

CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9th July 2025 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Mrs J Zebedee (Acting Chairman), C Kay (from 99.6), Sarah Leppard, Mrs R Balchin, T Platel, J Bartlett, Dr C Bass, MDDC & DCC Cllr. Simon Clist, the Clerk, the P3 Footpath Co-ordinator and the Volunteer Footpath Warden. Two members of the public were present - one was present to speak in the democratic period and then left the meeting.

- 94. Democratic Period:** A parishioner was present to raise concerns about the speed that vehicles travel through the village and the ongoing problem of heavy goods vehicles - reference was made to some recent damage to a property caused by an HGV. Could the village be a pedestrian priority village and could virtual pavements be considered? DCC Cllr. Clist offered to assist by raising the matter of Highways safety at DCC - it was agreed that the parishioner would write an article for the Culmstock News and suggest that incidents are recorded, as evidence is required. Cllr. Dr Bass offered to assist with any reports as a member of the Highways Advisory Group and as Vice-Chairman of the Blackdown Hills Parishes Network.
The parishioner volunteered to put up 20mph green signs if purchased. Note - these signs display "20 is plenty" , they are not official Highway signs and should be placed off the Highway.
- 95. Apologies:** Cllr. Mrs L Jones and MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw.
- 96. Declarations of Interest:** None.
- 97.** The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11/06/2025 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- 98. Matters Arising:** None.
- 99 Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**
- 99.1** Applications to be considered: None received.
- 99.2** Results from Mid Devon District Council:
- 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. Notification of refusal received; *full details reported at the last meeting and noted within the minutes*
 - 25/00396/HOUSE Installation of 10 photovoltaic panels to South facing roof and 4 photovoltaic panels to East side lean to roof. Croft View, Silver Street, Culmstock. EX15 3JE. Permission granted.
 - 25/00186/FULL Erection of agricultural storage barn and workshop. Hunters Lodge, Hunters Hill, Culmstock. EX15 3HH. Permission granted.
 - 25/00449/LBC & 25/00447/HOUSE - Listed Building Consent and permission for proposed re-render and replacement roof lights to house and installation of photovoltaic panels to outbuilding. Thornbank Farm, Fore Street, Culmstock. EX15 3JD. Grid Ref: 310151:113489. Permission granted.
 - 25/00561/FULL Retention of an extension to an agricultural barn. Land & Building at NGR 309838 113201 Uffculme Road, Culmstock. Approved.
- 99.3** For Information only: 25/00882/PNCOU Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to dwelling under Class Q Land and Building at NGR 309838 113201 Uffculme Road, Culmstock.
- 99.4** MDDC Tree Preservation Order 24/00011/TPO (The Paddocks, Blackwater Rd, Culmstock). Formal notice of an order which took effect on a provisional basis on 09/06/25 for a further six months or until the order is confirmed by the district council, whichever first occurs. Noted - Clerk to enquire in approx. six months' time as to the status of the order.
- 99.5** To note the hearing date of 12/08/25 in respect of the Appeal re: application 24/00848/FULL - Change of use of agricultural land to allow the siting of 1 mobile home and associated works for the use of gypsy & traveller family (Revised Scheme)|South Fork, Culmstock. EX15 3HW. Appeal Reference PP/Y1138/W/25/3365163. MDDC Cllr. Clist & Cllr. Dr Bass will attend.
- 99.6** Any other Planning Matters. (i) MDDC Consultation - Local Validation Checklist 2025; Cllr. Dr Bass reported and details had been circulated to all - since 2008 local planning authorities have been required to publish a list of information they require to "validate" the planning applications they receive. This validation list forms two components, the national requirements, including the application form, the fee, certificates etc., and specific local validation requirements known as the "Local List". The Government requires local planning authorities to review the "local list" every two years. Noted.
(ii) MDDC Planning Training & Updates - the Clerk will attend in person at Phoenix House, Tiverton and Cllr. Dr Bass will endeavour to attend. *Cllr. Kay joined the meeting.*

100. Reports.

100.1 The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.

100.2 The Clerk: Invitation to the upcoming Blackdown Support Group AGM - Cllr. Mrs Balchin will endeavour to attend.

100.3 P3/Footpaths and/or Access: A report was circulated; FP12-trimmed vegetation at entrance to Hunkin Wood & path through wood (the tree trunk has been removed from entrance). FP12 & railtrack - trimmed path & sides of rail track, checked for any trees growing through new fence, and trimmed. FP13-trimmed verge at road entrance and stiles. FP5-refitted loose finger post and replaced short piece of fence. FP23-trimmed field path and gateways/stiles. FP29-trimmed around gates at entrance (Somerset end). FP22-trimmed around gates at boundary, also a stile at Somerset end. FP25-trimmed. Strimming of Buddles Bridge Path has been undertaken. The Clerk will submit an invoice for £1950 following confirmation that this is the figure that has been awarded in respect of the P3 grant 2025-26.

100.4 Highways. (i) Highways Safety - ref MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw & correspondence received: see details in the democratic period. It was noted that another parishioner had written in regarding the possibility of a 20mph speed limit through the village.

100.5 Blackdown Hills Parishes Network: Dr C Bass reported on the recent AGM; Cllr. Kay had also attended. 23 parishes were represented and the main focus was planning. The main speaker was the Planning Officer from the Blackdown Hills National Landscape (BHNL) - details were given on planning applications within a National Landscape, relevant policies in Local Plans, information from the NPPF which impacts most on applications in and around the National Landscape, how natural beauty in the National Landscape is defined, its importance and the legal status of the BHNL Management plan and on what grounds Parish Councils can reasonably object to planning applications.

A representative from Sheldon Parish Meeting was present to provide an update on the objections of the Parish Meeting in relation to planning applications submitted to EDDC to increase karting at Dunkeswell Airfield, which would lead to increased noise and carbon emissions in the National Landscape.

100.6 Culmstock Cemetery: A quote is awaited for works to the hedge following a site meeting with Cllr. Mrs Zebedee and the contractor.

100.7 Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors: Cllr. Clist gave a report as DCC and MDDC Councillor - inductions have been taking place at DCC and there have been various meetings to attend. £86 million is going to be invested in a new pothole repair initiative. 86% of councillors attended the Members Development Day. DCC has reduced grant funding for struggling families. With reference to MDDC - information was given on various grants all which have been publicised online. It was noted that planning permission for up to 100 homes at Tidcombe Hall, Tiverton has been approved at Appeal.

101. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.

101.1 Update following installation of Petanque pistes and preparation of site for Thunderbox all access toilet - R&R Services have prepared the site for the compost toilet which will be installed shortly. The pistes are complete. The contractor will be asked to return to rectify a small problem in relation to the compacting of a layer, as a result of the ongoing dry weather before payment is forwarded (approved at 102.2).

101.2 Any other matters: The Clerk has made enquiries regarding renovation of the wooden picnic tables.

102. Finance.

102.1 A report was given, the Clerk has completed the first quarter which will be circulated - the balance was noted as at 30/06/25 as £63,312.64.

Direct Debits taken: Nest 27/06 £113.62, Lloyds Bank service charge 17/06 - £4.38, Pennon Water Services 09/06 - £27.68.

102.2 Payments were approved:

1. £ 871.13 Clerk - salary & expenses.
2. £ 184.89 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
3. £ 24.14 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
4. £ 932.42 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract.
5. £ 156.00 MDDC. Bin emptying Jan-June Culmstock Bridge.
6. £ 176.40 Eagle Plant. Portable toilet hire.
7. £ 854.60 HMRC. Quarterly payment.
8. £1231.20 R&R Services Devon Ltd. Construction of base for Thunderbox toilet.
9. £14,298.60 R&R Services Devon Ltd. Installation of 2 twin Petanque pistes.

Finance (payments) continued:

It was agreed to raise cheque number 2040 for payments (8) and (9) for £15,529.80.

-Agreed to approve as expected payments:

- 10. £ 216.00 MDC Exports Ltd. Dog bags.
- 11. £ 36.00 Culmstock Village Hall. Room hire, June & July.
- 12. £ 168.66 Computerlink (Leicester) Ltd. Printer cartridges.

- 102.3** Hiscox Insurance Co Ltd., via A J Gallagher: Culmstock Parish Council Insurance Renewal - Year 2 of the long term agreement: Details of the premium due by 01/09 are awaited and payment will be made under delegation. The Clerk has completed and returned a standard questionnaire.
- 102.4** The dates for the notification of public rights and notification of unaudited Annual Governance Accountability Return were noted as 27/06/25 to 07/08/25; documents displayed as required.
- 102.5** Any other financial matters: (i) The Clerk reported that invoices with reference to payments 10, 11 and 12 had been received since the agenda had been produced and it was agreed to approve as expected payments. (ii) Following the last meeting the Clerk has spoken to Uffculme Allotment Society (ref minute 89.4) and the subsidy payment for allotments will be raised at the next meeting. (iii) Income & Expenditure - the Clerk has completed the first quarter.
- 103. Parish Bins:** Report on recent site meeting regarding possible relocation of The Cleeve bin and to agree on new location and instruct contractor as required: Cllr. Dr Bass reported following details discussed at the last meeting (minute ref 87.8 June 2025). It was agreed to relocate the bin closer to the war memorial at the cost of the Parish Council - the Clerk will contact the Lengths man (previously instructed by the Parish Council) and arrange for Cllr. Mrs Zebedee to meet the Lengths man on site. A photograph of the location is required to be sent to MDDC for approval to ensure that operatives can access the bin easily.
- 104. Hillmoor Common:** (i) Cllr. Dr Bass had just arranged for the Clerk to circulate a Management Plan which was prepared 30 years ago which illustrates how to maintain the area. Cllr. Dr Bass reported that the Plan is still very relevant and encouraged councillors to study the document for further discussion at a future meeting. (ii) The maintenance contractor will be asked to cut the orchard over the summer months and to take care around the fruit trees. No felling of trees will take place at the moment.
- 105. Scheme of Delegation:** The scheme of delegation will be in place throughout the summer recess - it will cover standard planning applications and routine expenditure.
- 106. Correspondence & Any Consultations:**
Correspondence: Communication received from a parishioner regarding broadband speeds and connectivity problems in the Hillmoor area of the Parish: The Clerk reported on communication sent to the Chairman regarding no speed/low fluctuating speed in the area and the possibility of writing to Openreach. DCC Cllr. Clist offered to assist and the parishioner will be asked to make contact direct with Cllr. Clist.
Consultations: Have your say on the future of Devon's Councils - <https://letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation>. Noted - this will be publicised in the Culmstock News magazine and online; residents are encouraged to respond.
- 107. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates:** For Info: Cllr. Sarah Leppard has organised a group to help eradicate some of the Himalayan Balsam. Future agenda items: Uffculme allotments. Quote for cemetery hedge. Hillmoor Common Management Plan. Next meeting - 10/09/25.