

## CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs. Mrs L Jones (Chairman), Mrs J Zebedee, Dr C Bass, C Kay, Sarah Leppard, T Platel, J Bartlett  
Mrs J Saunders, MDDC Cllr. S Clist and the Clerk.

18 parishioners were present for the Democratic period (and throughout “Planning applications to be considered”) - all were present in respect of planning application 25/00346/PIp.

- 48.** Democratic Period: The Chairman asked MDDC Cllr. Clist to provide an update on planning application 25/00346/PIp - MDDC Cllr. Clist reported that the MDDC Planning Officer was minded to approve the application and that MDDC Cllr Natasha Bradshaw would “call the application in” so that it may be determined by the MDDC Planning Committee at an MDDC Planning Committee meeting where there would be an opportunity for members of the public to speak. If the application is called in, the Planning Committee cannot discuss the matter until June, after the current election period.  
Six parishioners addressed the council to raise concerns, these included flooding and water-run off which will result in damage to properties, subsidence and drainage issues, sewage and pollution, lack of infrastructure, accessibility - road and pedestrian safety and concern over wildlife. The site is outside of the settlement limit. There has been no community involvement and there is not enough offered for the community in terms of affordability. The most recent Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 4 houses none of which were self-build.
- 49.** Apologies: Cllrs. Mrs Rosemary Balchin and MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw.
- 50.** Declarations of Interest: In respect of planning application 25/00346/PIp - Cllr. Kay (DPI as a neighbour to the site) and Cllr. Sarah Leppard (DPI as currently listed on the self-build register).
- 51.** The Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 12/03/25 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.
- 52.** Matters Arising: None.

### **53 Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**

- 53.1** Applications considered:  
-25/00346/PIp - Permission in Principle for a phased development of between 3 and 9 Custom and Self Build dwellings. Land at NGR 310051 113426 North of Uffculme Road, Culmstock. *See declarations. Cllrs. Kay and Sarah Leppard left the room for this item.*  
It was unanimously agreed to object. Concerns align with those raised within the democratic period so include accessibility, pedestrian and other road users’ safety, flood and pollution risk and environmental considerations. The proposed site is outside the current settlement limit; in responding to the recent HELAA call by MDDC, the Parish Council was unable to recommend any sites suitable for development outside of the settlement limit. The Parish Council is not averse to small scale developments however this proposal is not what the parish currently needs, nor is it in a suitable location. Housing need is principally for affordable or social rent properties. The most recent housing survey revealed the need for 4 affordable houses within the next five years which this proposal does not address. There are unused plots within the settlement limit which should be exploited first. Cllr. Dr Bass will prepare a response.  
-25/00449/LBC & 25/00447/HOUSE - Listed Building Consent and permission for re-render, installation of photovoltaic panels, replacement of roof lights and installation of roof lights on barn. Thornbank Farm, Fore Street, Culmstock. EX15 3JD. No objections.
- 53.2** For Information only - the following prior approval/prior notification has been submitted: 25/00501/PNCOU Prior Notification for the change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to a dwelling under Class MA. Pegga Holdings Limited, The Workshop, Culmstock. EX15 3HU.
- 53.3** To consider submitting a response to East Devon District Council in respect of the following three “VAR” planning applications regarding Dunkeswell Raceway, Dunkeswell, EX14 4AH, following communication from the Blackdown Hills Parishes Network and a neighbouring parish.  
It was agreed to object to the variations. Existing permissions have controlled the nuisance of traffic and noise. Any variations would result in an increase in traffic and noise, the parish already sustains a high level of traffic accessing the track on race days and noise from the track is audible in the parish, which is within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape. Concerns also include environment conservation and enhancement and the health and wellbeing of future generations. If approved this would lead to more pollution, noise, traffic and damage to the environment of a Protected Landscape.

*Planning Continued:*

25/0382/VAR Variation of wording of condition 2 (post resurfacing noise readings and noise attenuation methodology) and removal of condition 3 (hours/days of operation) for planning permission 05/0540/FUL (Formation of extended track) to facilitate alternative days of operation and hours of kart racing as proposed within a Noise Management Plan.

25/0383/VAR Variation of wording of condition 1 (defining the range of track activities) and removal of condition 2 (hours/days of operation) for planning approval 06/3353/FUL (Retention of widening of kart track) to facilitate an alternative range of track activities, days of operation and hours of kart racing as proposed within a Noise Management Plan.

25/0384/VAR Removal of condition 1 (hours/days of operation) and condition 3 (Maximum noise levels) and variation of wording of condition 4 (12 Kart limit) to increase the number of karts for variation 15/0280/VAR (Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 99/P0234 to allow more than 8no karts to be in use at any time) to facilitate alternative days or operation, hours of kart racing and increase the number of leisure karts to 24 as proposed within a Noise Management Plan. *The parishioners left the meeting.*

**53.4** Results from Mid Devon District Council.

-24/01815/HOUSE Erection of carport, garage and workshop for ancillary use. Lower Mead Barn, Culmstock. EX15 3LA. Permission granted.

-25/00046/CLP - Certificate of lawfulness for the installation of 2 twin Petanque Pistes. Location: Land at NGR 310107 114317 (Culmstock Community Garden) Hunters Hill, Culmstock. Permission granted.

**53.5** Any other Planning Matters - the possibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish will be discussed at the next meeting.

**54. Reports.**

**54.1** The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.

**54.2** The Clerk: Devon Community Resilience Forum is running a workshop on creating and updating emergency plans at Kentisbeare Village Hall on 20/05/25 - Clerk to attend. Other councillors should inform the Clerk if they wish like to attend.

**54.3** P3/Footpaths and/or Access: Report from the P3 Co-ordinator, circulated to all: FP1-the grass cutting has started. FP12-the entrance to Hunkin Wood has been trimmed and the path through the wood has been cut and some small fallen trees cleared from the path. A broken board has been replaced on the small bridge nearest the entrance and a handrail to the steps. FP3-Rebuilt a short section of fence. FP29-Adjustment is required on gate near Lane End. FP 23-The grass has been cut near Lane End. Another section where the path crosses a field has been ploughed, the path must be reinstated once the crops have been sown, so it may not be good for walking until this has been completed.

**54.4** Highways: The drain crossing Town Hill at the Silver Street junction has been fixed.

**54.5** Culmstock Cemetery. (i) Cemetery Hedge - Cllr. Mrs Zebedee is to meet with the contractor shortly. (ii) Any other matters - the Clerk is pursuing the ordering of a brown bin.

**54.6** Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors. (i) Cllr. Dr Bass attended the recent Connecting the Culm event.

**55. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.**

**55.1** Improvements to the site: (i) Update on Table Tennis Table, cost and position: Cllr. Sarah Leppard reported on the most convenient position. It was reported that the current cost is £700. It was agreed to defer ordering until later in the summer and following details of the cost of fixing and a base for which the Clerk will make enquiries.

(ii) Update on Compost Toilet - cost and position: Cllrs. Sarah Leppard and Mrs Zebedee reported on the most convenient position. Thunderbox Ltd., is the preferred supplier having provided the local primary school with the same.

**55.2** Any other matters: A start date is awaited in respect of the Petanque pistes.

**56. Finance.**

**56.1** Finance report & to note the balances: A report was given and the bank balance was noted as at 31/03/25 as £47,493.02.

Credits received: Cemetery Fees, 15/03 - £1500 & 21/03 - £200.

Direct Debits taken: Nest 04/03 - £109.84, ICO 11/03 - £47, Service charge 18/03 - £6.20.

*Finance Continued:*

- 56.2** Payments were approved:
- £ 865.55 Clerk - salary & expenses.
  - £ 162.87 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
  - £ 37.94 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
  - £ 681.12 HMRC. Quarterly PAYE.
  - £ 3655.30 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract - 858.43. Supply and installation of 3 benches - £2796.87.
  - £ 105.00 Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management. Membership renewal.
  - £ *Defer* Sarah Leppard. Trees for Hillmoor Common. Deferred as no invoice received.
  - £ 1500.00 The Culmstock News. Contribution towards printing costs as agreed.
- 56.3** Bank reconciliation as at 31/03/25 and Income and Expenditure 2024/25: The Clerk reported on the end of year figures prior to the internal examination prior to external audit - approved. Figures circulated to all.
- 56.4** The bank interest for 2024-25 was noted as £99.71.
- 56.5** To agree on a grant for the Blackdown Support Group - it was agreed for a grant of £500; payment will be included on the next agenda.
- 56.6** To note the renewal invoice for the Devon Association of Local Councils as £387.53 - to be deducted from the precept by MDDC.
- 56.7** Quotations for compost toilet (55.1 relates): Various suppliers had been researched and a quotation from Thunderbox Ltd., - to supply and install for £4750 was agreed. Funds will come from reserve as held for the playing field. A deposit of 50% is due on order; Clerk to request an invoice.
- 56.8** Any other financial matters: None.
- 57. Hillmoor Common:** Cllr. Sarah Leppard reported that the orchard trees have now been planted.
- 58. South Western Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST), Defibrillator located outside of Culmstock Village Hall:** Ending of supported defibrillator package Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - the Clerk reported that SWAST is discontinuing the defibrillator contracts and parishes have been given the option to take over the defibrillators. Culmstock is currently in an agreement with Hemyock and Clayhidon; following communication with the Clerk of both parishes it was agreed to take over the defibrillator and to work together in respect of maintenance and supplies.
- 59. Renewal of Grounds Maintenance Contract:** The Parish Council went into Part 2. Two quotations had been received - it was agreed to accept the quotation from Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd.
- 60. Correspondence & Any Consultations: Correspondence** - Various generic emails (circulated to all). Correspondence for discussion - Family Farms and IHT; a Discussion Paper circulated to parishes within the Blackdown Hills. To suggest comments: Cllr. Bartlett - the detail had been noted and it was agreed not to submit any comments.
- 61. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates.** Next meeting: 14/05/25 the annual parish meeting will take place at 6.30pm and the annual Parish Council meeting will follow at approximately 7pm.