

PLASTERDOWN GROUPEd PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Whitchurch Community Hall**
On **Wednesday 15th October 2025** at **7.30 pm**

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

In Attendance: Cllr. M. Renders, Cllr. M. Fife Cook (arrived later in the meeting) and one member of the public.

67/25. Apologies for absence

None.

68/25. Declaration of Interest

None.

69/25. Public Question Time

No questions were asked by the member of public present.

70/25. Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on the 18th of September 2025

Cllr Walton proposed an amendment to minute 60/25, Receive nominations for representatives to Whitchurch Community Hall. The Council nominate three people and nominated Mr Richard Singleton alongside himself and Cllr Sturmer. All agreed to the nomination.

Subject to this amendment, all approved the minutes.

71/25. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. M. Renders:

At present, is the temporary leader of the Council. There are no major updates at present, as most discussions are focused on the current devolution.

72/25. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

The stone at Sortridge is still not located. Cllr Phillips agreed to speak with the landowner.

Cllr Ware reported that she had spoken with Mr. Anthony Sarrant, who confirmed that, in principle, he is happy for a stone to be placed on the verge near the new Dartmoor fingerpost. He requested that a photo of the proposed location be sent to him — Cllr Ware to action this. The stone will stand approximately 18 inches above ground level. Cllrs Sturmer and Walton to liaise and arrange a date to install the boundary stone when engraved, at the river side boundary at East Crowndale Farm.

Ward Bridge - This item was discussed following Cllr Fife Cook's arrival at the meeting. Cllr Phillips provided background information explaining the reason why the Council wished to engrave the parish initials on the bridge. Cllr Fife Cook agreed to attend a site visit with Cllrs Phillips and Sturmer. The Clerk will liaise with Cllr Fife Cook to arrange a suitable date and will forward all relevant information to him.

- Tiny Wilds School

All agreed to go into Part 2.

All agreed to come out of Part 2.

Cllr. Renders confirmed that it is an ongoing case and hopefully there will be an update at the next meeting.

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- Update on adoption of BT phone boxes – Merrivale & Sampford Spiney

The Sampford Spiney phone box has now been adopted by the Parish Council. The maintenance and future community use will be discussed at the next meeting.

The Merrivale phone box - The Duchy of Cornwall have sent a landlord and tenant's notice and agreement for the Council to review and sign, but on inspection the notices had been addressed to the wrong Parish Council. The Clerk to request the correct paperwork. To be discussed and reviewed at the next meeting.

- Update on the Bus Shelter

Devon Highways has confirmed that cutting back the hedge alongside the road and the tree with overhanging branches along the A386 is the landowner's responsibility and it is in hand to be done.

The Clerk is still exploring the possibility of installing a digital bus timetable at the shelter. In the meantime, it was agreed to place in the noticeboard the poster 'How to use the interactive Bus Map' for those waiting for a bus.

73/25. Discussion on broadband coverage in Dartmoor National Park

Mr Larry Bunt updated members on the ongoing issues regarding broadband provision within the area and that the deadline to switch off the copper network is scheduled for the end of January 2027. There are still residents within the area who rely solely on landlines, and it is not an option to drop the landline. Therefore, there is concern about what action is being taken to accelerate the fibre broadband rollout.

Mr Bunt reported that he has spoken with BT, who confirmed there are no plans to delay the copper switch-off, or accelerate the fibre rollout. The broadband contract for Dartmoor has been downgraded from Category A to Category C, meaning there is no further contractual obligation for contractors to do anymore. BT assumes everyone has good mobile coverage but in reality 4G and 3G coverage in the area is insufficient.

Mr Bunt is continuing to lobby through David Boocock from the Dartmoor National Park Authority and has also written to Sir Geoffrey Cox MP, who is holding meetings with network providers regarding this matter.

Discussions took place regarding the fact that BT should be supporting vulnerable residents. It was noted that those at risk need to register with BT to ensure they are provided with an alternative communication option.

Cllr Renders stated there is a meeting with Openreach soon and will raise the issue of broadband rollout across Dartmoor.

Cllr Fife Cook stated that 16% of residents on Dartmoor do not have internet access and described this issue as a major concern, particularly as contractors appear focused only on more populated areas. He will continue to raise the issue, has written to the Cabinet Minister for Rural Affairs and will keep the Parish Council informed.

74/25. Discussion on Devon County Council's Road Warden Scheme and appointment of a Warden for the Parish

Devon Highways confirmed that rectifying the fingerpost, which is currently facing the wrong direction, does not meet the criteria for remedial action, as there are other, more pressing priorities for their maintenance teams. However, they advised that if the Council were part of the Road Warden Scheme, it could undertake the repair itself. The Clerk explained the details of the scheme. It was noted that this means the Parish carries out jobs, or pay someone to do the work, thereby not receiving a service already paid for. There were no volunteers at this stage, and it was agreed to discuss further at the next meeting.

Cllr Fife Cook requested that details of the incorrect fingerpost be sent to him, and he will raise the matter with Devon Highways.

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75/25. Planning application to consider

Dartmoor – 0327/25 – Installation of background heating, electrics, toilet and shower, and new staircase at Barn B, Boyton Farm, Whitchurch, Tavistock, PL19 9EJ

After discussions Cllr. Pearson-Bunt proposed submitting 'no comment'. All for, except Cllr. Philips who abstained.

76/25. Consider purchase of projector

After discussion Cllr. Davies was asked to research cost of projectors and discuss at the next meeting.

77/25. Discuss possible restoration of 1843 Whitchurch Parish Map

Cllr Sturmer reported that a resident has the map in their possession. The map measures approximately 5 ft high by 7 ft wide and it required restoration before it can be displayed.

It was discussed that, as the map is believed to have been given to the Whitchurch Trustees around the year 2000, it would therefore be considered their asset rather than the Parish Council's. As such, any decision regarding its restoration or display rests with the Trustees.

The Clerk was asked to review past minutes to see when/if the map was given to the Trustees, and Cllr Walton will also make enquiries and report back at the next meeting.

78/25. Consider damage to footpath stile between Casey Town and Middle Moor

Cllr. Sturmer had sent photos of the damaged stile to the Clerk. It was discussed that it is the responsibility of the landowner to repair. The Clerk to report on the Devon County Council report a problem right of way website page. To report issue with kissing gate as well.

79/25. Review website provider

After reviewing information given by the Clerk, all were happy and agreed on the switch to an alternative website provider.

80/25. To review and approve bank reconciliation ending 30th September 2025

All approve.

81/25. Review Internal Control Statement

All agreed to defer to the next meeting.

82/25. Review proposed budget for 2026-27

All agreed to defer to the next meeting.

83/25. Approve Invoices for payment.

- Clerk's October salary – £198.20
- HMRC ending 5 October 2025 - £43.20
- Poppy wreaths - £80

All approved payments.

84/25. Correspondence

Information from DALC regarding the online Briefing on the Devolution scheduled with Devon County Council on 20th October, 2pm -3pm.

Discussions took place regarding Devolution, and Cllr Fife Cook stated that the final proposal will be a Cabinet decision, and what Councils say will not have any input in that decision.

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Cllr. Pearson-Bunt and the Clerk confirmed they would be attending and will report on at the next meeting.

85/25. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Wednesday 10th December at Whitchurch Community Hall at 7:30 pm.

1. Tiny Wilds School
2. Boundary Stones
3. Acquisition of a Council projector
4. DCC's Devolution proposal
5. Sampford Spiney phone box – discuss its community use

The meeting closed at 8.39 pm.