

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

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

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

Apologies for absence: Cllr S Whitby, due to work commitments, Cllr Knight on sabbatical. (Apologies accepted).

25/26 Declarations of Interest

None

26/26 Public Participation

None

27/26 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 7th January 2026.

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

Cllr Verney proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th January 2026 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Ayre. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 7th JANUARY 2026 BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED BY THE CHAIR AFTER THE MEETING.

28/26 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 7th January 2026.

- a) Cllr Reeves advised that NDC had confirmed the Precept amount of £22,000 for next year 2026-2027. This will be received in equal parts in April and September.

29/26 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

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

Vehicle Crime	6
Other theft	1
Violence and sexual offences	1

Of these 8 crimes 1 was in West Down.

Source : www.police.uk

30/26 Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis reported :

- a) Holcim UK, on behalf of Devon County Council, will be carrying out resurfacing works on the A361 Road from Mullacott Cross to Trimstone Cross. They will be repairing a deep patch of the carriageway under 2-way temporary traffic lights prior to the overnight resurfacing. The carriageway will be open outside of our working hours.

The programme of works will be as follows:

- Monday 23rd March – Thursday 2nd April 2026: Overnight road closures (19.00 – 07.00) A361 Road from Mullacott Cross to Trimstone Cross
- Monday 23rd – Tuesday 24th March 2026: 2-way temporary traffic lights (09.30 – 15.30) A361 Road from Twitchen Cross to Trimstone Cross

They will maintain access for residents and businesses within the road closure, but delays should be expected. For safety reasons the road will be closed to all through traffic during our working hours.

- b) Exmoor National Park is conducting a housing needs survey and it is important to encourage participation via the link:

<https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/planning/affordable-housing/housing-needs-survey-2026>

- c) Cllr Reeves commented on the recent flooding along Dean Lane and that this had been reported via the Devon County Council website. C Cllr Davis encouraged reporting of such issues via the website when they will be prioritised.

31/26 Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson informed the meeting that NDC full Council had reviewed the provision of the Trade Waste Collection service and revised its earlier decision to cease the service, so the collection service will now continue but not include the recycling element. There will be a 46% increase in pricing to customers, but the cost will still be significantly lower than that of other commercial collection service providers.

32/26 Reactive Speed Sign

- a) To receive an update on the proposed Reactive Speed Sign site on Ilfracombe Road.

The Parish Council has received a quotation of £450-£500 (depending on the type of fencing chosen) for the preparatory work prior to installation of the 3rd pole on the edge of the Parish Hall Car Park. This work will entail the reduction in height of a concrete post, trimming the

hedge and brambles and placing a new fence along the car park boundary to maintain the safety of users of the Car Park.

Cllr Kenshole proposed acceptance of this quotation and this was seconded by Cllr Verney, decision unanimous, but provisional on the Parish Hall Management Committee (PHMC) approving the plan to site the pole and Reactive Speed Sign at this location. The next Parish Hall Management Committee meeting is on 25th February. The target is to install the 3rd pole by end of March.

b) To discuss further neighbourhood communication plans.

A draft letter to residents local to the Parish Hall site was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Verney proposed distribution of the letter which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole, unanimous decision to distribute when plan agreed by PHMC.

c) To discuss proposed Landowner Agreement document.

A draft Landowner Agreement was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. This is an agreement relating to the positioning of the pole and Reactive Speed Sign and the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain the Reactive Speed Sign equipment. Cllr Verney proposed that the Parish Council proceed with this agreement and Cllr Tanton seconded, decision unanimous. Agreement with the PHMC will be subject to their decision to permit the pole to be installed at the Parish Hall. Cllr Reeves mentioned that although already installed on Dean Lane with the Landowners approval, this agreement will also be retrospectively applied to this site position. The Stang Lane position is on DCC owned pavement which has previously been formally approved.

d) Assess risks relating to relocation of Speed Sign between locations.

Cllr Reeves proposed that a risk assessment be conducted once the 3rd pole has been installed. Cllr Kenshole has a suitable Risk Assessment Form and will conduct the risk assessment. Cllr Lavender proposed acceptance of this plan and Cllr Kenshole seconded, decision unanimous. In preparation for the risk assessment Cllr Verney will purchase two fluorescent jackets.

e) To discuss required additional clips and security requirements.

Cllr Verney proposed that we purchase two additional clips from Westcotec and an additional long clasp padlock (estimated total cost £60) which was seconded by Cllr Reeves, decision unanimous.

33/26 Bus shelter: Foxhunters Replacement update on wooden shelter.

The Service Manager (Development Management) at NDC confirmed that a replacement bus shelter (undertaken by a Parish Council) might benefit from permitted development rights, as set out in Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, providing the replacement bus shelter would be installed within the perimeter for scale (not exceeding 4 metres in height) and would not include any form of advertisement (as the later may require Advertisement Consent).

However, unfortunately the Parish Council is unable to benefit from the Bus Shelter Improvement Program (BSIP) grant of 50% of the cost due to the design limitations at the current location making a like for like replacement bus shelter ineligible for the grant. Councillors were disappointed to learn that the idea of an enhancement using a mirror to view oncoming buses was against DCC Transport policy.

Consensus among the Councillors was that more thought was needed to determine the best way forward and that this was likely to take some time. This item will be brought back to the agenda as and when more information becomes available.

34/26 Litter Pick in February.

Under AOB at our January meeting Cllr Ayre had mentioned there seemed to be a lot of litter in the village, particularly on Stang Lane and Dean Lane and perhaps a litter pick should be organised. Consequently, it was agreed to bring this back as an agenda item to this meeting.

Cllr Verney therefore proposed that a village area Litter Pick event should be organised, Cllr Reeves seconded, decision unanimous. Cllr Ayre volunteered to organise a promotional flyer and suitable prizes, with a target date of the first week of March for the litter pick.

35/26 Equal Opportunities Policy review.

Cllr Reeves suggested one amendment which was to change the title of the document from "Register" to "Policy" on the Parish Council website and to update "Date of Change" to 2026. Cllr Kenshole proposed to accept this plan which was seconded by Cllr Verney, decision unanimous.

36/26 IT Policy review.

Cllr Reeves had reviewed the IT Policy and advised, that in his opinion, it was all fine with one grammatical change to remove the attached ? appearing in the last sentence under the 'General' heading. Cllr Kenshole volunteered to make the amendment.

Cllr Kenshole recommended an addition to the IT Policy such that Councillors will be obliged to keep their Personal Computer anti-virus software up-to-date to protect everyone against IT failures.

Cllr Ayre proposed acceptance of these amendments and Cllr Verney seconded, decision unanimous. Cllr Kenshole will amend the IT Policy accordingly.

37/26 Planning Decisions

Approved/Refused/Withdrawn - None

38/26 Planning Applications

a) Received before Agenda was published :

Appeal Ref: 80606 - Land known as Part Beef Farm. EX34 8NU

Cllr Verney proposed no further comment on this application/appeal and Cllr Tanton seconded, decision unanimous.

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

81271 Buttercombe Meadow Camp Site West Down EX34 8NU

Prior approval for a 60 day Temporary Recreational Campsite (resubmission of 80256) (Mid July – Mid September)

NDC Planning has not formally invited the Parish Council to comment so this application is noted here for information purposes.

81341 at The Hayloft & Stable Cottage West Stowford Barton West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8PJ

Change of use Annex to Holiday and vice versa.

Cllr Kenshole proposed support for this application, seconded by Cllr Lavender, decision unanimous in favour.

39/26 Footpaths

a) Update on outstanding P3 grant claim.

DCC issued a purchase order, value £220, covering the basic P3 grant for 2025-26 and the Clerk has invoiced the sum of £220. DCC have other grant applications under review so further purchase orders might be forthcoming.

b) P3 walking of footpaths (October to December) completion of survey forms.

Councillors have been able to survey 6 out of the total 14 footpaths to-date. Due to the extreme wet weather conditions under foot, and on stiles, it has been too treacherous to undertake many of the surveys.

Cllr Whitby had noted a temporary fence cutting through Footpath 3 with vegetation growing across it obscuring the route. Cllr Verney volunteered to investigate and report back before we report via the DCC website.

c) P3 grant application for 2026/27 and to discuss possible inclusion of any extra work bids.

Given the adverse weather conditions prohibiting completion of all the Footpath surveys Cllr Reeves proposed that the Council apply for the basic P3 Grant by the 1st March and include a note that other Improvement Bid grant applications will be made later when all the surveys have been completed. This was seconded by Cllr Ayre, decision unanimous.

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

Cllr Reeves noted that the Parish Council had not received an invoice for the extra work strimming Garden Lane. Cllr Verney offered to follow up with the Contractor.

Cllr Verney will also follow up with the Contractor 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.

40/26 Road Warden Scheme: To discuss the next steps, including Road Warden Training.

Cllr Whitby and Cllr Reeves have successfully completed the Highway Safety Awareness training course and received their Certificates, joining Cllr Kenshole and Cllr Verney.

Cllr Verney is planning to meet Alex Bird, DCC Neighbourhood Highway Officer, in the village to discuss next steps relating to additional training.

41/26 Insurance: To receive an update on the Insurance.

The Clerk has written to Samuels Solicitors requesting:

- a) Their opinion on whether it makes sense to open discussions with NDC to remove the requirement to Insure the Car Park or simply pay the insurance premium.
- b) An indication of likely costs for negotiating with NDC to remove the requirement for Insurance, and
- c) To ask if they would be willing to act on the Parish Council's behalf in any Asset Transfer process.

Action : Clerk to follow up in a couple of weeks, in time for next meeting.

42/26 Car Park Signage – risk mitigation.

Cllr Reeves had contacted Martin Rich, Devon Communities Together, regarding his previous advice to Parish Halls' in their approach to signage in car parks. His response had been previously circulated to councillors.

Cllr Kenshole researched suitable signs and likely costs. A tailored sign made of composite Aluminium 600x400mm would cost £38.11plus VAT, 400x300mm would be £22.22plus VAT, plus freight.

Cllr Reeves proposed that he would discuss with one of the residents, adjacent to the Car Park, the siting of the sign on their fence along the edge of the car park as this would avoid the cost of a dedicated pole and associated installation charges.

Cllr Kenshole seconded this proposal, majority decision with one abstention. The Council will then be able to make a decision regarding whether and where to install a sign.

43/26 Car Park Asset Transfer Opportunity.

NDC provided an Asset Transfer Expression of Interest Form. Cllr Ayre kindly provided a draft response which had been distributed prior to the meeting.

The Expression of Interest Form must be submitted by 12th February.

One key question arising in the questionnaire related to funding the asset transfer. We stated that we shall be able to provide these details once NDC provide a transfer value.

Cllr Verney proposed that we submit this response, Cllr Tanton seconded, decision unanimous.

44/26 Finances:

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 31/01/2026

Community Account

Opening	£4,298.01
Received	£ 0.00
Outgoings	<u>£ 560.83</u>
Closing	£3,737.18

Treasuries Account

Opening	£24,977.66
Received	£ 12.24
Outgoings	<u>£15,000.00</u>
Closing	£ 9,989.90

Notice Account

Opening	£ 0.00
Received	£15,000.00
Interest	£ 23.77 **
Outgoings	<u>£ 0.00</u>
Closing	£15,023.77

Grand Total £28,750.85

** Interest received during the month determined on the last day of each month.

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	475758451	£ 4.25 (via DD)
North Devon Council Clerks Salary	SD11649181	£ 397.86
NDC Admin Charge		£ 7.72
Total Payment February 2026		<u>£ 524.83</u>

Cllr Lavender proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Tanton. Decision unanimous. RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOLLING £524.83 SHOULD BE PAID.

45/26 AGAR Assertion 10 Compliance (in particular, WDPC website).

WesternWeb have advised that the work will be completed before the end of February.

Clerk to check whether this compliance check is an annual requirement.

46/26 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

1. A resident of Trimstone emailed to bring a number of issues to our attention :-
 - a) State of Bus Stop on A361 Southbound opposite Trimstone Lane. Missing flag and post leaning over, apparently damaged.
 - b) Potholes/drain damage in Trimstone. Clerk has reported these via the Highways website. (One pothole did not meet the minimum size threshold eligible for reporting.)

In addition Cllr Reeves queried whether there should a Bus Stop sign on A361 Northbound side as no obvious Bus Stop at the top of Trimstone Lane, yet it appears on Google Maps. C Cllr Davis offered to refer this query to the appropriate team at County Hall.
2. Devon Air Ambulance reminded us to inform them if the Air Ambulance Site on the Community Field became unusable due to the adverse weather condition.
3. A NDC Notice seeking views relating to the extension of the PSPO for Ilfracombe Harbour. Cllr Reeves proposed that this notice will be placed on the West Down village website and village Facebook page, and Cllr Kenshole seconded, decision unanimous.
4. Trade Waste recycling update – Cllr Reeves has already passed this news on to local businesses.

47/26 Unresolved Questions:

None

48/26 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

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

- f) Reactive Speed Sign update.
- g) Litter Pick prizes.
- h) Footpaths, including P3 Funding & Walking of Footpaths.
- i) Road Warden Scheme – Next steps.
- j) Insurance – car park.
- k) Signage for car park.
- l) Car Park Asset Transfer
- m) Review Asset Register.
- n) Pay Parish Hall MC for hire of hall for meetings. (6 months).
- o) Schedule Internal Quarterly Audit

49/26 Any Other Business:

- a) Councillors were reminded to ensure their Notice of Registerable Interests and contact details are up-to-date.
- b) Repair Parish Council Notice Board/Display Cabinet when weather suitable.
- c) Cllr Reeves observed that an old version of the Emergency Plan was accessible via the website. Clerk to investigate and remove appropriate web link.
- d) The road salt, spreader and shovels, and fluorescent jacket will be relocated to Cllr Reeves garage at Pipcott for ease of access.
- e) Cllr Reeves has reported the flooding on Dean Lane via the DCC website.
- d) Upcoming roadworks details (as noted in C Cllr Andrea Davis's report 30/26 above) to be placed on Village website and Facebook pages asap.
- e) Cllr Kenshole reminded everyone to make sure their anti-virus and other protection software is up-to-date because there has been a significant increase in phishing emails recently.
- f) Cllr Verney requested that our Contractor be given the access codes to the Community Field security system so that he can gain easy and rapid access to the field as his work requires on Garden Lane. Clerk to liase with Keith Oades so that the code is provided to the Air Ambulance team and Contractor each time the access code changes.

Part B: Confidential Matters:

50/26 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A:

None

The meeting closed at 21:18 pm