

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Sampford Spiney Church**
On **THURSDAY 16th July 2026** at **7.30 pm**

Present: Cllr. E. Cole, Cllr. W. Hall, Cllr. R Philips, Cllr. R. Pearson-Bunt, Cllr. J Sturmer, Cllr. S. Ware and Cllr. I. Walton

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

43/26. Apologies for absence

Cllr. A. Davies sent her apology. Accepted by the Council.

44/26. Declaration of Interest

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt declared an interest in DALC.

45/26. Public Question Time

The member of the public wished to ask their question under item Planning Matters.

46/26. Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on 10th June 2026 and deal with any matters arising.

Min 37/26

Following Cllr. Ware's suggestion, the Dartmoor National Park Highway Heritage Project have added the Rix Hill signpost to their list of posts to be restored.

All agreed to approve and adopt the minutes.

47/26. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors

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

Cllr. Michael Fife-Cook read out an update received from the Dartmoor National Park Authority Planning Enforcement Officer regarding the ongoing planning enforcement investigations at Heckwood Farm and surrounding land.

Members were advised that an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for an Existing Use or Development (CLUED), seeking to regularise the erection of one of the yurts associated with the Tiny Wilds School at Heckwood Farm, is currently under consideration. Determination of the application has been delayed while legal advice is obtained from the Authority's solicitors. Once the application has been determined, it is intended that an updated enforcement report relating to the use of the land will be presented to the next available meeting of the Development Management Committee.

The Enforcement Officer also confirmed that a significant number of other planning investigations relating to land within the same ownership are currently being actively pursued with the landowner and their solicitor. As these investigations are ongoing and the alleged breaches have not yet been confirmed as breaches of planning control, no further details can be provided at this stage.

Following the Government's decision on Local Government Reorganisation, Cllr. Fife Cook noted that the proposals are not considered good for rural and coastal areas of Devon and that Devon County Council is seeking to pursue a legal challenge to the Government's proposals.

48/26. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge
Cllr. Sturmer reported that the boundary stone at East Crowndale had now been installed following replacement of the adjacent fencing.
- Update on restoration of 1843 Whitchurch Parish Map
No further update was available regarding the Whitchurch Tithe Map.
- Update on Broadband coverage within the Parish
Cllr. Fife-Cook reported that following a meeting, DCC are exploring ways to improve broadband connectivity for smaller, more remote communities that may not benefit from existing voucher schemes, ensuring rural areas are not left behind.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr. Pearson-Bunt reported that good progress had been made on the local broadband project to provide connectivity to approximately 100 properties between Whitchurch and Grenofen. The project has now reached the stage where a route can be planned with the cooperation of local landowners. It will also require agreement from a local property owner to connect to the existing network. Both DCC and the local MP are supporting the scheme. The outcome of the grant application is expected in August. Members welcomed the progress made.

49/26. Planning Applications to consider:

- Dartmoor - 188/26 - Erection of an agricultural building for the storage of machinery, equipment and materials associated with the management of agricultural meadow and woodland at SHULA, Moorshop, Tavistock, PL19 9JX

Following discussion, Members considered the proposal to be a straightforward agricultural development with no concerns identified. It was noted that, with increasingly severe weather events, covered storage for agricultural machinery is beneficial.

Resolved: To support the application.

- Dartmoor - 0207/26 - Erection of temporary agricultural workers dwelling, creation of new track and associated works at Taviton Farm, Mount Tavy Road, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 9JL

During the discussion, Members noted that the proposal was for temporary accommodation to meet an identified agricultural need while the applicant demonstrates the case for a permanent dwelling in due course. It was considered the provision of on-site accommodation for a farm worker to be appropriate in these circumstances.

Resolved: To support the application.

- West Devon - 1621/26/FUL - Change of use of cafe and associated residential accommodation to 3 dwellings and the erection of 2 dwellings in the former carpark at Land Adjacent Halfway House, Grenofen

A member of the public addressed the Council and raised concerns regarding the proposed change of use, explaining that a community group had recently applied to West Devon Borough Council to register the property as an Asset of Community Value. It was noted that this application was separate from the planning application currently under consideration.

Members discussed the planning proposal in detail. Concerns were raised regarding:

- The proposed drainage and soakaway system, particularly the potential impact on the historic Grenofen Tunnel.
- The adequacy of the proposed parking provision and the likelihood of overspill parking onto the highway.
- Highway safety, including access and egress onto the A386.
- The proposed relocation of the cycle path, with concerns regarding its reduced width, visibility for cyclists emerging onto the highway, and its suitability for shared pedestrian and cycle use.

Some members acknowledged that the redevelopment would bring a vacant building back into use and provide additional useful housing. The majority considered that the concerns outlined above warranted an objection at this time.

Resolved: Cllr. Philips proposed that the Parish Council object to the application on the grounds of:

- the potential for the proposed soakaway to affect the Grenofen Tunnel;
- inadequate parking provision;
- highway safety concerns relating to vehicle access and egress; and
- concerns regarding the proposed relocation, width and visibility of the cycle path.

Seconded by Cllr. Pearson-Bunt. A vote was taken. Six for, one abstain. Motion carried. It was noted that should the above be resolved, the applicant would then be acceptable.

The Chair requested that the member of public who addressed the meeting keep the Parish Council informed of progress regarding the Asset of Community Value application.

50/26. To review first quarter budget monitoring report and bank reconciliation ending 30th June 2026

Members reviewed the first quarter budget monitoring report and bank reconciliation.

The Clerk explained that expenditure remained within budget and the only variance related to the accounting software

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

subscription, where payment had been made for two financial years following the cancellation and reissue of a cheque from the 2025/26 financial year.

Against a total budget of £7,000, expenditure to the end of the first quarter totalled £1,893.06. The bank reconciliation to 30 June 2026 was presented with a closing balance of £4,142.79, which reconciled correctly.

51/26. Approve Invoices for payment

- Clerk's June 2026 salary – £203.70
- McAfee subscription renewal - £114.99 – to be repaid to the Clerk
- HMRC ending 5 August – (Direct Debit) - £44.60
- Whitchurch Community Hall hire (June 2026) - £34
- Notice Board Company (UK) Ltd - £383.95
- Hire of Sampford Spiney Church for yearly Council meetings - £450

As the Council would not meet again till September 2026, the Clerk requested approval for payment of her August salary in advance.

Resolved: To approve all payments and the payment of the Clerk's August salary, of £203.90, with the cheque dated 3 August 2026.

52/26. To note and discuss Dartmoor National Park Authority Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation.

Members noted that the consultation period provided limited time for parish councils to respond. Cllr. Fife-Cook advised that this was an initial consultation and that there would be further opportunities to comment as the Local Plan develops. Members agreed to await further information before submitting any comments.

53/26. To note the Government's proposed changes to the planning decision-making process, due to take effect from 31 October 2026.

Members considered the Government's proposed changes to the planning system and expressed concern that they would reduce local democratic accountability by limiting the referral of planning applications to Planning Committee.

Resolved: To write to the Government expressing the Council's concerns regarding the proposed changes

54/26. To review and adopt the new Scheme of Delegation.

The Clerk presented the proposed Scheme of Delegation, explaining that it sets out the circumstances in which the Clerk may act on behalf of the Council in urgent situations where it is not possible to convene a meeting. Any actions taken under delegated authority would be reported to the Council and that the policy does not permit decisions on matters reserved to the Council, such as planning consultations or the disposal of assets. Any decisions made by the Clerk on behalf of the Council will also be reported to the Chair of the Council.

Resolved: To adopt the Scheme of Delegation.

55/26. Consider approval for members to attend DALC's AGM and Annual Conference on 7 October 2026.

Cllr. Sturmer requested approval to attend the Devon Association of Local Councils AGM and Annual Conference on 7 October 2026. Cllr. Pearson-Bunt will already be attending, as a Director of DALC.

Resolved: To approve Cllr. Sturmer's attendance at the DALC AGM and Annual Conference on 7 October 2026.

56/26. Consider the adoption of an official Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council logo.

Members considered two draft logo designs based on a photo currently used on the Parish Council's website and unanimously agreed that the full-colour version was their preferred option.

Resolved: To adopt the full-colour logo as the official logo of Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council.

57/26. Items raised by Councillors (for information/ brief updates only. No decisions can be made)

1. Cllr. Sturmer reported that following her attendance at a recent meeting given by Lindsay Rogers regarding the local Leat, she suggested inviting Mr Rogers to a future Council meeting to give a short presentation so that Members could learn more about it and its management. All agreed. Cllr. Sturmer to liaise with Mr Rogers to arrange his attendance

PLASTERDOWN GROUPEd PARISH COUNCIL

at a future meeting.

2. Cllr. Walton provided an update following the recent Whitchurch Community Hall Trustees' meeting:
 - two new trustees had been appointed;
 - maintenance issues including cleaning standards, replacement locks and repairs to the balcony were being addressed;
 - The Trustees confirmed their reasonable financial support for a digital copy and frame of the restored Whitchurch Tithe Map in the Hall, with the final size and location to be agreed following completion of the restoration.
- 3 The Clerk advised Members that she would be on annual leave during August but would continue to monitor emails periodically for any urgent matters.

58/26. Correspondence

The Clerk reported details of the forthcoming Dartmoor National Park Forum, to be held on 24 July 2026 at Dartmoor National Park Authority offices, Princetown. The meeting would provide an update on the Local Plan timetable and planning system changes and would seek views on community engagement and the preparation of the new Local Plan.

59/26. Agenda items for the Council meeting to be held on Thursday 17th September 2026 2026 at 7.30 pm, at Stampford Spiney Church

- Presentation by Lindsay Rogers.
- Update on Heckwood Farm enforcement matters.
- Local Government Reorganisation.
- Any further update on the Whitchurch Tithe Map.
- DALC Payroll Service for Member Councils.

There be no other business, the meeting closed at 8.43 pm.