

## CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs. Mrs Jude Zebedee (Acting Chairman), Charlie Kay, Sarah Leppard, Tim Platel, Dr Catherine Bass, James Bartlett, MDDC Natasha Bradshaw and the Clerk. One member of the public was present for the democratic period. Due to apologies received from the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman took the meeting.

- 123. Democratic Period:** A parishioner was present to give details of his pending application to DCC to redirect a public footpath across part of his land which is a drive and is currently being used by some incorrectly - a sign has been erected informing people to use the correct route as the drive is not a public or a permissive path. The parishioner emphasized the importance of the public abiding by this due to insurance implications. Details will be publicised in the next issue of The Culmstock News magazine. It was reported that the application had been with DCC for several months and was a lengthy process.
- 124. Apologies:** Cllr. Miss Lizzie Jones, Mrs Rosemary Balchin and MDDC/DCC Cllr. Simon Clist.
- 125. Declarations of Interest:** None.
- 126.** The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10/09/2025 were approved and duly signed by the Acting Chairman.
- 127. Matters Arising:** See 130 re: vehicle parked outside of the play area.
- 128. Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**
- 128.1** Applications to be considered:
- 25/01302/FULL Retention of outbuilding for domestic storage and change of use of land to domestic garden and proposed partial change of use of outbuilding to ancillary annexe. Oak View, Hunters Hill, Culmstock. EX15 3HH. No objections but the proximity of the National Landscape should be taken into consideration. The application should enhance and conserve the landscape and consideration should also be given to light pollution.
  - 25/01360/CAT Notification of intention to reduce the crown of 1 Sycamore tree by 1.5-2m within the Conservation Area. Land at NGR 310170 113440 Thornbank Farm, Culmstock. No objections.
- For information only:
- 25/01296/PNAG Prior Approval for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Land at NGR 310560 114950 Dalwood Farm, Culmstock. MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw will query with the Planning Officer whether comments can be submitted in respect of PNAG applications - a discussion took place regarding the impact of the previous application on the landscape, in particular light pollution being in close proximity to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Culmstock Beacon hut. If comments may be submitted then a suggestion for low level lighting will be considered.
- 128.2** Results from Mid Devon District Council:
- 25/00636/FULL Change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden and erection of garage and workshop building for ancillary use. Land at NGR 309504 114341 Prescott Barn Uffculme. Approved.
- 128.3** Any other Planning Matters: A presentation on Neighbourhood Planning will be arranged to take place immediately before the next meeting. Cllrs. Platel, Dr Bass and the Clerk will attend a workshop in Exeter on 22/10/25 - to be hosted by Devon Communities Together.
- 129. Reports.**
- 129.1** The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.
- 129.2** The Clerk: (i) The Clerk attended two workshops at the Devon Association of Local Councils conference - Parish Online gave details of asset mapping and gov.uk domains.
- 129.3** P3/Footpaths and/or Access. A report had been received from the P3 Co-ordinator:
- FP 1A-4 mesh panel replaced on boardwalk, and cleaned. Low hanging/fallen tree cut across path to beacon. FP1-2 fallen branches cleared. FP21-removed old broken stile and replace with self-closing gate and new fence. FP11-site visit to see progress on the lane clearance and surface improvements. FP4 - The Clerk will remind the P3 DCC Warden that sign needs replacing. There is a fallen tree near Hillmoor; Clerk to speak to the maintenance contractor or PROW team.
- 129.4** Highways. (i) The hall has been booked for the morning of 20/11 for a meeting with the NHO to discuss various issues. DCC Cllr. Clist will endeavour to attend. The lengthsman will shortly undertake works in The Strand area as agreed.

*Reports continued:*

- 129.5** Blackdown Hills Parish Network: The steering group met recently online. The Design Guide for Houses published in 2012 is due to be revised. A letter to be sent to the Prime Minister and other Cabinet members, on behalf of the National Landscape Association and various other bodies (including the BHPN) and prominent individuals, had been circulated to all Parish and Town Councils and Meetings via the BHPN following concerns that the government was considering weakening planning protection in National Landscapes. District and county councillors and MPs had been urged to raise the objection, hopefully along with their own.
- 129.6** Culmstock Cemetery: The meeting room may be required for administrative purposes on occasion whilst the Clerk and Parish Warden endeavour to update the records. The Clerk will remind the maintenance contractor about the maintenance of the hedge beside the adjoining property.
- 129.7** Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors: (i) MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw - following a presentation to Cabinet, all members will shortly receive a presentation on Local Government Re-organisation (LGR). The submission deadline for proposals to be submitted from the council is 28/11/25. Recycling - pots and pans can now be collected through the kerbside recycling service. There is to be a trial of soft plastics, nappies and coffee pods next year. There is funding available for farmers, landowners and communities in the Blackdown Hills via the Access for All Fund and the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
- 129.7.1** Report on MDDC State of the District Debate: Cllr. Kay reported on the session as attended together with Cllr. Dr Bass and the Clerk - an update had been given regarding LGR with information from various officers and the Devon Association of Local Councils together with experiences from local councils in Somerset. Cllr. Kay reported that consultation on LGR is expected around Easter 2026. The Clerk will circulate a link to a map of council assets as referred to by MDDC; the document is work in progress and not all assets may be shown - it is hoped that a list may be available. Discussion at the debate included the work that town and parish councils undertake and consideration will be given on how to promote this locally such as placing stickers/signs on assets provided and maintained by the council. LGR is a long process and whilst it is expected to bring simplification it was felt that it is inevitable that it will mean significantly more cost and work for local councils.
- 129.7.2** Culmstock Primary School and 150 year celebration - 2026: Cllr. Sarah Leppard reported firstly that there are now four classes in the village school. There is to be a Christmas fundraiser in the village hall. The clothes bank is a great way of recycling and earns £240pa; a second bank was questioned. Discussions are taking place regarding celebrations such as "Culm Fest" to mark the 150 year celebration next summer
- 130. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion:** The supplier of the toilet will return to address the sliding door. The Clerk will meet with the general maintenance contractor shortly. The annual inspection is due. It was noted that a vehicle had been parked on Parish Council land outside of the play area for a few weeks. MDDC and DVLA have been informed.
- 131. Finance.**
- 131.1** A report was given, the bank balance was noted as at 30/09/25 - £35,495.88 and the finance schedule was signed.  
Credits received: In respect of cemetery fees- £600 on 09/09 and £50 on 19/09. DCC P3 footpath grant, £1950 on 08/09. Direct Debits taken: Nest 09/09 £119.95, Lloyds Bank service charge 16/09 - £4.40.
- 131.2** Payments were resolved:
1. £ 937.56 Clerk - salary & expenses.
  2. £ 191.00 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
  3. £ 24.14 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
  4. £ 932.42 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract.
  5. £ 135.00 Devon Communities Together. Neighbourhood Planning workshop for 3 persons.
  6. £ 992.70 HMRC. Quarterly payment.
- The Clerk reported that this differs from the agenda which lists £985.80.*
- Note: the payment listed as Payment 7 to The Land Registry (due to be confirmed) was deferred to a future meeting, re: Cllr. Platel.
7. £ 72.00 Shiny Happy People Services Ltd. \*Annual Fire Risk Assessment.
- \*The Clerk reported on an invoice received which was approved as an expected payment.*

*Finance continued:*

- 131.3** Cemetery hedge - following receipt of two quotations, it was agreed to accept an estimate from R&R Services (Devon) Ltd., for £2830 to remove and replant the hedge at the entrance in the cemetery. *The contractor will be asked for advice on future maintenance.*
- 131.4** A quotation of £550 was agreed from The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) for a memorial inspection.
- 131.5** External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25: External Auditor's Report and Notification of Conclusion of Audit received: No matters of concern - the relevant information has been publicised as required for 14 days.
- 131.6** Any other financial matters: As 131.2, payment to Shiny Happy People Svs Ltd., approved as an expected payment.
  
- 132. Parish Bins:** MDDC will be asked to position the Cleeve bin appropriately between the lych gate and the telegraph pole.
  
- 133. Hillmoor Common.** As 118.1 details are awaited from MDDC Cllr. Clist regarding contact with Devon Wildlife Trust regarding future management.
  
- 134. Possible Community Orchard:** MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw will endeavour to arrange a meeting with MDDC Officers and Cllr. Mrs Zebedee.
  
- 135. Copper Beech Tree at Culmstock Village Hall:** Cllr. Mrs Zebedee reported following a site meeting with the Arboriculture Officer at MDDC - some remedial works have been recommended which will be actioned following receipt of a survey from MDDC.
  
- 136. Correspondence & Any Consultations:** Various generic emails.
  
- 137. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates:** Next meeting - 12/11/25.