

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 8th April 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

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

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

Apologies for absence: C Cllr Davis, Cllrs S Tanton & T Verney due to work commitments, and Cllr Knight on authorised leave. (Apologies accepted).

75/26 Declarations of Interest.

None

76/26 Public Participation.

None

77/26 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 4th March 2026.

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

Cllr Kenshole proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th March 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 4th MARCH 2026 BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED BY THE CHAIR AFTER THE MEETING.

78/26 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 4th March 2026.

a) Cllr Reeves confirmed that both Landowner Agreements for the Dean Lane and Parish Hall sites, relating to the location of the Reactive Speed Sign and support poles, had been signed and duly returned on 8th March. The Clerk will store these together with the email of 22nd January 2025 from C Cllr Davis confirming that the proposed Stang Lane location was acceptable to Devon County Council Highways.

b) Cllr Reeves wished to acknowledge the excellent communications from Caroline Anderson, Highway Liaison Officer, Devon County Council regarding the resurfacing works on the A361 Road from Mullacott Cross to Trimstone Cross.

79/26 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

The Clerk reported that unfortunately the Police.uk website had not been updated since the last meeting.

Source : www.police.uk

80/26 Report from County Councillor.

C Cllr Davis was unable to attend the meeting but sent a message advising that it has been very quiet due to the Easter holiday period and consequently there was very little to report; other than the recent good weather was helping with reducing the backlog of Pothole repairs.

81/26 Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson informed the meeting that the Community Councillor Grant scheme is now active and that applicants need to be quick to win some of the funding available. D Cllr Wilkinson was keen to emphasise that applications cannot be retrospective i.e. applying for funds to reimburse previous expenditure was not permissible under the scheme rules.

82/26 Reactive Speed Sign.

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

Cllr Reeves reported that the final site on Ilfracombe Road was installed and live from 19th March.

Data collected between 19th March and Sunday 5th April indicated that there had been 5,169 vehicle movements down Ilfracombe Road into the village during that period. Of these 584 (>11%) were travelling in excess of the speed limit of 30 mph. Two drivers exceeded 50 mph with another at 45 mph.

The plan is to gather data in both directions on Ilfracombe Road, each for a period of up to 4 weeks, and then present the bigger picture to residents later in May.

Councillors agreed to decide at the next Parish Council meeting on 6th May how best to inform residents.

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

Cllr Kenshole advised that the Council needs to purchase appropriate equipment to minimise the risks associated with relocating the Speed Sign between sites. Immediate needs include a 3-point ladder and 3 road safety bollards.

Cllr Reeves proposed we purchase these items, seconded by Cllr Lavender with a unanimous decision.

c) To note availability of potential equipment/operational improvements.

Cllr Reeves raised the idea of implementing Solar Panels to power the Reactive Speed Sign (RSS) because this would increase the amount of time between Battery recharge (currently about 2 weeks). This would also enhance safety by minimising the number of times personnel would be active in the road to change the battery. It might also be possible to configure the RSS so that the speed display flashed rather than stay steady to extend the battery charge.

However, the cost would be £875 plus VAT, plus a small freight charge, and the unit would need to be returned to Westcotec so that they could make the necessary modifications and test the rig.

The general consensus was to wait a couple of months so that there is more data available regarding the battery life/recharge period, especially in the warmer weather.

It was also thought that Marwood PC had recently purchased the Solar Panel accessory for their RSS so it will be useful to check on their experience with this in due course.

83/26 Community Speed Watch – Revisit possibility of a West Down Group.

Cllr Reeves reported that there had been quite a lot of interest in the Reactive Speed Sign and support for the Parish Council's efforts to improve road safety and that maybe this might be a good time to invite parishioners to form a Community Speed Watch (CSW) Group.

Previous attempts at forming a CSW Group had failed due to insufficient volunteers. A minimum of 4 volunteers is the requirement for the Police to provide free training and commit to lending equipment when required. Following training the process entails agreeing with the Police a date and location for each speed watch and then the Police will lend the equipment for the event.

Cllr Reeves proposed that the Council seek support for a CSW Group after presenting the speed data in May and Cllr Whitby seconded this proposal with the decision unanimous.

84/26 Litter Pick in 1st week of March: Update/feedback.

Cllr Ayre reported that several participants collected litter during the week and that it was definitely worthwhile. Each participant received a gift and Thank You card.

The intention is to make this an annual event prior to the holiday season.

85/26 Planning Decisions.

Approved/Refused/Withdrawn :

81341 at The Hayloft & Stable Cottage West Stowford Barton West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8PJ. Change of use Annex to Holiday and vice versa. Approved 18/3/2026

Appeal Ref: 6002914

Land known as Part Beef Park, Buttercombe Lane, West Down, Ilfracombe EX34 8NU Planning Inspectorate : 1st April 2026 The appeal was allowed and planning permission is granted for retention of a livestock shelter, however costs were not awarded.

86/26 Planning Applications.

a) Received before Agenda was published :

81515 at Moore Farm West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NT

Removal of condition 4 (removal the existing track) and variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) and condition 3 (Demolition of barn) attached to planning

permission 79176 (Demolition of existing barn and erection of new dwelling and change of use of land to form domestic curtilage (fall back position of application 77945)) to allow the track to be kept for access to the lower field and barn number 3 and keep barn until new dwelling is habitable to use as storage for building materials at Moore Farm West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NT. Grid Ref: 250236; 143003

Cllr Whitby proposed that if there are no circumstances that would lead to a need to change the Conditions specified in the Decision Notice of 24th October 2024 relating to Application No. 79176 then the Parish Council does not see any reason to amend them.

Cllr Ayre seconded this proposal and the decision was unanimous.

81597 Extension to dwelling at Hillsvievw Bungalow Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NY
Grid Ref: 250081; 144118

Cllr Ayre proposed support for this application, seconded by Cllr Reeves, decision unanimous in favour.

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

87/26 Footpaths.

a) Update on outstanding P3 grant claim.

The Clerk reported that whilst the basic DCC P3 Grant of £220 for 2025/26 had been received there had not been any response to the applications last year for funding additional work.

Cllr Reeves proposed a review of the costings in the original 3 bids so that they can be re-submitted; given that the work still needs to be undertaken. Cllr Kenshole seconded this proposal and the decision was unanimous.

The Clerk will liaise with Cllr Verney to review the previous bids so that the Council can review these at the next meeting.

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

The Clerk reported that all footpaths had now been surveyed. The survey feedback was consolidated into a spreadsheet and circulated to Councillors for their review.

Cllrs Ayre and Verney reported that they had cleared, or repaired, various parts of footpaths as they conducted the surveys.

c) P3 grant applications for any extra work bids.

The Clerk will ask Cllr Verney to advise on any additional work required based on the survey response so that this can be reviewed at the next Parish Council meeting.

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

Reference March meeting Minute 62/26 item d) Cllr Verney reported that Jon Knight plans to quote for the repair work at Pulland Bridge but this has not been received yet.

Cllr Reeves reported that Cllr Verney and Jon Knight are planning to visit Stocklands to examine what needs to be done to maintain footpath 3.

88/26 Road Warden Scheme: Update by Road Warden Cllr Verney on further training and future plans.

In the absence of Cllr Verney there was no update on the plan for Alex Bird, DCC Neighbourhood Highway Officer, and Cllr Verney to meet to discuss the next steps relating to additional training and potential work that could be undertaken.

89/26 Asset Register - to confirm the register is up to date as of 31/03/26.

The Clerk had sent the latest Asset Register to Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllr Ayre proposed one amendment to correct the number of Bins within Bus Shelters from 2 to 4 and that the Asset Register would then be up-to-date. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous.

90/26 Finances:

a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 31/03/2026

Community Account

Opening	£3,436.60
Received	£1,187.29
Outgoings	£ 910.06
Closing	£3,713.83

Treasuries Account

Opening	£9,994.42
Received	£ 3.83
Outgoings	£ 0.00
Closing	£9,998.25

Notice Account

Opening	£15,054.05
Received	£ 0.00
Interest	£ 33.72 **
Outgoings	£ 0.00
Closing	£15,087.77

Grand Total £28,799.85

** 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	£ 86.20 (via DD)
Lloyds Bank - Account Charges	480711304	£ 4.25 (via DD)
North Devon Council Clerks Salary & NDC Admn charge	SD11656761	£ 405.58
Jon Knight (Grass cutting/FP & Bus/S maint - Jan)	0143	£ 208.33
Jon Knight (Grass cutting/FP & Bus/S maint – Feb)	0144	£ 208.33
Jon Knight (Grass cutting/FP & Bus/S maint - Mar)	0145	£ 208.33
Jon Knight (Grass cutting/FP & Bus/S maint - Apr)	0146	£ 208.33
S Ayre (Expenses - Litter Pick prizes)	-	£ 9.00
J Barnett (Expenses Ink)	-	£ 26.32
DALC Annual Membership	7592	£ 294.45
Chris Wallis (PH Pole installation)	45	£ 90.00
Total Payment April 2026		£1,749.12

Cllr Ayre proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Lavender. Decision unanimous. RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £1,749.12 BE PAID.

Cllr Ayre proposed that the Car Park Annual Lease fee of £1 payment be scheduled for April 14th annually by Standing Order because the 14th April is the date the Lease commenced. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Whitby, decision unanimous.

c) Update regarding year end internal & external audit.

The Clerk reported that Cllr Lavender's (Council Auditor) Quarterly Audit was completed satisfactorily on Good Friday 3rd April, and that 19th May has been arranged with Julie Snooks to conduct the annual Internal Audit. Collection of the books is scheduled for Friday 22nd May.

d) Proposed increase in balance in 95 day Interest Notice Account.

The Clerk had sent an email on 4th April proposing a transfer from the Community Bank Account to the Notice Account after receipt of the next Precept payment of £11,000. However, since the Precept amount typically arrives very late in April any discussion relating to a transfer to the Notice Account can take place at the next Parish Council meeting on 6th May.

e) To receive the Parish Council Final Accounts for the 2025/2026 financial year.

The Clerk prepared draft Year End Accounts and emailed these to Councillors on 4th April. In summary :

Outgoings:

Expenditure for the year	£22,409.12
Small Grants given	<u>£ 3,870.00</u>
Total expenditure	£26,279.12

Receipts:

Precept	£22,000.00
VAT rebate	£ 2,766.97
P3 Grant	£ 440.00
CEG & Devon Emergency Fund	£ 2,730.00
Bank Interest	<u>£ 162.78</u>
Total Income	£28,099.75

Closing Bank Balance £28,799.85

Cllr Reeves thanked the Clerk for his excellent work and proposed that the Council approve these figures and the full year end accounts which was seconded by Cllr Ayre with the decision unanimous.

f) Moving to an electronic Ledger.

The Clerk created an electronic version of the General Ledger and emailed a copy to Parish Councillors with a request that the electronic ledger is adopted for the new financial year.

Cllr Reeves proposed adoption of the electronic Ledger for 2026-2027, seconded by Cllr Ayre decision unanimous.

The electronic Ledger also states all ring-fenced funds for the Air Ambulance landing site maintenance, P3 Footpath work and Car Park maintenance.

91/26 AGAR Assertion 10 Compliance (in particular, WDPC website).

WesternWeb have advised that the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliancy check has been completed and the Accessibility Statement has been updated on the website.

92/26 Small Grant – check receipted invoices received by next meeting/AGM latest.

The Clerk confirmed that the relevant copies of invoices evidencing expenditure of 2025-2026 small grants had been received from the Parish Hall, WDVGFA, and St Calixtus Church and that he will be following up with the West Down School PTFA to obtain their documentation.

93/26 DALC Annual Renewal.

The Clerk reported that the renewal notice invoice had been received and included in this month's payment list.

94/26 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

1. A Resident (Tina Pearce) enquired whether the village had an Emergency Plan and a Flood Warden. Since Tina was booked on a Flood Warden & Emergency event training course the next day Cllr Reeves put her in contact with Andy Odell, Coordinator of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). He is now in discussion with Tina and they will be meeting to discuss CERT in more detail. A copy of the West Down Emergency Response Plan is available to view on both the West Down Village website and the West Down Parish Council website.
2. The Morteheo Clerk copied us into his latest communications with OFCOM regarding the Openreach upgrade to transition from the traditional PSTN service to Digital voice services.
3. West Down Village Green Field Association notified us they had applied for a Ramblers Path Accessibility Fund Grant to improve accessibility of footpath 12 from the Garden Lane entrance towards the boardwalk.
4. The Clerk circulated the Newsletter from North Devon Council which has set aside funding to re-open the Climate and Environment Grant Fund (CEG) for one more year.

£20,000 has been allocated to be awarded to small Parishes towards funding projects with a strong emphasis on sustainability and countering climate change.

The Council hopes to encourage and support projects which are sustainable and look to improve the environment and/or tackle climate change issues such as reducing carbon and improving biodiversity. These projects could include “wilding” open spaces, wild-flower meadows, more sustainable approaches to graveyards, renewables, etc. Climate and Environment Grants can also be used as match-funding for Parish Councils to attract other funding from external sources.

Closing date for applications is 31st August for Round 1 (£10,000) of funding.

The Clerk is to ask C Cllr Davis whether the Parish Council can plant flowers on Highway verges.

Clerk will also forward the NDC Newsletter to the Parish Hall and the WDVGFA so that they can consider applying for a Climate and Environment Grant.

5. Julie Snooks – Internal Audit fee confirmed at £250. 19th March.

6. North Devon Council sent a news item on 17th March launching a renewed crackdown on dog fouling as part of its Clear Messages initiative - a no-nonsense approach to addressing the environmental issues that matter most to residents. The Clerk circulated this communication and also sent it to WDVGFA.

7. Cllr Reeves reported that he had been invited to provide an entry to the Village Shop Newsletter and did so noting progress on the Reactive Speed Sign, the recent litter pick initiative, and inviting residents to attend the Annual Parish meeting and Parish Council (AGM) meeting to be held on 6th May, commencing at 6.45 p.m. and 7 pm respectively.

8. Ben Hookes informed the Parish Council that he continues to operate a monthly testing program for the Air Ambulance landing light on the Community Field. Cllr Reeves expressed his thanks on behalf of the Parish Council for his diligence and reliable service in this matter.

9. Devon Communities Together wrote on 7th April to confirm that their annual fee is frozen again at £50, payable in June.

10. DALC Newsletter of 7th April informing members of the Local Council Weed Management Survey which we shall complete in the near future.

11. On 5th April PCSO Dale Kingdon sent the Spring Newsletter from your local Policing Team which was circulated by the Clerk.

12. Cllr Reeves received an invitation to attend the Ilfracombe Mayor's annual Civic Service and Reception in Ilfracombe on 19th April. Cllr Ayre will accompany him.

95/26 Unresolved Questions:

None

96/26 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 6th May 18:45 pm. Items for the Agenda so far include:

- a) Community Speed Watch – Next steps.
- b) Road Warden Scheme – Next steps.
- c) Small Grant – check receipted invoices received from West Down School PTFA.
- d) AGM/ANNUAL PARISH MEETING/ELECTION OF OFFICERS.
- e) Review Parish Council Insurance and PAY insurance.
- f) Review Grant Fund Policy.
- g) Pay out grants following first Precept and Grant receipt of the new financial year.
- h) Approve and sign Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting May 2025.
- i) Review Code of Conduct Policy.
- j) SW Heritage Trust – To agree the donation for document storage.
- k) Ideas to support possible Climate & Environment Grant application.

97/26 Any Other Business:

1. Cllr Lavender photographed recent flooding in Dean Lane and Rock Hill, and informed DCC via their website but the council reported no problems found.
2. Cllr Lavender raised a question regarding the Minuting of Police Crime statistics each month and whether it made more sense to simply provide residents with the web link to view the statistics directly. (www.police.uk) The Parish Council will review whether the reporting of Crime Statistics is necessary.
3. Cllr Reeves enquired whether there had been any recent news about the West Down Community Land Trust (CLT). The Clerk will contact the CLT for an update.

Part B: Confidential Matters:

98/26 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A: None

The meeting closed at 21:22 pm