

**WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 20 JANUARY 2025, 7pm**

Present: Cllr Alan McArthur
Cllr Denise Dearden
Cllr Jo Yarwood
Cllr Todd Olive
Cllr Richard Lawrence

Also present: Amy Tregellas (Parish Clerk)

There were two members of the public present.

109. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies. Cllr Olive left the meeting at 8.05pm.

110. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

111. Public Participation

Mr Stuart Bell spoke to make the council aware of the Rapid Relief Team, which was established by the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (PBCC) in 2013. The Rapid Relief Team offers quality catering assistance and tangible support to charities, government and emergency services confronting some of humankind's greatest challenges. Mr Bell left a leaflet and contact details.

112. Minutes of the previous meeting of Whimple Parish Council

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Whimple Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 16 December 2024.

(proposed by Cllr McArthur; seconded by Cllr Dearden)

113. District and County Councillor reports:

East Devon District Councillor report

Cllr Olive provided updates on 3 items:

1. National Planning Policy Framework – The changes being introduced by the Government mean that EDDC have had to make some minor changes to the Regulation 19 version of the emerging Local Plan. Cllr Olive advised that the Plan would go back to Committee in February 2025 for approval. He also advised that getting the Plan approved under the Governments transitional arrangements would mean avoiding having to build an additional 200 homes per annum. The Government are also making changes to the land supply, changing it from 5 years to 6 years.
2. Local Government Finance – Cllr Olive advised that EDDC were revising their 2025/26 budget before it is approved next month. This is because of the Government taking away approximately £5m of business rates and taking away the Rural Services Grant of about £600k. Cllr Olive also advised that the Government are planning to re-base Business Rates from 2026/27.
3. Local Government Reorganisation. Cllr Olive confirmed that EDDC had considered the Government's White Paper on Local Government Reorganisation. Cllr Olive confirmed that

EDDC's preferred option for Unitaries in Devon would be two larger Unitary Councils focused around the cities of Plymouth and Exeter.

Devon County Councillor Report

Cllr Iain Chubb was in attendance and had provided a report, which had been circulated to councillors. He provided the following updates:

1. Local Government Reorganisation. DCC of similar view to EDDC. DCC have decided to ask the Government to postpone the County Council elections which were due to take place in May 2025, so that focus can be on the reorganisation, whatever that looks like.
2. Finance – Cllr Chubb confirmed that the Rural Services Grant of £10m for DCC has been pulled at the last minute. At the moment DCC are doing budget scrutiny. National Insurance Contributions uplift is costing DCC an additional £17.5m as well.
3. Changes for disposal of unholstered furniture – new environmental requirements mean that upholstered furniture can now only be disposed of at the Exmouth Household Waste Recycling Centre. This is due to Persistent Organic Pollutants and other hazardous chemicals in the textiles and foam that are often fire retardants.
4. Cllr Chubb confirmed that DCC had £83m funding for roads in the next year.

114. Environment & Community

i) Community Speed Watch initiative

The Clerk confirmed that a response had been received from the Speed Watch Team at Devon and Cornwall Police.

- The Police have now set up the Whimble Community Speed Watch Group online.
- The Council now needs to confirm who it intends to be the coordinator and to register them on the Community Speed Watch Online, and for them to complete the online training.
- Once completed the coordinator will then be given access to add the volunteers to the online group.
- The Police have provided guides for registering and setting up the Group
- The Police also asked the Council to identify any areas of concern in the community that they are looking to monitor.
- Once all of these steps have been completed, the Community Speed Watch Team will arrange a training date for all volunteers.

It was decided that Cllr Lawrence would be the coordinator and that the Clerk would forward him the information provided by the Police.

Councillors agreed that the areas of concern that they wished to focus on were Church Lane and School Hill.

ii) To receive an update on S106 Town Lane play equipment

The Clerk confirmed that she was liaising with play equipment suppliers to obtain quotes and that she expected to bring a report to the February meeting of the Council.

iii) Dince Hill Footpath

The Clerk confirmed that there had been no response from Mrs Hansford's daughter.

Cllr Yarwood updated that there had been an issue with some fencing along the footpath that had come apart. Glenn Starkey repaired the fencing. The Council wished to record their thanks to Mr Starkey, both in the minutes and Whimble News.

iv) Flooding

The Clerk confirmed that she is liaising with the current grounds maintenance operative and others to obtain quotes for the cutting back and removal of the weeds in the area of the Culvert

to the bridge in The Square. She has now taken photographs to send to the grounds maintenance operatives. It is anticipated that a report will be brought to the February Council meeting.

v) The Lomas Seat

The Clerk confirmed that she had been looking for prices for the replacement of the Lomas Seat with a new wooden bench, as well as trying to obtain three quotes for the repair of the existing Lomas Seat.

In terms of the costs of a new bench, the following prices were obtained from Memorial Benches UK:

Prices ranged from £500 to £1000

Currently Teak benches are 4FT £599, 5FT £599 (sale) and 6FT £999.

A 4FT Oak bench is £500.

Engraving on a bench costs £59 for one line and £69 for two lines.

The Clerk confirmed that she was still trying to get additional quotes for the repair of the existing Lomas Seat. It is anticipated that a report will come back to the Council in February.

Councillors discussed whether, if the option is to go with a new bench, it could be situated on the other side of the road. This would need to be discussed with the landowner.

vi) Goal mouth/posts for the Parish Field

The Clerk confirmed that she had found quotes for a goal mouth/posts for the Parish Field.

Mark Harrod have socketed goals 24 by 8FT quick release goals – Aluminium package of £1382.50 excluding VAT or £1659.00 including VAT. The package includes two goal frames, stanchions, nets and sockets.

It's a Goal have anti vandal single goal mouths with prices – 24 x 8FT £867, 24 x 7FT £847 and 16 x 7FT £804. The anti theft design is due to the uprights require a 90 degree twist and lock in the base of the sockets and the crossbar is then locked into the top of the uprights. Once in place unless you have the key to the goalpost lock the goals cannot be lifted out.

In both cases, fitting the goal mouth/ post would be in addition to these costs. The Clerk confirmed that she had been in touch with Mr Bloomfield to see if he would be interested in fitting the goal mouth/posts.

Discussion took place around:

- Keeping Ms Silk from WACY informed as to progress
- Where the goal mouth/posts would be located in the Parish Field
- If located on the flattest part of the Parish Field at the top, discussions would need to take place with the Football Club
- Whether WACY and the Football Club could liaise to deliver the goal mouth/posts without the Council acting as an intermediary

The Council asked Cllr Lawrence to liaise with the Football Club to see if they are still keen to progress a goal mouth/posts at the top of the Parish Field.

vii) Village Maintenance

Cllr Lawrence raised the fact that a number of villagers had raised village maintenance with him.

Discussion took place around:

- Whether it would be sensible to carry out a survey of the village to pick up any areas where improvements are needed
- Any areas requiring improvement would need to be fully costed
- The need to make it clear to members of the public that the council might not be able to carry out all issues raised by Villagers, due to budget constraints and also land ownership issues, i.e. not having the legal remit to carry out the works
- What is included in the Grounds Maintenance work programme
- That Cllr Lawrence and the Clerk work together to draw up a village maintenance schedule
- Whether the Gardening Society might be interested in working with the Council to improve the appearance of the Village
- The need to have a list of contractors in the local area that would be interested in carrying out works for the Council.

Cllr Lawrence advised that he had managed to obtain £500 funding from Cllr Iain Chubb's Locality Fund for the clearing of the riverbank and the tidying of the Village Square.

The Council asked that Cllr Lawrence work with the Clerk to draw up a Village Maintenance Schedule and bring it back to a future meeting for discussion.

Cllr Olive left the meeting during this item of business at 8.05pm.

viii) Any other arising environment and community issues

Damage to the trim trail in the Parish Field

The Clerk confirmed that she had been in touch with Mr Bloomfield to obtain a quote for repairing the trim trail in the Parish Field. To date, no response had been received. Councillors decided to liaise with local contractors to see if any of them would be able to assist with replacing the wooden post.

Water meter

South West Water (SWW) have been in touch regarding repairing the meter near the Parish Field. Cllr McArthur agreed to meet the SWW operative on site and asked the Clerk to send him across the information in order to call and arrange an appointment.

Allotments – Grove Road

Cllr Yarwood reported that the untidy state of the allotments had been reported to her. The report was that a number of the plots were unlet or unattended. As well as this there is debris, rubbish and plastic waste around the communal areas of the allotments. It was agreed that Cllr Yarwood and the Clerk visit both allotment sites to carry out an inspection before the end January 2025.

The Clerk updated that, despite chasing, no reply had been received from Savills regarding the proposed rent review increase being requested by Exeter Diocese. Councillors asked the Clerk to chase Savills again and not to pay the invoice until this matter has been resolved.

115. Neighbourhood Plan

Councillors considered the briefing paper on the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan: Site Selection.

The report outlined the following:

- At the Council meeting on 16 December 2024, the Council resolved to pursue making an allocation/s for affordable housing in the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan, and that Cllr Olive complete funding applications on behalf of the Council.
- The briefing paper asks councillors to consider which site/s in and around the village should be taken forward for further assessment and discussion with a view to potentially making an allocation.
- For absolute clarity, this does **not** constitute making a formal decision to allocate land for affordable housing development at this stage; this report asks councillors to come to a reasoned conclusion about which sites have the best opportunities and characteristics in planning terms, and most closely align with the Parish Council's long-term vision for Whimble.
- The following background and evidence documents had been considered when drafting the briefing paper:
 - 2018-19 Public Consultation 1: survey findings and map of potential development areas
 - 2022 Public Consultation 2: Results graph
 - 2024 Whimble Housing Needs Survey
 - 2024 Whimble Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment Report (produced by consultants AECOM, commissioned by Whimble Parish Council)
- Consideration had also been given to the following documents produced by East Devon District Council (EDDC):
 - EDDC 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation responses on Whimble development sites
 - EDDC 2022 Regulation 18 site selection report – Whimble site evaluations
 - EDDC 2024 Regulation 19 Whimble site selection report
- In terms of the sites, EDDC has subsequently made allocations for housing development at sites Whim_08 and Whim_11 in the draft Regulation 19 East Devon Local Plan, and therefore these sites cannot be allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan for developments of 100% affordable housing.
- The sites considered are listed below. Amber indicates that the site is less sustainable or may be appropriate for development if certain issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated. Red indicates that the site is not appropriate for allocation.

Site reference	Site address/location	Suitability for allocation
Whim_03	Land to the south of Grove Road	Potentially suitable
Whim_04	Hits Farmhouse, Lilypond Lane	Unsuitable
Whim_07	Land south of Broadclyst Road	Potentially suitable
Whim_09	Lane south of Junction of Church Road and Woodhayes Lane	Unsuitable
Whim_10	Land adjoining Woodhayes Country House, Woodhayes Lane	Unsuitable
Whim_12	Land to the west of Lilypond Lane and south of The Withey	Unsuitable
Whim_13	Land north side of Grove Road	Potentially suitable
Whim_14	Land at Perriton Barton	Unsuitable
Whim_18	Land to the east of Church Road	Potentially suitable
Whim_19	Land to the west of Lilypond Lane	Unsuitable
Whim_20	Land to the north of Plumtree Lane	Potentially suitable

Discussion took place around:

- Whether to either discount or undertake further investigation for each of the above listed sites
- To discount all sites coloured red
- To investigate all sites coloured amber, which totals to five potential sites – noting that this does not mean that all potential sites will be considered appropriate for allocation in the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan
- Whim_18 being the preferred site for allocation, but only if a number of issues can be resolved including the provision of a footpath along the highway.
- Cllr McArthur wants the Council to start having conversations with the landowners for the sites, especially for Whim_18 Land to the east of Church Road.

The Council **RESOLVED** to investigate all 5 of the amber sites – Whim_03, Whim_07, Whim_13, Whim_18 and Whim_20, and to ask Cllr Olive to apply for funding to carry out the investigations.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; Cllr McArthur)

116. Planning

i) To consider Planning Applications

No planning applications had come forward from EDDC for consideration at this meeting.

117. EDDC Consultation on the Tree, Hedge and Woodland Strategy

The Clerk confirmed that she had tried to access the consultation but was unable to access the questions and instead got a message stating 'engagement phase has finished' despite the fact that the closing date is listed as 31 January 2025.

118. Finance

i) Summary receipts and payments for 2024/25 to 31 December 2024

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summary of receipts and payments to 31 December 2024

(Proposed Cllr McArthur; seconded Cllr Dearden)

ii) Unity Bank current account reconciliation as at the end December 2024

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end December 2024

(Proposed Cllr McArthur; seconded Cllr Dearden)

iii) Unity Bank savings account reconciliation as at the end December 2024

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account reconciliation to end December 2024

(Proposed Cllr McArthur; seconded Cllr Dearden)

iv) To approve the scheduled of payments for January 2025 totalling £1012.91, which included payments for:

Clerk salary; January 2025 = £781.53

HMRC PAYE and Employers NIC; January 2025 = £225.38

Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/12/24 to 31/12/24 = £6.00

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments for January 2025.

(proposed Cllr McArthur; seconded Cllr Dearden)

v) Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25 as at end December 2024

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the budget monitoring report as at end December 2024.
(*Proposed by Cllr McArthur; seconded by Cllr Dearden*)

119. Correspondence

The Council considered the following correspondence:

1. Items for the next edition of Whimble News – Items to cover the budget and precept for 2025/26, priority project and an update on the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan.
2. EDDC Email regarding a consultation on the EDDC Draft Housing Strategy

120. Chair's Business

There were no items considered under Chair's Business:

The meeting closed at 8.41pm

The next Planning Meetings will be held on Monday 3 February 2025 at 7pm * *A planning meeting will be cancelled if no new planning applications are received by the date that the agenda is published (the Tuesday before the meeting).* The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 17 February 2025 at 7pm.

Signed by Chair:

17/02/2025