

CULMSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13/05/2026 at 7pm in Culmstock Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Mrs Lizzie Jones (Chairman), Dr Catherine Bass, Mrs Jude Zebedee, Tim Platel, Charlie Kay, Sarah Leppard, the Clerk, MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw and one member of the public.

53. Democratic Period. One of the applicants in respect of planning application 26/00354/FULL was present regarding photographs submitted in respect of the application; the applicant was advised to make contact with MDDC direct with any queries.

54. Election of Officers.

54.1 Chairman: Cllr. Miss Jones was proposed by Cllr. Mrs Zebedee and seconded by Sarah Leppard.

There being no other nominations, Cllr. Miss Jones accepted the Office and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

54.2 Vice Chairman: Cllr. Mrs Zebedee was proposed by Cllr. Dr Bass and seconded by Cllr. Sarah Leppard. Cllr. Mrs Zebedee accepted the Office and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

55. Apologies: Cllrs. Mrs Rosemary Balchin.

56. Declarations of Interest: None.

57. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th April 2026 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

58. Appointment of representatives to advisory/working groups.

58.1 Planning: Cllrs. Mrs Zebedee, Dr Bass, Mrs Balchin and Miss Jones.

58.2 P3/Parish Paths: Mr M Barrow as P3 co-ordinator & assistance from the Volunteer Footpath Warden.

58.3 Highways: Cllrs. Dr Bass and Mrs Balchin.

58.4 Playing Field: Cllrs. Miss Jones, Sarah Leppard, Mrs Balchin and the Parish Warden (as correspondent).

58.5 Cemetery: Cllrs. Miss Jones, Mrs Zebedee, the Clerk and the Parish Warden (as correspondent).

58.6 Access, Common Land & Beacon: Cllrs. Miss Jones, Platel, Bartlett and Dr Bass.

58.7 Website: The Clerk.

58.8 Finance: The full council is responsible for the finance. A sub group was agreed of Cllrs. Miss Jones, Dr Bass, Mrs Balchin and the Clerk; any other councillor may attend any informal meetings. Signatories on the Lloyds bank account to be Cllrs. Miss Jones, Mrs Balchin, Mrs Zebedee, Sarah Leppard and the Clerk. The Clerk to be the Responsible Finance Officer.

58.9 Personnel: Cllr. Miss Jones.

58.10 Flooding & Sewerage: Cllr. Dr Bass.

58.11 Emergency: Cllrs. Dr Bass, Kay & Sarah Leppard. .

59. Appointment of Representatives to:

59.1 Culmstock Village Hall: Cllrs. Dr Bass, Miss Jones and Mrs Zebedee.

59.2 Blackdown Hills Parish Network: Cllr. Dr Bass as correspondent.

59.3 Parish Magazine: Cllrs. Mrs Zebedee and Dr Bass as correspondents.

59.4 Fuel Allotment Society: Cllr. Miss Jones and Mr M Barrow (as correspondent).

59.5 Governing Body of the Primary School: Cllr. Sarah Leppard.

59.6 Culmstock Beacon of Lights: Cllr. Miss Jones.

60. Planning and Planning Correspondence/Information.

60.1 Applications considered: None received.

60.2 Results from Mid Devon District Council.

-Appeal decision for 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. Appeal Dismissed.

-25/01648/FULL Removal of Condition 1 of Planning Permission 22/02186/FULL (Change of use of land for siting of temporary workers mobile home and septic tank and retention of change of use of land from agriculture to commercial equestrian use) relating to temporary time limit of the dwelling and variation of Condition 2 to allow substitute plans. Beacon View Farm, Nicholashayne. TA21 9QY. Permitted with conditions to discharge.

Planning continued:

-26/00238/FULL Erection of replacement self-build dwelling. Brookfield, Silver Street, Culmstock.

Permitted with conditions to discharge.

25/01296/PNAG Prior Approval for the erection of an agricultural storage building. Land at NGR 310560 114950 Dalwood Farm, Culmstock. Development acceptance.

60.3 Devon Communities Together joint Housing Needs Survey - update on dates and publicity:

The survey will go live w/c 08/06 and end on 21/07/26. Information will be publicised.

60.4 Any other Planning Matters: Cllr. Sarah Leppard gave a brief report on recent training in respect of planning as provided by MDDC; there are a lot of changes ahead.

61. Reports.

61.1 The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.

61.2 The Clerk: (i) An Expression of Interest form has been submitted to MDDC regarding the village green and the possible transfer of local community assets ahead of LGR. (ii) MDDC has launched a refreshed Visit Mid Devon website which is designed to make it easier for residents and visitors to discover places to visit, with details of events, and local businesses across the district. Parish and Town Councils are invited to have a dedicated page – details have been circulated and information can be updated.

61.3 P3/Footpaths and/or Access: (i) A report has been received from the P3 Footpath Co-ordinator - FP12: Repairs following damage (due to decay and force) to the kissing gates and fencing on this fenced section of the footpath beside the rail track. BW34: Minor repairs have taken place to the main gate at Blackdown Gate leading to the Beacon. FP20: Strimmed. FP12: Hunkin Wood-a start has been made on cleaning the footboards on two of the bridges. FP's 1,6,8 & 10 - some strimming has taken place. FP12: Recently the grass on the footpath has been cut after the latest piece of damaged wood was replaced. (ii) The Clerk will obtain a quotation for additional "dogs on leads" signs on the beacon to help remind walkers to keep dogs on leads between 1st April and 31st July due to ground nesting birds. A reminder will be placed in the Parish magazine.

61.4 Highways: It is hoped a meeting will be held with the NHO next month.

61.5 Blackdown Hills Parish Network: The AGM will be held in The Otter Room at The Sidmouth Arms in Uppottery on 22/07/26.

61.6 Hillmoor Common: Following an enquiry from a member of the public regarding an area for parking it was confirmed that the area queried was within private ownership and the matter should be discussed with the owner.

61.7 Culmstock Cemetery: The contract for the brown bin has been renewed by Cllr. Mrs Zebedee.

61.8 Culmstock Primary School, 150 year celebration - 2026: Cllr. Sarah Leppard: None.

61.9 Any other reports including reports from DCC & MDDC Councillors.

MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw reported: A decision is expected on LGR in mid-June or July.

The scoping consultation in respect of the Local Plan is due to start shortly.

Recycling - there is to be a trial of soft plastics.

Progress on planning guidance for anaerobic digesters.

Green Enterprise Grants programme - a competitive capital grant scheme designed to help cut carbon emissions and accelerate the district's progress toward a net-zero future.

Creative Communities Grant Scheme (Round 1) - Round 1 is open, community groups, businesses and organisations can apply for new projects with funding available for up to £5,000 for partnership projects and up to £1,000 for individual applicants.

The Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) and heating oil support - Devon will receive £1.3 million in additional support as global conflict continues to drive up heating oil costs.

Cullompton - Planning permission and funding have been secured, and construction works are now due to start on Cullompton's Relief Road with completion anticipated in March 2028.

Funding is in place to support the delivery of new railway stations at Cullompton and Wellington, helping to improve connectivity and unlock growth.

Recognising the Rights of Rivers - Council debated a significant environmental motion seeking to recognise the ecological, social and cultural importance of Mid Devon's rivers, including the Exe, Culm, Creedy, Lowman, Yeo, and the upper reaches of the Dart and Taw; to build on previous council commitments to river and marine protection; to align Mid Devon with DCC's decision of December 2025 recognising the rights of rivers.

Reports continued:

The motion acknowledged ongoing pressures from pollution, abstraction and climate change - process.

MDDC Cllr. Natasha Bradshaw gave details of a new community initiative, "Culm River Against Pollution" ('CRAP') which is being proposed. The aim - to bring local people together to protect and improve the river. This could include monitoring water quality, reporting pollution, sharing information and speaking up for the river when problems arise. Details will be publicised in the Culmstock News and information given at the Annual Parish Meeting.

62. Culmstock Play Area and Pavilion.

62.1 Thunderbox - arrangements for cleaning: A quotation from Bubbles Exterior Cleaning Services of £23 per clean was agreed for cleaning at the start of each week. The Parish Warden will perform a check and half hour light touch clean at the end of each week; salary will be amended accordingly.

62.2 Any other matters: (i) As a result of dogs being seen in the play area MDDC will be carrying out extra patrols - a reminder that dogs are not permitted inside children's play parks covered by a Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) will be publicised in the Culmstock News. (ii) Due to being beyond repair, one of the large wooden tables was removed recently and the second table will have to be removed later in the summer. Alternatives will be considered at a later date.

63. Finance.

63.1 A report was given, the finance schedule was signed. The bank balance was noted as at 30/04/26 as £74,576.84. Credits rec'd: MDDC precept first instalment 15/04 - £33,105.49. Direct Debits: Nest 07/04 - £125.10. Lloyds Bank service charge 20/04 - £4.75. Open Spaces Society subs 20/04 - £45.

63.2 Payments were resolved:

1. £ 133.50 SMA Services. Payroll provider - includes pension re-declaration.
2. £ 955.84 Clerk - salary & expenses.
3. £ 194.05 Parish warden - salary & expenses.
4. £ 966.47 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd. Grounds Maintenance Contract.
5. £ 126.00 Culmstock Village Hall. Room hire and compost toilet cleaning for March.
6. £ 45.00 Geosphere Ltd. Parish Online-annual mapping renewal subscription.
Note - duplicated as payment 10 on the agenda in error.
7. £ 737.44 Vision ICT. Website hosting & support. Email accounts & annual support package.
8. £ 388.47 Helping Hand Ltd. Litter picking equipment.
Note typing error on the agenda, listed as £388.54.
9. £ 110.00 Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management. Annual subscription renewal.
10. £ 46.00 Bubbles Exterior Cleaning. Compost toilet cleaning for the end of April.

63.3 Any other financial matters: The Clerk will make enquiries with Lloyds Bank regarding the Notice account.

64. Parish Council Website - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Vision ICT has confirmed that the website does not meet the guidelines; an estimate will be provided for a review of the site. This process will demonstrate that the council is taking reasonable informed action in order to meet the regulations.

65. Annual Parish Meeting - update on format and arrangements. Cllr. Mrs Zebedee will purchase refreshments as in previous years at a cost of approximately £150-£200. Various organisations have confirmed attendance and will have a table to display information. A representative from Devon Communities Together will give a short presentation on Neighbourhood Planning - details have been publicised in the Culmstock News and within the Parish by means of posters and a WhatsApp group as the Parish Council agrees that it is important to engage with the Parish before making a decision on whether or not to proceed.

66. Correspondence & Any Consultations. CPRE Centenary issue. Clerks and Councils Direct.

67. Items for information, future agenda items & future meeting dates. Next meeting: 10/06/25.