

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

West Down Parish Hall

Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs M Reeves (Chair), S Ayre (Vice-Chair), T Verney, R Kenshole 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 Lavender, due to family illness and Cllr Knight on authorised leave. (Apologies accepted).

51/26 Declarations of Interest

None

52/26 Public Participation

None

53/26 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 4th February 2026.

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

Cllr Verney proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th February 2026 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 MEETING HELD ON THE 4th FEBRUARY 2026 BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED BY THE CHAIR AFTER THE MEETING.

54/26 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 4th February 2026.

- a) Cllr Reeves recommended that details of the closure of the A361 for road works by Holcim UK, on behalf of Devon County Council, 23rd March - 2nd April should be reposted on the Village website and on Village Facebook page nearer the time to remind residents of the potential disruption to normal traffic flows. (See February Minute 30/26 for full details.)
- b) The Clerk reported that two Potholes in Trimstone, logged on the Highways website on 4th February, had been repaired. (February Minute 46/26 item 1.)
- c) The IT Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy amendments have been completed and uploaded to the PC website. (February Minutes 36/26 & 35/26 respectively.)
- d) Additional “Clips” have been received from Westcotec for securing the Reactive Speed Sign. (February Minute 32/26 e))
- e) The Footpath Grass cutting Contractor now has the access code to the security system gate for the Community Field. (February Minute 49/26 f))

55/26 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

The crime figures for January 2026 for Morteheo, Woolacombe, & West Down (including Mullacott & Bittadon) were:-

Violence and sexual offences	4
Criminal Damage & Arson	1

Of these 5 crimes 3 were in West Down, 1 in Woolacombe and 1 in Morteheo.

Source : www.police.uk

56/26 Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis provided a written report (Appendix A).

In addition, Cllr Davis mentioned that the Library Consultation process had drawn 22,000 responses; significantly more than any previous consultation when around 5,000 is typical.

Cllr Tanton raised the long-standing issue of flooding in Aylescott Lane and asked C Cllr Davis for further advice on reporting this to DCC Highways, which was duly provided.

57/26 Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson informed the meeting that the District Council budget has been set and has an objective of £29m balanced for the next year, projecting deficits of £1.75m, £2.37m and £2.6m over the next few years when a Unitary Authority.

Unfortunately, Premier Inn have decided not to proceed with their planned investment in a new hotel in Ilfracombe due to it not being financially viable based on the current cost of building it.

58/26 Reactive Speed Sign

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

Cllr Reeves reported that the WDPHMC approved the location and preparatory work required to install the 3rd Reactive Speed Sign on the boundary of the Parish Hall. The initial work should commence on 14th March, depending on the weather, with the pole installation scheduled for 16th or 17th March.

- b) Assess risks relating to relocation of Speed Sign between sites.

Cllr Kenshole offered to provide a Risk Assess template for review in advance of the risk assessments. After the 3rd site has been installed Cllr Kenshole will conduct a risk assessment one location at a time. This will assess the safety, and equipment, required for cleaning and maintenance, amongst other considerations. Cllr Reeves proposed acceptance of this plan and Cllr Verney seconded with the decision unanimous.

In preparation for the risk assessment Cllr Verney has purchased a Hi-Vis jacket and 3 Hi-Vis vests.

Cllr Kenshole proposed that Reactive Speed Sign reports should be reviewed at Parish Council meetings only when an apparent issue appears e.g. the 85th percentile speed calculation exceeds 30 mph or there is repetitive speeding at a particular time of day. Cllr Reeves seconded this proposal and the decision was unanimous.

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 Reeves proposed that the Parish Council proceed with this agreement and Cllr Verney seconded with the decision unanimous.

59/26 Litter Pick in 1st week of March.

A number of participants have posted images on the West Down Facebook page and Cllr Ayre proposed that she will decide winners and distribute prizes in due course. Cllr Kenshole seconded this plan and the decision was unanimous.

60/26 Planning Decisions

Approved/Refused/Withdrawn - None

61/26 Planning Applications

a) **Received before Agenda was published :**

81315 Demolition of garage and erection of new garage at Sunningdale, Higher Cheglinch Lane West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NW

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

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

62/26 Footpaths

a) **Update on outstanding P3 grant claim.**

The Clerk reported that payment of the basic P3 grant of £220 for 2025-2026 had been received from DCC.

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 reported that they are still waiting for better weather but expect to complete this exercise before the end of March.

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

On 16th February the Clerk submitted an application for the basic P3 grant of £220. Despite a follow up email no acknowledgement of receipt of the application has been received.

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

Cllr Verney reported that Jon Knight plans to quote for the repair work at Pulland Bridge and that he will start grass cutting work shortly. There is an invoice due for the additional work completed late last year in Garden Lane.

63/26 Road Warden Scheme: Update by Road Warden Cllr Verney on further training and future plans.

Alex Bird, DCC Neighbourhood Highway Officer, has been on holiday but Cllr Verney expects to meet him shortly to discuss next steps relating to additional training.

64/26 Insurance: To receive an update on the Insurance.

The response from Samuels Solicitors, summarising their thoughts on the Parish Council questions had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting :

- 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.

In light of Samuels Solicitors's input Cllr Verney proposed the Parish Council wait until there is news from NDC regarding the Asset Transfer expression of interest before reviewing the question of Insurance cover. Cllr Reeves seconded this proposal and the decision was unanimous.

65/26 Car Park Signage – risk mitigation: Update.

Cllr Reeves discussed with one of the residents adjacent to the Car Park, the siting of the sign reading "Parking at Owners Risk" or similar, on their fence along the edge of the car park as this would avoid the cost of a dedicated pole and associated installation charges. However, this resident was not very enthusiastic and suggested the sign should be positioned at the entrance to the Car Park.

The Parish Council continue to wait for a response from North Devon Council regarding the "valuation" of the Car Park necessary to obtain an accurate quotation for Insurance. It is likely

that there will be a requirement for a regular risk assessment as part of the insurers terms of cover. This review will contribute to the discussion regarding whether a sign is important. Cllr Verney proposed no action necessary to provide a sign at the present time. Cllr Ayre seconded , decision unanimous.

66/26 Car Park Asset Transfer Opportunity: Update

NDC acknowledged receipt of the Expression of Interest Form submitted on 8th February.

67/26 Review Asset Register.

Assets listed in the Asset Register were allocated to a number of Councillors for physical verification of their condition and fitness for purpose :

Cllr Ayre - Bus shelters & bins in bus shelters, 2 x defibrillators

Cllr Verney - Benches, Air Ambulance pole & light, West Down signs (in wall at the end of Dean Lane and at the top of Ilfracombe Road).

Cllr Kenshole - Hand held radios, CERT equipment

Cllr Reeves - Notice board, grit spreader, no entry to vehicles sign (FP 16), map case

Cllr Tanton - Village pump.

Clerk to update Asset Register by 31st March financial year end in time for the annual audit.

68/26 Finances:

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 28/02/2026

Community Account

Opening	£3,737.18
Received	£ 220.00
Outgoings	£ 520.58
Closing	£3,436.60

Treasuries Account

Opening	£9,989.90
Received	£ 4.52
Outgoings	£ 0.00
Closing	£9,994.42

Notice Account

Opening	£15,023.77
Received	£ 0.00
Interest	£ 30.28 **
Outgoings	£ 0.00
Closing	£15,054.05

Grand Total £28,485.07

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

A VAT reclaim for £1,187.29 was received into the bank account on 4th March and will be included in Year End figures.

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	478233053	£ 4.25 (via DD)
NDC Clerks Salary & NDC Admin charge	SD11652622	£405.58
WDPH (Room Hire)	81	£120.00
Croyde Aerials (Mr J Godfrey)	1859	£190.00
Westcotec	17564	£ 15.84
T Verney (Exps)	A25066005198	<u>£ 55.14</u>
Total Payment March 2026		£905.81

Cllr Ayre proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Tanton. Decision unanimous. RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £905.81 BE PAID.

The Clerk requested postponement of the next Parish Council meeting, scheduled for 1st April, by one week until Wednesday 8th April to facilitate the timely preparation of the Parish Council year end accounts, and the annual audit process.

Cllr Kenshole proposed approval of this request and this was seconded by Cllr Ayre, with the decision unanimous.

69/26 AGAR Assertion 10 Compliance (in particular, WDPC website).

WesternWeb have advised that the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliancy check is not an annual requirement but the website should be audited periodically – no time frame is given.

Assertion 10 is made by the council so the clerk just needs to be confident to make the assertion.

WesternWeb have advised that the work will be completed soon.

70/26 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

1. Notification from NDC regarding the Ramblers Path Accessibility Fund available to improve accessibility e.g. FP12. Cllr Reeves offered help to the WDVGFA with the application process – but has not received a response as yet.

2. Ken Miles, Chief executive of North Devon Council, email providing clarification of unitary plans.

3. North Devon Council has agreed to extend the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) at Ilfracombe Harbour for another three years after strong public support.

The order was first introduced to address competitive ticket sales during the busy summer months, ensuring that all licensed operators have an equal opportunity to engage with customers without being affected by touting. The extended PSPO will continue to stop people from selling or promoting boat trips in the harbour area by approaching visitors or handing out leaflets, unless they have permission through a licence or written approval from the Harbourmaster or the council. The rules themselves have not changed.

4. Julie Snooks, Auditor, sent details of the changes to the Practitioners Guide and will schedule date for the internal audit shortly.

5. Cllr Reeves confirmed that the Clerk and he had jointly completed two surveys as requested by NDC. One relating to a survey that the Devon Community Resilience Forum are undertaking following the recent storms, and the other exploring Cluster Working with local towns which is being led by Laura Donovan, Proper Officer of Ilfracombe Town Council. The latter asked just one question : Given a choice which local Council would West Down most likely Cluster with. (Answer : Ilfracombe.)

6. A resident enquired about who to contact regarding the trees along Church Pool as they appeared to be close to the overhead power lines. The Clerk informed the Parochial Church Council and provided details of the National Grid website where concerns can be logged on-line. National Grid provide a “pruning” service where necessary.

7. The Morteheo Clerk copied us his communications with OFCOM regarding the Openreach upgrade to transition from the traditional PSTN service to Digital voice services.

8. Croyde Aerials responded to questions about the rising cost of hosting the Village website :

Croyde Aerials supplier has increased Hosting fees 3 times in the last 5 years. The website is using a Virtual Private Server (VPS) shared with others, so we are not paying the full cost.

Unlimited data storage is included in the price, and the labour charge covers regular monitoring and site cleaning. Regular updates of the Content Management System (CMS) is crucial for security, performance, and access to new features.

The contract runs from 1st January for 12 months with payment in advance. There might be cheaper options available but they will likely be less resilient, have slower response times and have limited data storage.

71/26 Unresolved Questions:

None

72/26 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 8th April. Items for the Agenda so far include:

- a) Reactive Speed Sign update. Risk assessment results.
- b) Footpaths, including P3 Funding & Walking of Footpaths.
- c) Road Warden Scheme – Next steps.
- d) Small Grant – check receipted invoices received by next meeting/AGM latest.
- e) AGAR update.
- f) Review Asset Register.
- g) DALC membership renewal.
- h) Schedule Audit with external auditor

73/26 Any Other Business:

The Clerk will request road sweeping of Dean Lane given the amount of mud on the road following the recent flooding.

Part B: Confidential Matters:

74/26 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A:

None

The meeting closed at 21:24 pm