

PLASTERDOWN GROUPEd PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN GROUPEd PARISH COUNCIL** held in
Whitchurch Community Hall on Wednesday 27th November 2024 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr R Phillips (Chair of the Council), Cllr E Cole, Cllr. A. Davies, Cllr. R. Pearson-Bunt and Cllr. Sturmer, Cllr. S. Ware, Cllr. I Walton.

In Attendance: Cllr. Philip Sanders, County Councillor, Cllr. Mark Renders, Borough Councilor, Caroline Metcalf, Parish Clerk.

245/24. Apologies

None.

246/24. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

247/24. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

248/24. Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23rd October 2024 and the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 13th November 2024 and the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 13th November 2024.

Cllr. Walton proposed an amendment to the Council meeting minutes held on 23rd October 2024, Minute no: 215/24, Sarah Fielder is the appointed Snow Warden. All agreed to the amendment.

It was AGREED by all, after the above amendment be made, that all minutes be formally adopted.

249/24. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors

County Council:

Cllr. Sanders gave an update on the County Council's 2025-26 budget; funds has been allocated for potholes and dragon patches, which have proved to be more efficient with filling potholes, have been purchased.

The County Council's elections will be in May 2025 and big changes can be predicted, as many Councillors are not standing for re-election.

Dartmoor National Park are struggling to set a budget for 2025-26. The Staff Dartmoor National Visitors Centre in Princetown is set to close on 31st March 2025 and the lease expires in March 2026. No body wants it to close, but there is no money or reserves left to pay for the maintenance of the building and lease renewal. Still waiting on an announcement whether Princetown Prison will reopen again.

Borough Council:

Cllr. Renders apologised for not attending a meeting for a while and gave a report on West Devon Borough Council; the independents are in control of the Council. The budget for 2025-26 is looking good and the Council are about to start a new plan for next year.

250/24. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda.

- a) **Update on signposts** – The reported down signposts have still not been repaired. The Clerk to chase Devon Highways for an update. Cllr. Sanders said he would also ask when they will be repaired.
- b) **Update on the new Boundary Stones** – There is no stone on Ward Bridge, and it is believed to be owned by Devon County Council, therefore would the County Council give permission for the Parish Council to add a boundary engraving on the Bridge? Cllr. Sanders said he would enquire and report back to the Council.

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In January 2025, Cllr. Sturmer asked Cllr. Walton to visit, with her, Merrivale to choose the additional stones. Nick Fell would also be asked to attend. Cllr. Sturmer to send the Clerk a proforma invoice from Pascoe's and Sons for the stones engraving. Cllr. Sturmer again thanked Cllr. Sanders for his donation towards the purchase and engraving of the new boundary stones. Cllr. Renders stated he could also offer a donation towards the project.

- c) **Update on Internet Banking** – The Clerk, Cllrs. Sturmer and Walton to arrange a meeting to complete registration for online banking.
- d) **Snow Warden** – Sarah Fielder contacted the Clerk to say she no longer wished to be the Snow Warden. A discussion on a replacement will be at the next meeting. The Clerk to investigate the cost of purchasing a Mobile Salt Spreader for the Parish.
- e) **Drake's Café nomination as a Community Asset** – The closed café is for sale as a potential redevelopment. It was felt by all that it should be considered as a community asset. The Clerk to complete a community asset nomination form and submit to West Devon Borough Council.

251/24. Approve 2025-26 Budget

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt approve the 2025-26 budget for £5,975, seconded by Cllr. Philips. All in agreement.

252/24. Approve 2025-26 Precept

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt approve the 2025-26 precept at £5,975, seconded by Cllr. Philips. All in agreement.

253/24. Discuss and consider the Council signing up to the Respect and Dignity Pledge

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt gave a brief discussions on the benefits of the Council signing up to the pledge was and proposed the Council do so. All agreed to sign up.

254/24. Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) update

The Clerk received an email from the Economic Development Officer, Devon County Council:

'This is to update you on the planned roll-out of broadband in your parish under the Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) programme which now, sadly, will not be going ahead.

As you are no doubt aware, CDS contracted with broadband supplier Airband in late 2020 to deliver fibre broadband to communities across Devon & Somerset over the course of three years, concluding at the end of 2024. Your parish was to be covered by cluster NF054. Unfortunately, Airband has faced a range of challenges over the intervening years which have delayed delivery of these contracts.

However, following Airband's restructure earlier this year, the company is seeking to maximize take up across its existing network while slowing down on build activity which means it can no longer complete its contracted build for CDS in full. As a result, in April, Airband sought a change to its contract.

Since then, CDS has worked closely with the Airband team to maximise the number of clusters that might yet be delivered under the scope of our contracts. Whilst this process has had some success in allowing further clusters to be built, I'm afraid NF054 is not one of them.

This will clearly be extremely disappointing for you and your parishioners, and we share your frustration. For clusters that will now not be built through our contracts, CDS has taken the opportunity to engage with government, through the Building Digital UK agency (BDUK), to discuss alternative options for providing connectivity to parishes who have been affected by this situation. We are discussing options including their Project Gigabit Programme and voucher schemes and considering any local investment opportunities.

CDS is liaising with BDUK to re-enable rural voucher eligibility for communities which were earmarked for delivery by Airband allowing them to pursue solutions with other fibre providers as soon as possible, should they wish to.'

Noted by the Council.

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255/24. Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings consultation

After discussions, the Council agreed that they support remote attendance in theory but recognise the technical issues. The Clerk to submit the Parish's comments.

256/24. Dartmoor National Park Active Travel Plan Consultation

Cllr. Renders stated that the Plan is looking to improve the cycle track. After discussions, it was decided that if anyone had any ideas on new/improvements to cycle tracks, to let the Clerk know, who would then pass on.

257/24. Engraved marker on Bridge

This item was discussed and agreed on under minute no: 250/24.

258/24. Bus stops

Discussed and agreed item was not applicable to the Parish.

259/24. Discuss the Whitchurch Stocks Preservation

Cllr. Sturmer stated a preservation expert had examined the stocks and said that they are currently stored in the best place, because if placed in the Church, they may start to rot due to a lack of flowing air. It was agreed that there were no concerns with the stocks at this time, but the Council will continue to conduct an annual inspection.

260/24. Stampford Spiney consider a remembrance wreath for 2025

Due to Parish boundary changes, Stampford Spiney Church does not have a war memorial, and traditional parishioners attend the service at Horrabridge. Cllr. Sturmer and Cllr. Cole will put it to the Church whether next year, they wish to consider laying a wreath at the Church. Both will then report back to the Council.

261/24. VE Day – 8th May 2025

Item will be deferred to the next meeting.

262/24. Approve HR Policies – Dignity at Work, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Home Working Policy

All agreed to approve the HR policies.

263/24. Planning Applications to consider.

West Devon 3337/24/FUL – Lower Grenofen, Grenofen, PL19 9ES, Installation of 54 Ground Mounted solar panels

After discussions, the Council object to this application, due to the loss of car parking spaces and the visual impact of the solar panels.

264/24. Approve the following Invoices for Payment:

- Clerk's October monthly salary - £251.15
- Repayment to the Clerk for the West Devon Borough Council invoice 'Recharge of elections May 2023' - £87.85
- HMRC ending 5 December 2024 -£
- Whitchurch Community Hall - £48.00

Two additional payments to approve, not itemized on the agenda:

- Janet Sturmer – £31 - purchase of the plaque placed on the Grenofren bus shelter.
- Richard Phillips – £40 – purchase of remembrance wreath laid at St. Andrew's Church

Donation to St. Andrews's Church, Whitchurch will be approved at the next Council meeting.

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All payments were approved.

265/24. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.30pm at Whitchurch Community Hall.

1. Sampford Spiney defibrillator.
2. VE Day – 8th May 2025

The meeting closed at 8.23 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council

Date: