

## CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs. Mrs Lizzie Jones (Chairman), Dr Catherine Bass, Mrs Jude Zebedee, Mrs Rosemary Balchin, Charlie Kay and the Clerk. Two members of the public were present, one left following the Planning section.

- 41. Democratic Period.** One of the applicants in respect of planning application 26/00354/FULL was present to give brief details of the application.
- 42. Apologies:** MDDC/DCC Cllr. Simon Clist.
- 43. Declarations of Interest:** None.
- 44.** The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11/03/2026 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.
- 45. Matters Arising:** None.
- 46. Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**
- 46.1** Applications considered:
- 26/00423/HOUSE Installation of a free-standing electric vehicle charger (EV). Colletts, The Cleeve, Culmstock. EX15 3JR. No objections.
  - 26/00387/HOUSE Erection of single-storey rear extension, alterations vehicular access and existing boundary wall (Revised Scheme). Fair View, Culmstock, EX15 3HU. No objections.
  - 26/00354/FULL Erection of self-build dwelling following demolition of agricultural building utilising the Class Q fallback. Land and Building at NGR 309811 113174 (Uffculme Road) Culmstock.
- The Parish Council has grave concerns in respect of the style and location of the proposal. The proposal is dissimilar to the existing, with a suburban look, it is very large and is not in character. The site is outside of the settlement limit, within the open countryside and will be very prominent on the landscape - which is close to the foot of the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. It was considered that more consideration should be given to the appearance and the landscape.
- 46.2** Results from Mid Devon District Council: None.
- 46.3** Housing Needs Survey - Information received from Devon Communities Together (DCT) regarding the possibility of a running a standard joint Housing Needs Survey (HNS) for Culmstock, Hemyock and Clayhidon: DCT has been liaising with MDDC and is looking for the support of the Parish Council to run a joint HNS with the idea to provide strong evidence of the existing local need for affordable housing, including size and tenure, to feed into any discussions that may arise about new residential development in the area. The cost for Hemyock and Culmstock will be funded by MDDC whilst Clayhidon has agreed to pay a small fee to be included.
- The joint HNS will be the standard survey which is shorter and simpler than the old survey which was run previously - the standard survey asks only those in housing need to complete it, expected returns are lower, but the assessed need should be the same. It was agreed to proceed and to ensure that there is sufficient time for the details to be publicised in the next issue of the Culmstock News.
- 46.4** Any other Planning Matters: Cllr. Sarah Leppard may provide a report on the recent MDDC online planning training at a future meeting.
- 47. Reports.**
- 47.1** The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.
- 47.2** The Clerk: The upcoming MDDC Annual Clerks meeting will now take place online.
- 47.3** P3/Footpaths, access and common land. (i) A request had been received for scattering of ashes on the beacon - permission granted; the Clerk will put together a basic policy for future reference and will forward details to the family.
- (ii) A report had been received from the P3 Co-ordinator - FP1 Removed fence posts & barbed wire from river near Blackwater Cottage (food debris and bank erosion). FP's 23, 40, 12, 3-grass cutting has been carried out at various paths, also the entrance to Hunkin Wood. FP3 & 3a-two small trees were removed from the paths to Hackpen and Owlycombe Common. FP3-A broken board has been replaced on the small boardwalk and the ditch cleared of debris, had caused flooding on footpath. The maps have been replaced on the 5 Parish Noticeboards. The padlock on gate at Blackdown Gate has been oiled.

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- 47.4 Highways: None.
- 47.5 Blackdown Hills Parish Network: Cllr. Dr Bass reported that she is now the Acting Chairman.
- 47.6 Culmstock Cemetery: None.
- 47.7 Culmstock Primary School, 150 year celebration - 2026: Cllr. Sarah Leppard: None.
- 47.8 Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors: None.
- 48. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.**
- 48.1 Thunderbox - upkeep and cleaning: The Clerk will make arrangements ASAP for cleaning to take place twice a week following the village hall confirming that it is no longer being able to assist with the services of a cleaner. The Clerk has made enquiries and it is hoped that cleaning will start next week and the costs will have to be confirmed at the next meeting.
- 48.2 Any other matters: Works to the wooden picnic tables are imminent.
- 49. Finance.**
- 49.1 A report was given, the finance schedule was signed. The balance was noted as at 31/03/26 as £44,813.35. Direct Debits taken: ICO annual renewal fee 11/03 - £47.00, Lloyds Bank service charge 17/03 - £4.25, Nest 09/03 - £125.10. Credits received: Cemetery fees 27/03 - £130.00, 13/03 - £57.
- 49.2 Payments were approved:
1. £ 44.14 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
  2. £ 194.05 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
  3. £ 966.29 Clerk - salary & expenses.
  4. £ 932.42 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract.
  5. £ 1034.11 HMRC. Quarterly PAYE and NI.
- 49.3 Bank reconciliation as at 31/03/26 and Income and Expenditure 2025/26. The Clerk reported the bank balance and the end of year figures prior to the internal examination prior to external audit - approved.
- 49.4 The bank interest for 2025-26 was noted as £61.40.
- 49.5 The renewal invoice for the Devon Association of Local Councils for £394.52 was noted - to be deducted from the precept.
- 49.6 Any other financial matters: None.
- 50. Annual Parish Meeting Format and Arrangements - update.** Confirmation has been received from Devon Communities Together that they can attend to provide information on Neighbourhood Planning. Arrangements will be made for the purchase of light refreshments as in previous years.
- 51. Correspondence & Any Consultations:** Various generic emails and information.
- 52. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates.** Next meeting - 13/05/26.