

CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th March 2026 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Mrs Lizzie Jones (Chairman) (part of meeting), Dr Catherine Bass, Sarah Leppard, James Bartlett, Mrs Rosemary Balchin, Charlie Kay, MDDC/DCC Cllr. Simon Clist, MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw (part of meeting) and the Clerk. Two members of the public were present for the Democratic Period. *Cllr. Dr Bass took the meeting up until minute 35 when the Chairman, Cllr. Miss Jones arrived.*

- 27. Democratic Period.** The applicants regarding planning application 26/00238/FULL were present to give details of the application.
- 28. Apologies:** Cllr. Mrs J Zebedee.
- 29. Declarations of Interest:** None.
- 30.** The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11/02/2026 were approved and duly signed by the acting Chairman.
- 31. Matters Arising:** None.
- 32. Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.**
- 32.1** Applications considered:
- 26/00238/FULL Erection of replacement self-build dwelling. Brookfield, Silver Street, Culmstock: No objections - the Parish Council is pleased to see that there are plans to upgrade the property from its current condition.
- 25/01296/PNAG Prior Approval for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Land at NGR 310560 114950 Dalwood Farm, Culmstock: The Parish Council has concerns regarding the increasing size and obtrusiveness of the facilities on site which is within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape [BHNL] and comments will be submitted in connection with the previous application (23/00227/MFUL) which resulted in construction of a large new facility which is clearly visible from the BHNL. Visibility is exacerbated at night by the bright lights which appear to have no downward directional shading and appear to be frequently on permanently with no apparent external infra-red movement sensors to reduce the impact on the neighbourhood - the lights are highly visible in all directions due to the relatively high exposed location of the farm. Permission for 23/00227/MFUL was conditional upon a number of points including planting and an approved lighting scheme - the Parish Council is concerned that these two conditions have not been fulfilled; MDDC will be informed via the Planning Enforcement portal (re: non-compliance with conditions 5 and 6 of the new dairy constructed in 2023 (23/00227/MFUL).
- 25/01296/PNAG seeks to add a further large and higher feed store behind the dairy which if approved will be enclosed inside a newly constructed 1.2m high hedge bank but there is no mention of control of light spill. The Parish Council has no objections but requests the following: (a) Strong conditions regarding well maintained hedge bank and top planting, to be established over at least five years, to screen both buildings. (b) Requirement of amended low energy lights, low light spill and proper control of external lighting for the existing dairy and similar control for the new feed store, to support the important BHNL Dark Skies designation.
- 32.2** Results from Mid Devon District Council: None.
- 32.3** Any other Planning Matters: Cllr. Sarah Leppard will endeavour to attend upcoming planning training offered by MDDC.
- 33.** Proposed Diversion of Public Footpath No.4, Culmstock - notification from DCC of an application to divert part of footpath No.4, Culmstock, on land at Barton Lands Farm, Culmstock. The Order would be made under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 in the interest of the landowner: No concerns.
- 34. Reports.**
- 34.1** The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.
- 34.2** The Clerk: (i) LGR session - an online session proved useful where attendees could raise any queries. (ii) MDDC Register of Assets - the Clerk has spoken with MDDC and awaits details in relation to a few queries; to report at a future meeting. (iii) Assertion 10 online session - an IT policy is to be approved (as 39.2). The Clerk will look into a Gov.uk domain for 2026/27.

- 34.3** P3/Footpaths, access and common land: A report had been received from the P3 Footpath co-ordinator - FP1A-two sections of the boardwalk & two single boards and sections of mesh replaced. FP1a and beacon area-litter collected from the picnic area. FP12-extra post to reinforce kissing gate fencing on end gate (new posts required on first gate from the beach) installed. FP11-clearing flood debris from gate & fence in Hunkin/Millennium Wood. No cycling signs on new gate. Measuring for replacement steps over hedge between gates. FP12-flood debris moved from path.
- 34.4** Highways: Various concerns will be raised with the NHO when a meeting takes place with the lengthsman later on in the summer - including the Access Protection Marker/white lines in the church area and the possibility of a 20mph limit. Details of two incidents have been sent to the NHO - damage to a property by a heavy vehicle and speed of a vehicle travelling up Town Hill recently. Notification of upcoming road closures will be publicised. *MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw arrived.*
- 34.5** Blackdown Hills Parish Network: None
- 34.6** Culmstock Cemetery. (i) Headstone inspection - an application will be made to The Diocese.
- 34.7** Culmstock Primary School, 150 year celebration - 2026: Cllr. Sarah Leppard reported that a date of 11/07 had been agreed for the celebration to take place.
- 34.8** Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors. Cllr. Dr Bass will attend the upcoming Connecting the Culm annual Forum. DCC - DCC Cllr. Clist reported that a balanced budget has been agreed. Frontline services are protected. 25,000 responses were made to the library consultation. The amount available via the Locality Budget for 2026/27 is £10,000. MDDC - MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw reported: Results from the resident's survey are promising. MDDC ranks in the top 6% in the country in respect of waste and recycling. NPPF Policy - there are significant changes occurring affecting local government and the planning system. MDDC is keen to have a green buffer policy around the Grand Western Canal. There is a new EV charger in Tiverton Pannier Market. A reminder of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant that is available via the BHNL.
- 35. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.** *Cllr. Miss Jones arrived and took the meeting from here.*
A new padlock is required for the store cupboard as the one put in place has gone missing.
- 36. Finance.**
- 36.1** A report was given and the balance was noted as at 27/02/26 as £48,354.24.
Direct Debits taken: Pennon Water Services 09/02 - £20.10, Lloyds Bank service charge 17/02 - £4.25, Nest 02/02 - £125.10. Credits received: HMRC VAT 09/02 - £7150.11 (23/24 and 24/25).
- 36.2** Payments were resolved:
1. £ 24.14 SMA Services. Payroll provider.
 2. £ 193.85 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
The Clerk reported a typing error on the agenda for payment 2 which was listed as £194.05.
 3. £ 985.74 Clerk - salary & expenses.
 4. £ 932.42 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract.
 5. £ 219.46 MDC Exports Ltd. Bags for dog bag dispensers.
 6. £ 445.80 Royal Mail. PO Box renewal invoice.
The Clerk reported a typing error on the agenda for payment 6 which was listed as £35.00.
 7. £ 220.50 Culmstock Village Hall. Hall Hire and cleaning of Thunderbox.
 8. £ 343.00 M Delamain. Maintenance works at the play area and pavilion.
It was agreed to approve payments 9 & 10 as expected payments in respect of P3/footpath work.
 9. £ 76.78 M Barrow. P3 expenses - P3 co-ordinator.
 10. £ 113.34 R Lock. P3 expenses - Volunteer footpath warden.
- 36.3** Annual Review of Fixed Asset Register - agreed.
- 36.4** Request for financial help with litter picking equipment from village litter picking team leader - agreed; the Clerk will look into costs and report back, cost expected to be in the region of £300-£400.
- 36.5** Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd., 3.65% uplift in monthly cutting costs from 01/04/26 - agreed.
- 36.6** Any other financial matters: None.

37. Correspondence & Any Consultations:

Consultations:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR) consultation - Cllr. Dr Bass will respond to the consultation; the Parish Council has concerns and does not consider that there is any benefit to the proposal.

Correspondence:

Communication received from a parishioner regarding power outages in Culmstock - details were noted of ongoing power outages as reported in the communication, which the Parish Council understand last a short time. The Parish Council is sympathetic but it was agreed that those concerned should raise the matter with National Grid. Details have been forwarded to DCC Cllr. Clist as Devon County Councillor to see if DCC may be able to assist.

- 38. Provision of allotments:** Options regarding the possibility of provision of allotments was discussed. Currently plots are available and used by six parishioners in Uffculme via the Uffculme Allotment Society; it is not known if there is further interest. The matter will be discussed again at a future meeting. It was considered that there may be the option for some to share gardens and this may be an idea for a future issue of The Culmstock News.

39. Review of various Policies.

- 39.1** The following to be reviewed or adopted where appropriate: The Clerk has reviewed and updated the following - Accessibility Statement, Privacy Policy, Retention Policy, Subject Access Request Form and How to Access your Records, Internal control, Risk Management Policy, Publication Scheme. Standing Orders & Financial Regulations.

- 39.2** Adoption of an IT Policy - circulated and agreed.

- 40. Items for information, future agenda items, and future meeting dates.** Next meeting - 08/04/26.