

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Whitchurch Community Hall**
On **Wednesday 11th March 2026** at **7.30 pm**

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

In Attendance: Cllr. M. Fife Cook, Cllr. M. Renders and three members of the public.

138/26. Apologies for absence

None.

139/25. Declaration of Interest

Cllr. I. Walton declared an interest in previous matters arising from the minutes relating to Tiny Wilds.

Cllr. R. Philips declared interest in the 40-mph sign in Grenofen.

140/26. Public Question Time

A member of the public expressed concerns about the ongoing speeding outside his property in Grenofen. He reported that the 40-mph speed sign has not been repaired for over nine years, despite being raised with Devon Highways on several occasions. Although he has repeatedly been told the matter would be looked into, no action has been taken. He was also informed that the sign had been removed for safety reasons.

Cllr. Philips declared an interest, as the location of the fallen speed sign is on his land. He advised that he had last held meetings with representatives from Devon County Council (DCC) in 2019 regarding the matter; however, correspondence subsequently ceased and no further progress was made.

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had contacted Devon Highways about this matter and was informed that this matter has already been investigated and the member of the public had received a response. 'The position remains unchanged, in that the A-board will remain in place until Devon County Council (DCC) deem it appropriate to source a permanent replacement. On 10th February, DCC confirmed that the sign had not been removed but had been blown over in adverse weather conditions, and that a contractor would reinstate it when possible. It was also confirmed that a sign remains visible on the opposite side of the road and that the signage is compliant with current policy. Further correspondence dated 17th February confirmed that, in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual (Chapter 3, Section 8.2.2), it is not a requirement for both signs to be in place to meet policy. Following the removal of the pole for safety reasons and the A-board being displaced in poor weather, DCC advised that their contractors will re-erect the signage when it is suitable to do so.'

Cllr. Fife Cook requested that the correspondence be forwarded to him and confirmed that he would follow the matter up.

141/26. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. M. Renders reported that there was nothing new to update from West Devon Borough Council (WDBC). He noted that Dartmoor National Park's new CEO will be starting shortly.

Cllr. Fife Cook advised that he is still in the process of arranging a meeting between several parishes and Devon Highways. If this initial meeting is successful, he intends to organise further meetings with Highways and additional parishes, including Plasterdown.

He is also continuing to follow up with broadband suppliers and have discussions regarding the government reopening the rural broadband voucher scheme for residents.

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142/26. Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on the 11th February 2026

Matters Arising

116/26

The broken stile reported has been fixed.

All approved the minutes of the meeting.

143/26. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

The three additional stones have now been engraved. Cllr Sturmer suggested bringing them to the next meeting for distribution to Councillors, who can then place them at the pre-arranged boundary locations. This was agreed by all, and it was further decided that a date would be arranged at the next meeting to visit all the new stones.

- Tiny Wilds School

Cllr. Fife Cook stated that a lot cannot be said due to GDPR but said that things are moving forward. 'I think it is safe to say that there has been recent communication between the Authority and landowner concerning a number of apparent breaches of planning control at Heckwood Farm, and that an enforcement report seeking authorisation for appropriate legal action is likely to be presented to the Authority's Development Management Committee at its meeting in May, unless these matters are resolved beforehand.'

It was agreed to forward this information to those residents who had wished to be kept up to date with the situation.

- Restoration of 1843 Whitchurch Parish Map

Cllr. Sturmer and the Clerk hand-delivered the map to the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter. The map will now be assessed, and a treatment proposal prepared for the Parish to consider.

144/26. To discuss the Council's response to the Government's Devon Devolution consultation

Each member was given the opportunity to share their views on the proposals. A number of Councillors expressed concern that insufficient information had been provided for each option. Some noted that the final decision would rest with the Government and that any responses submitted may not influence the outcome. Cllr. Pearson-Bunt stated it was still important to submit a response. Three options were discussed: not to respond; to respond by stating the Council's preferred proposal; or to respond outlining what the Council would like to see.

Cllr. Sturmer summarised that the Council respond by stating the Council would prefer to maintain the current structure, i.e. retain both Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council. It was noted that the proposals did not provide sufficient information to allow the Council to make a fully informed decision. The Council though strongly advocates for enhanced democratic communication for Parish/Town Councils. It is important that Parish Councils have a clear voice and appropriate representation with a vote on neighbourhood committees to ensure local concerns and perspectives are effectively considered in decision-making processes. All in agreement.

145/26. Discussion on signposts and noticeboards

A finger post has broken off at Warren Cross. Cllr. Cole to send a picture to the Clerk to report to DCC.

The replacement of the Whitchurch noticeboard was discussed. The Clerk will investigate the cost of a replacement and whether sufficient funds are available to purchase it and will report back at the next meeting.

146/26. Review and approve Financial Regulations.

The policy had been sent to all members prior to the meeting. All agreed to re-adopt.

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147/26. Review and approve Risk Management Scheme

The policy had been sent to all members prior to the meeting. All agreed to re-adopt.

148/26. Review and approve Internal Control Statement

The policy had been sent to all members prior to the meeting. All agreed to re-adopt.

149/26. Review and approve Publication Scheme

The policy had been sent to all members prior to the meeting. All agreed to re-adopt.

150/26. Planning application to consider

- Dartmoor - 0056/26 - Brook House, Sampford Spiney, Yelverton, PL20 7QX
Conversion of coach house to holiday unit, extension to existing outhouse for additional storage, plus double garage with additional parking spaces, with variation of Conditions 6, 7, 9 and 10 attached to planning permission ref: 0721/05 dated 14 December 2005.

After discussion all agreed that the Council submit no comment.

151/26. Approve accounts for payment

Clerk's March 2026 salary - £203.90

Clerk's mileage (return trip to Exeter - 93 miles at 45ppm) - £41.85

HMRC ending 5 April 2026 – £44.40

Whitchurch Community Hall hire February 2026 - £32

Donation to Citizen Advice Bureau - £50

All approved payments.

152/26. Items raised by Councillors (for information/brief updates only. No Decision can be made)

None

153/26. Correspondence including Whitchurch Down Consultative group – soil aeration opportunity.

1. An email from the Group regarding a proposal from Westcountry Rivers Trust to fund the full cost of the aeration works to the Middle moor / Whitchurch Down area flood relief. They 'hope to increase the air and water holding capacity within the soil thereby increasing infiltration of rainwater and hopefully reducing and slowing runoff from the land. The improved aeration of the soil should also improve grass growth potential from the aerated land.'

Noted by the Council.

154/26. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Wednesday 15th April 2026 at 7.30 pm at Whitchurch Community Hall

1. Replacement Noticeboard
2. Signposts.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.