Road Markings/Signs

Stang Lane/Ilfracombe Road

Reference: W251847055

Date Reported: 29 March 2025 16:52 & reported a second time

Reference: ENQ251893537

Date Reported: 23 September 2025 08:58

Another example of long response times is :

Defective Road Markings/Signs

Dean Lane/Illfracombe Road

Reference: W251895040

Date Reported: 28 September 2025 19:35

C Cllr Davis will investigate and observed that historically a Street Light might take some time to repair if parts had become obsolete.

7/26 Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson informed the meeting that the Community Land Trust Woolacombe development of 21 affordable homes will commence in March and is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete. During this period there is likely to be some disruption to traffic flows on Beach Road, Woolacombe.

The Lifeboat change in Ilfracombe will not reduce the ability of RNLI to perform rescues at sea. The “Atlantic” class vehicle is replacing the “Shannon” class and it is capable of performing 98% of the tasks the previous “Shannon” class vessel could. Appledore will provide training.

In terms of employment there will be the loss of one maintenance engineer as the “Atlantic” class needs less maintenance than the “Shannon” class vessel.

The NDC Strategy for the local government reorganisation is ongoing and a decision is expected in the June-August period. The Boundaries Commission is responsible for defining any changes to the boundaries as a result of any regional reorganisation.

There will probably be a transfer of assets and debt consolidation where Councils are merged and non-profitable assets might be sold e.g. car parks. Income generating assets will not be sold.

8/26 Reactive Speed Sign

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

C Cllr Davis and Alex Bird (Devon County Council Highways) will visit West Down next week to look at the options available.

9/26 Planning Decisions

Approved/Refused/Withdrawn - None

10/26 Planning Applications

a) Received before Agenda was published : None

b) To comment on any planning applications received after the Agenda was published : None

11/26 Footpaths

a) Update on outstanding P3 grant claim.

C Cllr Davis is chasing Jon Boyd for a response to our application for a P3 grant for 2025-2026.

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

A few months ago Cllr Verney asked Jon Knight to cut Garden Lane grass areas once more due to unusual continued growth, and whilst this was completed we have not received an invoice for this additional work. Cllr Verney will follow up.

Cllr Verney will also follow up with Jon Knight to obtain a quote for other work to start in March, in particular repair of the stonework to Pulland bridge, and to clear the entrance to FP12 at Aylescott Lane.

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

The Clerk reported that survey forms for FP11 & FP15 have been completed.

Cllr Verney volunteered to walk the remaining footpaths during the week commencing 12th January as he has 4 days holiday booked. The Clerk will inform Cllr Knight so that she is aware of the plan.

12/26 Road Warden Scheme: To discuss the next steps, including Road Warden Training.

Cllr Verney (Road Warden), & Cllr Kenshole have successfully completed the Highway Safety Awareness training course and received their Certificates.

Cllr Verney plans to meet with Devon County Council to discuss the options for further training, in particular Chapter 8 training (includes how to physically erect Road signs). To be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

13/26 Bus shelter: Foxhunters Replacement update on wooden shelter.

C Cllr Davis will review the status with Mark Phillips (Integrated Public Transport, Devon County Council) at County Hall and report back regarding eligibility for the 50% grant under the Bus Shelter Improvement Plan (BSIP).

14/26 CAB donation request.

Unfortunately the Council had not budgeted for donations to other organisations but were appreciative of CAB bringing their work to the Council's attention. The Council concluded that they will keep the possibility of donations in mind in October when next budgeting for 2027-2028.

The Clerk will respond to the Citizens Advice Bureau accordingly.

15/26 Insurance: To receive an update on the Insurance.

1. Based on a car park valuation of £34,583 Zurich quoted £160 p.a. to cover the risks detailed in the Car Park lease. (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)

They also stipulated that they would require an Inspection Routine to be in place and regular Risk Assessments.

2. Cllr Kenshole is investigating the addition of appropriate Signage to mitigate risk; such as “Parking at Own Risk” or “Users of this Car Park do so entirely at their own risk. The Parish Council will not accept any responsibility for any damage, accidents or losses.”

The Clerk recommended covering the risks required by the Lease by paying the premium pro-rata to 31st May when the existing Zurich Policy is due for renewal i.e. £67, whilst investigating the possibility of negotiating the removal of this clause from the Lease Agreement.

Cllr Ayre proposed that the Council seeks legal advice regarding the option of re-negotiating the Lease clause relating to insurance before proceeding to arrange the insurance cover or place signage at the Car Park. Cllr Reeves seconded and the decision was unanimous.

16/26 Precept: To decide the 2026/2027 Precept.

NDC responded to the PC Precept Request for £22,000 advising that the Band D Calculation is £66.87. This is in-line with last year.

Cllr Ayre proposed acceptance of this calculation and Cllr Reeves seconded, decision unanimous.

The Clerk will complete the Precept Form and return to NDC by 23rd January 2026.

17/26 Finances:

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 31/12/2025

Community Account

Opening	£6,074.10
Received	£ 0.00
Outgoings	£1,776.09
Closing	£4,298.01

<u>Treasuries Account</u>		
Opening	£24,965.76	
Received	£ 11.90	
Outgoings	£ 0.00	
Closing	£24,977.66	
Grand Total	£29,275.67	

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	473307427	£ 4.25 (via DD)
DALC (Clerks Essentials 3 Training Course)	7089	£ 36.00
North Devon Council Clerks Salary	SD11644203	£ 397.86
NDC Admin Charge		£ 7.72
Total Payment January 2026		£ 560.83

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

RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £560.83 SHOULD BE PAID.

c) Internal Quarterly Audit was completed by Cllr Lavender on 2nd January and found to be satisfactory.

d) Treasuries Account – Higher Short Term Deposit rates available

Given the Council's current cash balance of £29,275 the Clerk recommended placing £20,000 on 95 days Notice which would generate approximately £136 interest, equating to £526 p.a. (32 days would produce £32 on 32 days, £370 p.a.)

Lloyds Bank higher interest rates on Notice Accounts:

32 days at 1.87%AER/1.85% Gross (Variable)

95 days at 2.66%AER/2.63%Gross (Variable)

Currently the Treasuries Account earns 0.6% which will drop to 0.5% on 20th January. (Interest year-to-date 9 months April – December is £54)

A Notice Account deposit of £20,000 would leave a bank balance of £9,275 to cover expenditure January - March 31st 2026. (Projected expenditure is less than £6,000).

Cllr Ayre proposed £15,000 so that the Council had a larger contingency fund available for emergencies and Cllr Verney seconded, decision unanimous.

The Clerk will open a Notice Account and transfer £15,000 to this new account which will require 95 days notice to withdraw part or all of the funds.

18/26 West Down Parish Hall (WDPH) Childrens AED PADS Purchase.

In December the Treasurer of WDPH requested allocation of part of their 2026-2027 Grant to be utilised to purchase Childrens AED PADS immediately and the Invoice be accepted as evidence of expenditure of part of the Small Grant. The Clerk consulted the Parish Councillors at the time and the general consensus was agreement to proceed on this basis. The Childrens AED PADS were purchased and placed with the AED at the Parish Hall ready for use.

Cllr Verney proposed acceptance of this request and Cllr Ayre seconded, decision unanimous.

19/26 AGAR Assertion 10 Compliance (in particular, WDPC website).

WesternWeb (WDPC website host) have written to advise the Parish Council that since last year Assertion 10 has been added to the requirements for the AGAR for 2025/26.

WesternWeb have updated the website platform for West Down Parish Council to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.2 Level AA can be achieved, as required by 2025/26 AGAR Assertion 10.

However the content on the website should also be tested regularly to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.2 level AA, and the Accessibility Statement on the website is required to show when the test was performed.

The website for West Down Parish Council was last tested on 21 st September 2021, and therefore should be retested. They can run a WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliancy check using a number of recognised tools on the website, identify and where possible resolve compliance failures and update the Accessibility Statement.

The fee for this service for our website is £45 + VAT (£54).

Cllr Verney proposed purchase of the website review and Cllr Reeves seconded, decision unanimous.

20/26 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

None

21/26 Unresolved Questions:

None

22/26 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 4th February. Items for the Agenda so far include:

- a) Litter Pick in February.
- b) Equal Opportunities Policy review.
- c) IT Policy review
- 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) Signage for car park

23/26 Any Other Business:

Cllr Ayre observed that there seemed to be a lot of litter everywhere, particularly along Stang Lane and Dean Lane and that perhaps a Litter Pick should be organised. Clerk to add to February meeting Agenda.

Part B: Confidential Matters:

24/26 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A:

None

The meeting closed at 20:59 pm