

# PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Whitchurch Community Hall**  
On **WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026** at **7.45 pm**

**Present:** Cllr. A. Davies, Cllr. E. Cole, Cllr R Phillips, Cllr. R. Pearson-Bunt, Cllr. J Sturmer and Cllr. S. Ware and Cllr I Walton.

**In Attendance:** Caroline Metcalf (Clerk), Cllr. M. Fife Cook, Devon Council Councillor and two members of the public.

**01/26. To elect a Chair and receive the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.**

Cllr. Philips nominated Cllr. Sturmer, seconded by Cllr. Pearson-Bunt. All in favour. Cllr. Sturmer was duly elected as the Chair for the ensuing year.

**02/26. Apologies**

None.

**03/26. Public Question Time**

The members of the public present had no questions.

**04/26. To elect a Vice-Chair and receive the Vice-Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.**

Cllr. Philips nominated Cllr. Davies, seconded by Cllr. Cole. All in favour. Cllr. Davies agreed to be duly elected as the Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

**05/26. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr. Philips declared an interest in the item, Update on Broadband in the Parish.

**06/26. Approval of minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

Matters arising

Min 161/26

Cllr. Sturmer proposed the purchase of a new noticeboard for outside the Whitchurch Post Office at a cost of £286 plus VAT, seconded by Cllr. Pearson-Bunt. All were in favour. The owners of the Post Office are aware and are happy about the noticeboard being replaced.

All agreed to approve and adopt the minutes.

**07/26. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors**

Cllr. Mark Renders, West Devon Borough Councillor had sent his apologies.

Cllr. Michael Fife-Cook report:

The enforcement report on Tiny Wilds can be in the public domain as it was due to be presented to Members at the DM Cttee meeting on 1 May 2026. To explain why this report was withdrawn at a late stage is due to the following sent by the Dartmoor National Park management:

“In the days leading up to the Committee meeting, the Authority was contacted by a planning agent acting on behalf of the landowner of Heckwood Farm, who advised that there is at least one child who regularly visits the property with protected characteristics and who, on the morning of the meeting, submitted a Certificate of Lawfulness application seeking to regularise one of the yurts.

While officers remain confident in the assessment undertaken to date, the information relating to the child raises important considerations. In addition, the submission of a Certificate of Lawfulness application could have a significant bearing on the decision-making process. Officers carefully considered how best to proceed faced with this information, and sought appropriate legal advice, before deciding to withdraw the item from the agenda to allow time for the Certificate of Lawfulness application to be determined, and for further investigation into the reported welfare matters. Once this work has been completed, Officers intend to take an updated report back to Members at the earliest available Committee meeting, along with a clear recommendation.

Offices recognise that this delay will be disappointing, however, they are also confident that this was the most appropriate course of action in the circumstances.’

‘it is now considered expedient to take formal enforcement action to remedy the ongoing breach of planning control and secure the cessation of the use of the Land for all non-agricultural or forestry purposes, including the removal of the non-residential yurt (Yurt 1), the ‘cabin’, toilet structures, canvas shelter, and all other non-agricultural structures, items and equipment, and the restoration of the land to its condition before these uses began.’

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A planning application for a certificate of lawfulness has now been submitted to Dartmoor National Park. It is also worth mentioning that the Authority has received a number of other allegations concerning various developments on land in the same ownership, that are being investigated separately, but that it is not appropriate to discuss these further at this stage.

The full report can be provided to any members of the public who wish to receive it and may be obtained by contacting the Clerk, who will forward a copy on.

## **08/26. Consent to receive agendas by email.**

AGREED by all.

The Clerk to send all Members their gov.uk email login details, together with instructions on how to access their accounts. It was agreed that all Members attend the next meeting earlier in order to log into their email addresses and receive assistance if required.

## **09/26. Appointment HR and Planning Committee Members**

It was agreed that all members be appointed to the Planning Committee.

It was agreed that the members of the HR Committee be Cllr. Sturmer, Cllr. Davies and Cllr. Pearson-Bunt. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee will be elected at its first meeting.

## **10/26. Appointment of Whitchurch Down Consultative Group Representative**

Cllr R Phillips and Cllr. Sturmer agreed to continue to be the Council's representatives.

## **11/26. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:**

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

The boundary stone at Sortridge is now in place. The landowner at Jordan Lane has changed his mind, and the Council will now need to consider an alternative location for this stone. The East Crowndale Farm landowner has requested that the stone be installed later in the year, following the completion of haymaking. Cllr. Sturmer has visited Ward Bridge with a Contractor who may be able add the Parish Council's initials together with W for Walkhampton.

- Update on restoration of 1843 Whitchurch Parish Map

Information on the cost of restoring the map had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. After discussion, Cllr. Philips proposed not pursuing restoration of the map but instead purchasing a tube to store it in and obtaining a digital copy for display in the Whitchurch Community Hall. Cllr. Davies proposed an amendment to the proposal, undertaking the restoration of map at a cost of £444, together with the purchase of a storage tube and obtaining a digital copy for display. All members were in favour of the amendment.

Cllr. Sturmer stated that the Whitchurch Trustees could be approached to fund the purchase of the digital copy and its framing.

## **12/26. Reports from other Organisations**

Cllr. Sturmer updated members that the turnover for the Whitchurch Community Hall was good, and that more events and classes were now being booked at the Hall.

Cllr. Philips stated that the Whitchurch Down Group has yet to adopt the Management Plan, and that trees have recently been planted on the Down.

There was nothing new to report from Dartmoor National Park Authority.

## **13/26. Update on Broadband with the Parish**

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt stated that the plan is to submit a bid to connect approximately 100 houses from the edge of Whitchurch through to Grenofen. The bid needs to be submitted by August, which is the deadline for the current Government grant scheme.

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Discussions have been held with a Devon-based supplier, Bush Broadband (trading as Radio Fibre.com), who have successfully delivered similar schemes elsewhere. The supplier is also prepared to assist with preparing the proposal and underwriting the scheme. Cllr. Philips has joined the group and is providing advice and guidance on possible cabling routes.

It was confirmed that there would be no commitment required from homeowners at this stage.

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt confirmed that approval in principle would first be sought before approaching the appropriate landowners, and that participation by landowners would be entirely voluntary. She asked whether the Parish Council would support the scheme by writing letters of support to the local MP and Building Digital UK (BDUK).

Cllr. Sturmer proposed that the Council write letters of support for the scheme to the local MP and BDUK. Seconded by Cllr. Cole. All in favour.

## **14/26. Confirm Council meeting dates June 2026 – May 2027**

The remaining meeting dates for 2026 were noted. The proposed meeting dates for January to May 2027 were also noted, although it was acknowledged that the May dates may need to be rescheduled subject to date of the Parish Council elections.

It was queried why Committee meetings are normally scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month and whether this could be changed. The Clerk advised that she is unable to attend Tuesday evenings due to prior commitments, and that Council meetings held at Sampford Spiney Church take place on Thursday evenings.

## **15/26. To receive the Internal Audit Report for 2025-26**

The report has been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The report was noted and accepted.

## **16/26. To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2025-26**

All approved of the certificate and the Chair and Clerk signed the Certificate of Exemption.

## **17/26. To approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26**

All approved the statement, and the Chair and Clerk signed the statement.

## **18/26. To approve and sign the Accounting Statements. 2025-26**

All approved the statement, and the Chair and Clerk signed the statement.

## **19/26. To approve and sign the Bank Reconciliation ending 31st March 2026**

All noted and approved the bank reconciliation.

## **20/26. To note the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights as Thursday 4th June 2026 to Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

All noted.

## **21/26. To note the Statement of Variances for 2025-26**

All noted and accepted.

## **22/26. Planning Matters –**

- Dartmoor 144/26 - Erection of General Purpose Agricultural Building at Taviton Farm, Mount Tavy Road, PL19 9JL

After discussion, the Council supported the application.

## **23/26. Approve Invoices for payment.**

- DM Payroll Services - £144
- Clerk's salary – £203.90
- HMRC ending 5 June 2026 - £44.40 (direct debit)
- Whitchurch Community Hall (April 2026) – £34
- Zurich Insurance - £481
- Penny Clapham (Internal Auditor) - £87.55

All approved payments.

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## **24/26. Items raised by Councillors (for information/ brief updates only. No decisions can be made)**

Cllr. Fife Cook updated members on a recent meeting he had organised between representatives of Devon Highways and four Parish Councils. Discussions focused on the challenges facing Devon County Council and the difficulties of maintaining the road network within existing budgets, which have been underfunded for many decades. The purpose of the meeting was to allow all parties to gain a better understanding of each other's concerns and the issues currently being faced.

Despite the challenges discussed, the meeting was considered positive and constructive. The Road Warden Schemes were highly praised. He informed that Parish Councils may in future be asked to undertake more work locally, e.g. employing a lengthsman to carry out certain maintenance tasks. Cllr. Fife Cook also advised that he is currently testing a new software package which could potentially improve the identification and management of highways issues. It is hoped that, once rolled out, the software will also be made available to Parish Councils to view.

## **25/26. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

## **26/26. Agenda items for the Council meeting to be held on Wednesday, 10th June 2026 at 7.30 pm, at Whitchurch Community Hall.**

The meeting closed at 8.59 pm.