

WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL AGM MINUTES
West Down Parish Hall
Wednesday 6th May 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

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

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

103/26 Apologies for absence: Cllr S Tanton due to family holiday, and Cllr H Knight on authorised leave. (Apologies accepted).

104/26 Election of Chair.

Cllr Reeves stepped down as Chair and invited other Councillors to volunteer as Chair for 2026-2027. Cllr Kenshole proposed that Cllr Reeves be re-appointed Chair and Cllr Verney seconded with the decision unanimous. Cllr Reeves subsequently signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk.

105/26 Declarations of Interest. None

106/26 Public Participation. None

107/26 Approve & Sign Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 8th April 2026.

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

Cllr Kenshole proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th April 2026 be accepted as a true record which was seconded by Cllr Whitby. There was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

RESOLVED – THAT THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 8th APRIL 2026 BE APPROVED AND THEY WERE DULY SIGNED BY THE CHAIR AFTER THE MEETING.

108/26 Matters Arising: To discuss matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 8th April 2026.

The Clerk had corresponded with C Cllr Davis regarding an opportunity to plant flowers on Highway verges around the village. C Cllr Davis advised that if the Council provided details of exact locations, then she would be able to include them in a Road Safety Audit with Highways planned for 19th May. The Clerk will provide more details before 19th May.

The Clerk reported that the North Devon Weed Management Survey had been completed on-line.

109/26 Election of Officers and other roles for 2026/2027

- a) Vice Chair Cllr Ayre offered to continue in the role for a further year. Cllr Reeves proposed acceptance of her offer and Cllr Whitby seconded with unanimous acceptance of the proposal.

- b) Data Protection Officer Cllr Kenshole offered to continue, Cllr Verney proposed acceptance of Cllr Kenshole’s offer, Cllr Whitby seconded with unanimous acceptance of the proposal.
- c) Parish Council Auditor – Cllr Lavender offered to continue in the role for a further year. Cllr Ayre proposed acceptance of his offer and Cllr Verney seconded with unanimous acceptance of the proposal.
- d) P3 Scheme Co-Ordinator Cllr Verney expressed his desire to stand down from this role due to taking on additional other commitments in the Community. Cllr Whitby offered to assist Cllr Verney to learn more about what the P3 Scheme Co-Ordinator role entails so that she could consider taking over at a later date, possibly early in the new year. Cllr Verney agreed to work with Cllr Whitby over the next 7 months. Cllr Ayre proposed acceptance of this plan and Cllr Reeves seconded with unanimous support.
- e) Parish Council Representatives (x2) on Parish Hall Management Committee. Cllr Reeves offered to continue as one Representative and Cllr Whitby volunteered to be the second Representative on the Parish Hall Committee. Cllr Kenshole proposed acceptance of their offer, Cllr Ayre seconded, unanimous support.

110/26 Police Report

Monthly Crime Figures.

- a) To receive Police information including the monthly crime figures.

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

Burglary	1
Criminal damage & Arson	1
Drugs	1
All other crime	2

Of these 5 crimes one occurred in West Down.

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

Violence and sexual offences	4
Criminal damage & Arson	1
Public Order	1
Vehicle Crime	1

Of these 7 crimes none occurred in West Down.

- b) Review the necessity to report Crime Statistics at every Parish Council meeting.

Source : www.police.uk

Cllr Kenshole proposed that rather than report these statistics each month instead we include this web link in the Minutes so that readers can look up the figures as they wish, thus

shortening the length of the Minutes. However, in the event that the Clerk observes a significant trend in the crime statistics then this will be reported at the Parish Council Meeting and subsequently minuted in detail. Cllr Kenshole's proposal was seconded by Cllr Verney with unanimous support.

111/26 Report from County Councillor.

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

112/26 Report from District Councillor.

D Cllr Wilkinson indicated that he is in discussion with the Village Community Shop about a possible grant of £150 to support the shop.

There is also a Community grant available from Devon County Council for 11-25 yr olds for sports & leisure facilities, and Skills building.

Additional funding for Community Land Trusts will probably be on-hold due to the re-organisation to a Unitary Authority in the next 18 months.

D Cllr Wilkinson's role has changed slightly to become Lead Member for Coastal Communities and Ilfracombe. Coastal erosion is a big issue now.

There is no update yet regarding the possible sale of assets as part of moving to a Unitary Authority.

113/26 Reactive Speed Sign.

a) To receive an update on the Reactive Speed Sign (RSS) statistics and to discuss action and format required for potential publication to the Community.

Cllr Kenshole reported the latest statistics. Between 18th April - 6th May there had been 7,201 vehicle movements (vehicles travelling out of the village on Ilfracombe Road) with the number of drivers exceeding the 30 mph speed limit gradually falling from 6 or 7 per day to 1-2 per day, whilst the volume of traffic had remained fairly constant. Cllr Kenshole remarked that this indicates that the presence of the RSS is probably influencing driver behaviour.

Cllr Reeves proposed that Cllr Kenshole send the Histogram of the figures to the Clerk on a regular basis for him to publish on the Parish Council website. Cllr Reeves to place a web link on Facebook and the Clerk to provide the current data to the West Down Village School. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Whitby with unanimous support.

b) Update on purchase of items to minimise the risk when re-locating the speed sign between sites.

Cllr Reeves proposed that Cllr Kenshole circulate the draft Risk Assessment to Cllrs for their review so that it can be approved at the next meeting. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous.

Cllr Kenshole offered to lend his tripod ladder for Cllr Verney to test out prior to deciding which ladder to purchase given an anticipated cost of £450. An appropriate ladder is necessary to reduce the Risk Rating from 12 (Dangerous) to 4 (Safe).

114/26 Community Speed Watch – Next steps.

The general consensus was to review this subject at a later date after gathering more data to see if there are any trends to report from the Reactive Speed Sign data collection, and after presenting the data to the Community.

It was noted that the Knowle Community Speed Watch Group has been disbanded now that the permanent speed camera has been installed .

115/26 Planning Decisions.

Approved/Refused/Withdrawn :

81315 Demolition of garage and erection of new garage at Higher Cheglinch Lane West Down Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8NW. Approved 14/4/2026.

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. Approved 24/4/2026.

116/26 Planning Applications.

a) Received before Agenda was published :

78231 at Ilfracombe and Woolacombe Golf Range Woolacombe Devon EX34 7HF

Part retrospective refurbishment of existing sports hall, extension to the existing driving range, erection of 21 bay steel structure with teaching room and secure storage, installation of integrated floodlighting, creation of outdoor play area, relocate and extension to car parking area to provide 59 spaces & 1 HGV parking bay (amended information) Grid Ref:249576; 143902

Cllr Verney 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

117/26 Footpaths.

a) Update on outstanding P3 grant claim.

The Clerk reported that there had not been any news from DCC regarding the application for the basic grant for 2026-2027.

The plan is to progress this when arranging an on-site visit of FP15, see below.

b) Review of 2025/26 bid pricing in readiness to re-submit.

Cllr Verney had reviewed the last Grant Bids and proposed the following :

1. The Council submits a new Grant Bid, previously Bid 1, to cover part of the Seasonal Strimming and cutting back around gates and stiles. (£1,140 calculated as the current cost of this work minus the basic grant of £220, divided by 2 on the basis of sharing the cost equally with DCC)
2. The Council requests an on-site visit from the P3 Coordinator to seek their advice for improving the safety of the stone steps on FP15, and to determine what materials they could supply.

The Clerk had circulated a revised Bid Form prior to the meeting.

Cllr Reeves proposed support for this plan of action, seconded by Cllr Verney, decision unanimous in favour.

The Clerk will submit the new Bid 1 and request an urgent on-site visit for FP15.

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

Cllr Verney stated that Jon Knight does not need to maintain the top of FP3, only the bottom part.

Cllr Whitby noted that there is an accumulation of “builders bags” full of rubble on private land but close to the bottom part of FP16 and that this is unsightly.

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.

118/26 Road Warden Scheme: Update by Road Warden Cllr Verney on further training and future plans.

Cllr Verney advised that there had not yet been an opportunity to meet Alex Bird, DCC Neighbourhood Highway Officer, to discuss the next steps relating to additional training and potential work to be undertaken.

119/26 Review Code of Conduct Policy & Discuss Training.

- a) To carry out the annual review of the Code of Conduct Policy.

Cllr Reeves reported that he had reviewed the Code of Conduct Policy and checked whether any updates were necessary and concluded that no changes were required. He proposed updating the Policy Review Date and uploading to the website. Cllr Kenshole seconded this proposal, decision unanimous.

- b) To discuss any new Code of Conduct Training required for Town & Parish Councils.

Cllr Reeves and the Clerk confirmed that no notifications regarding new training initiatives had been received.

120/26 Parish Council Insurance.

- a) To receive the renewal notice and alternative quotations.

The Clerk reported that he had checked insurance premium rates with several other insurers (typically £700-£800 p.a.), and that the incumbent insurer provided the most competitive annual premium (£435), and that the Agreement with Zurich was a 3 year deal, with 1 year remaining.

- b) To agree payment of the annual parish council premium.

Cllr Lavender proposed acceptance of the renewal notice from Zurich Insurance at £435, seconded by Cllr Whitby, decision unanimous.

121/26 SW Heritage Trust – To agree the donation for storage of Parish Council documents.

Cllr Reeves expressed his thanks to SW Heritage Trust for providing the council with the archive storage service in Barnstaple over the last few years when the annual donation has remained unchanged at £100 p.a. Given that their costs will have increased significantly over this time it was felt that an increase in the level of contribution was justified.

Cllr Whitby proposed a donation of £200, seconded by Cllr Verney, decision unanimous.

122/26 Small Grants Fund.

- a) To carry out the annual review of the Grant Fund Policy.

Cllr Reeves confirmed that he had reviewed the Grant Fund Policy and reported that it was still fit for purpose. Cllr Verney proposed that no changes were necessary which was seconded by Cllr Whitby and agreed unanimously.

- b) To receive any outstanding receipted invoices in respect of the grant funding awarded for 2025-2026.

The Clerk reported that all invoices evidencing expenditure per the Grant approvals 2025-2026 had been received from the Parish Hall, St Calixtus Church, WDVGFA and PTFA.

- c) To confirm the first instalments of the Grant Fund payments for 2026-27.

Cllr Verney proposed that the first instalments be paid, seconded by Cllr Kenshole, unanimous agreement.

123/26 Finances:

- a) To receive the balance in the bank accounts.

Balances at 30/04/2026

Community Account

Opening	£ 3,713.83
Received	£11,000.00
Outgoings	<u>£ 1,750.12</u>
Closing	£12,963.71

Treasuries Account

Opening	£ 9,998.25
Received	£ 4.25
Outgoings	<u>£ 0.00</u>
Closing	£10,002.50

Notice Account

Opening	£15,087.77
Received	£ 0.00
Interest	£ 32.68 **
Outgoings	<u>£ 0.00</u>
Closing	£15,120.45

Grand Total £38,086.66

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

b) To receive and agree the invoices received for payment.

<u>Creditor</u>	<u>Invoice number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
North Devon Council (Non-Domestic Rates - Car Park)	93625504	£91.00(via DD)
Lloyds Bank - Account Charges	483202221	£ 4.25 (via DD)
North Devon Council Clerks Salary & NDC Admin charge	SD11661911	£ 405.58
Jon Knight (Replace fencing along section of Parish Hall Car Park) 0136		£ 497.27
Community First Insurance 2026-2027	Renewal	£ 435.55
Southwest Heritage n/a	Donation	£ 200.00
Devon Communities Together (Annual Membership Fee)	n/a	£ 50.00
Jon Knight (Grass cutting/FP & Bus Shelter maintenance - May) 0150		£ 208.33
WesternWeb (Web site Audit to meet WCAG2.2)	25524	£ 54.00
PCC St Calixtus - Grant Part 1	n/a	£ 720.00
Parish Hall - Grant Part 1	n/a	£ 537.00
WDVGFA- Grant Part 1	n/a	£ 500.00
WDS PTFA - Grant Part 1	n/a	<u>£ 350.00</u>
Total Payment May 2026		£4,052.98

Cllr Verney proposed that these invoices should be paid which was seconded by Cllr Kenshole, decision unanimous. RESOLVED – THAT THE INVOICES TOTALLING £4,052.98 BE PAID.

c) Update regarding year end internal & external audit.

The Clerk reported 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.

Julie Snooks completes the AGAR form Schedule 1 which is then reviewed by the Parish Council, signed off at the next meeting and then submitted to the external auditor.

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

The Clerk had circulated an email on 2nd May proposing a transfer from the Community Bank Account to the Notice Account in order to earn more interest.

Cllr Verney proposed transferring £5,000 from the Treasuries Account to the Notice Account, maintaining the Community Account balance as is, to earn more interest. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Kenshole with unanimous agreement.

e) Confirm ring fencing of funds to cover any potential future parish councillor election.

Cllr Whitby proposed ring fencing £1500 to cover the cost of a potential Councillor election which was seconded by Cllr Lavender, decision unanimous.

124/26 West Down Community Land Trust (CLT). – Update on current situation.

The Clerk reported that he had received an update from the Secretary of West Down Community Land Trust which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Secretary confirmed that there has been no progress on the CLT over the last year and a half. She will chase up the other committee members this month and try to make a plan for the future, but it seems likely that they may choose to formally close it down. They will keep the Parish Council informed and should have more to report once they have met and also discussed with the CLT group Middlemarch.

125/26 Ideas to support possible NDC Climate & Environment Grant application.

A number of ideas were discussed:

- Contribution to a solar panel to power the Reactive Speed sign
- Planting bulbs at the end of Dean Lane, top of Ilfracombe Road, Pulland Bridge and the 'Coronation Triangle'
- Check whether Parish Hall or Community Field might have requirements ?

126/26 Correspondence: To receive items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

16/4/26 Devon Communities – Fuel & Energy Crisis Survey in Devon – relayed to WDVGFA & WDPHMC

16/4/26 Devon Local Council Weed Management Survey

21/4/26 Tarka Trail Progress Meeting Invite via Teams meeting 14th May 10-12 pm

21/4/26 Highways Liaison - Surface dressing sites for 2026 are:

- a) Woolacombe Station Road, Morteohoe

- b) Morteheo Station Road, Morteheo
- c) Upcott Hill, Pilton West
- d) Road from Shirwell Cross to The Old Rectory, Shirwell
- e) Road from West Hill Farm to Beara Down, West Down
- f) Road from Indicott Cross to Bowden Corner, Milltown, East Down

Kiely Bros will deliver brochures to residents nearer the time.

27/4/26 Devon Highways emailed confirmation of repair to drainage at Higher Aylescott Lane & Drain clearance, however it has been noted that flooding continues to occur.

28/4/26 National Allotment Society – National Allotment Survey - requested input from Keith Oades.

28/4/26 Samuels Solicitors letter confirming Registration of Car Park Lease at the Land Registry.

30/4/26 Morteheo PC Clerk sent an update on Digital Landline Migration communication with the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee requesting a national inquiry into the withdrawal of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) and the migration to digital voice services.

6/5/26 Lower Twitchen Farm letter regarding A361 road resurfacing issues where drains have been covered with tarmac.

127/26 Unresolved Questions: None

128/26 Items to be added to the next meeting Agenda.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 3rd June 19:00 pm. Items for the Agenda so far include:

1. Ensure Completed AGAR forms 1 & 2 available for approval before being sent to External Auditor.
2. Review Standing Orders, Statement of Internal Control & General & Financial Risk Assessment.
3. Review Financial Regulations and cheque signatories.
4. Review & update Diary.
5. Internal quarterly Audit.
6. Parish Online annual subscription due.
7. Samuels Solicitors car park documentation for review.
8. Road Warden update.
9. RSS Risk Assessment Policy.

129/26 Any Other Business: None

Part B: Confidential Matters:

130/26 Any Matters deemed too confidential for part A: None

The meeting closed at 21:40 pm