

**WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 21 JULY 2025, 7pm**

Present: Cllr Denise Dearden
Cllr Jo Yarwood
Cllr Todd Olive
Cllr Angela Trimblett
Cllr Lynda Patrick

Also present: Amy Tregellas (Parish Clerk)

There were 3 members of the public present. Two left immediately following public participation.

54. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Johnson.

55. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Olive declared a personal interest regarding agenda item 7 co-option of councillor as the potential co-optees husband employs his sister.

56. Public Participation

Mrs Silk and Mr Griffiths were in attendance and spoke to the Council regarding WACY funds. Mrs Silk confirmed that there is still approximately £2,000 left in the WACY account which they would like to hand over to the Council. The money was raised to provide items for local children in the Parish Field. Mrs Silk confirmed that WACY are happy to hand over the money to the Council on the conditions of:

1. It is used to purchase a goalmouth
2. Any remaining money is used for the upkeep of the BMX grass mounds in the Parish Field

Councillors referred back to the 22 April 2025 where the last update was that an email had been received from Mrs Silk confirming that she was liaising with the Football Club and Whimple Recreation Trust (WRT) regarding locating a goalmouth. She confirmed that a WRT meeting would be taking place in June 2025 where it would be discussed.

Mr Griffiths confirmed that he attended the WRT meeting in June on behalf of the Parish Council and that they were happy for the goalmouth to be located in the Parish Field. Mrs Silk confirmed that WACY specifically wanted the goalmouth to be located in the Parish Field and it needed to be a goalmouth rather than a different piece of play equipment.

Councillors confirmed that the Parish Field is owned by the Council and not the WRT. Councillors explained that the Council is currently working on a project to install new play equipment in the Parish Field and asked the Clerk to liaise with play equipment suppliers to see if a goalmouth plus matting could be located as part of this project. Discussions would need to be had as to the exact location of the goal mouth.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the WACY funding and that it be used to locate a goalmouth in the Parish Field, with any remaining funding being used to maintain the BMX grass mounds.
(*Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood*)

Mrs Silk then spoke regarding the BMX Grass mounds in the Parish Field. She said that this had become overgrown so a local parent had been strimming the grass mounds. She also

advised that some young people had made a track in amongst the trees and that they were not up to no good.

Mrs Silk also raised concerns about more dogs being walked / exercised in the Parish Field. This caused concern regarding dog poo and the potential for dogs off lead to be mixing with children using the play equipment.

Councillors noted these concerns and asked the Clerk to liaise with the play area suppliers to see if it would be financially viable to fence off the play area. However, it was noted by councillors that this would not include the BMX grass mounds or the Pump Track so children may still come into contact with dogs. It was suggested that maybe signage should be located asking members of the public to be mindful of keeping their dogs on lead when near the play equipment. This would be discussed further as part of the Play Area project.

Mr Griffiths then asked about the Town Lane site and what would happen to that.

Councillors confirmed that, following public consultation about where the play equipment should be located, that the decision had been made to clear the Town Lane site and to turn it into a community / mindfulness garden.

Mr Griffiths also advised that he had not seen the agenda for this meeting on the noticeboard in The Square and was unsure if the meeting was going ahead.

The Clerk confirmed that the agendas are all published on the website and placed on the noticeboard. However, this month she had not been able to open the noticeboard as one of the bolts was faulty so it had only been available on the website. The Clerk confirmed that she would be taking some tools in order to be able to remove the bolt and open the noticeboard. It was also agreed that a list of the remaining meeting dates would be included in the next edition (September / October) edition of Whimple News.

Mrs Silk asked whether the Council were looking at introducing an extended 20mph speed limit in the village.

Councillors confirmed that they had been operating, through a volunteers group, a Community Speed Watch Initiative to monitor speeds in the village and that the Police would follow up with individuals if appropriate. However, due to the co-ordinator and a number of volunteers stepping down the group had been paused to enable more volunteers to be recruited.

Councillors referred to Ottery St Mary and their 20mph speed limit and that they paid to have this installed in the village. Councillors asked the Clerk to liaise with the Highways Neighbourhood Officer to find out more.

Mr Terry Hill was unable to attend the meeting but asked that his email be read out during public participation:

'I cannot attend Monday's meeting but would ask that when discussing Item 10 re the Neighbourhood Plan that as other Parish Councils have had their plans submitted and accepted can we not liaise with them to learn from their experiences and find a way for our plan to be completed soon as it has been years in the development? Having said that it may be felt by Council that as Feniton have had a plan for nearly 10 years and their 83 house development has been approved in principle against the Neighbourhood Plan and villages wishes then should we be honest and say that it is no longer considered relevant? Local Plans override Neighbourhood Plans when such decisions are made and pressure from Government dictates decisions.'

Councillors confirmed that a response to Mr Hill would be considered under agenda item 10 and asked the Clerk to send Mr Hill a reply.

Mr Richard Lawrence had asked for a written statement to be read out in full relating to the Shed in the Parish Field. His complete statement is attached to the end of the minutes, along with the Council's response.

57. Minutes of the previous meeting of Whimble Parish Council

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Whimble Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Monday 16 June 2025.

(proposed by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Olive)

Clerk provided the following updates:

- Minute 46 (Grants and Donations Policy) – The revised policy is available on the website and information has been shared on the Council website. Details of the dates and deadlines for Grants has been included in Council update in the next edition of Whimble News
- Minute 48 (IT Policy) – the Clerk has been investigating the prices for replacement of the battery and charger for the Council laptop. Amazon has a number of batteries in the region of £30 and chargers in the region of £15 to £30 for a genuine Dell replacement. As the Clerk confirmed that she didn't wish to replace the battery herself, Cllr Olive confirmed that he would check the type of battery needed and then fit it once ordered. Councillors asked the Clerk to order the items and then claim the money back through expenses.

58. District and County Councillor reports:

East Devon District Council (EDDC) Councillor report

Cllr Olive gave a verbal update to the meeting:

- There is not much to update on at the moment as some decisions have been made in confidential session.
- The EDDC Strategic Planning Committee took place on 8 July 2025, which considered the feedback report following the Regulation 19 consultation. Due to the large number of objections from local people, sites Whim_08 and Whim_11 are to be included in a review by Planning Officers which will be considered at the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 2 September 2025. Cllr Olive confirmed that whilst a number of sites are included in the review, the chances of any sites being removed from the EDDC Local Plan are slim. Cllr Olive has provided an update in her article in the next edition of Whimble News.
- EDDC are consulting the public on Local Government Reorganisation in Devon. The Council are asking for input in shaping how local services are delivered in the future and this will be considered in the final report going to the Secretary of State in November 2025. The closing date for the consultation is 11 August 2025.
- EDDC are also consulting on the new community set out in the EDDC Emerging Local Plan. The consultation is asking for the public to vote on a name for the new settlement. There are four names to choose from which are Newton Clyst, Marcombe, Willowcrest and Clysthope. The deadline is 26 August 2025.

Devon County Council (DCC) Councillor Report

Councillor Connor was not in attendance and had not sent a report.

The Clerk updated councillors that following the last meeting, Cllr Connor had emailed across the name and contact details for the Highways Neighbourhood Area and the Clerk has emailed them regarding the Chapter 8 training. The Neighbourhood Highways Officer has sent across the details to register to be a warden and undertake the Chapter 8 training. This is to be sent to all councillors for them to register if they so wish.

59. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon

The Clerk confirmed that the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) Steering Group met on 11 June. Two webinars relating to LGR should be being made available before mid-July. Work is also taking place on a presentation setting out “what town and parish councils can do now” and learning from other areas that have been through LGR already. DALC is also contacting Devon County Council (DCC) to start getting information about asset transfer to T&P Councils.

Councillors discussed the assets that might be transferred to the Parish Council as a result of LGR, and the possibility that the Slewton Crescent Play Area might be on the list. This is due to be refurbished before the end of the year. The Council to think about this more when more is know about what LGR in Devon will look like.

As well as the EDDC consultation mentioned in Cllr Olive’s update, councillors also advised that DCC are visiting various locations in the County to seek the publics views. Whilst they won’t specifically be visiting Whimble they will be visiting other locations between July and September and a list can be found on the Devon County Council website.

60. Co-option of Councillor(s)

Councillors considered an application for co-option to Whimble Parish Council from Mrs Becky Venton. The Clerk confirmed that Mrs Venton was qualified to become a councillor.

The Clerk explained that if co-opted, the applicant would officially become a councillor at the next Whimble Parish Council meeting, which would either be the Planning meeting scheduled on Monday 4 August or Monday 1 September (subject to planning applications coming forward from EDDC) or the Council meeting on Monday 15 September 2025. Mrs Venton would be asked to read out and sign her Declaration of Acceptance of Officer statement at the start of the meeting.

The Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Becky Venton to Whimble Parish Council.
(*moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Trimblett*)

61. Environment & Community

i) Community Speed Watch initiative

The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Devon and Cornwall Police Community Speed Watch Team as agreed at the last meeting. They have advised that the monitoring equipment was collected from the former co-ordinator. A number of volunteers have stepped down and did not wish to continue due to the negative comments on social media. So the Police have confirmed that the group has been dissolved and there are no current members linked to it. The group can be established but the Council will need to find a new co-ordinator and at least three other members to sign up to meet the minimum numbers (4 persons) required to run a CSW group.

The Clerk confirmed that a request for a co-ordinator and volunteers has been included in the next Whimble News article and this will also be added to the Council website and on Facebook.

No further action can be taken until a co-ordinator and volunteers have been found.

ii) To receive an update on the Play Area Project (Parish Field)

There was no update on this project. The Clerk confirmed that illness has meant that the first meeting has not yet taken place. Information has been received from 9 play equipment suppliers, who have confirmed they would like to meet with the Working Group to discuss their proposals. The Clerk confirmed she will get a revised date into the diary as soon as possible.

iii) To receive an update on the Town Lane Project

Councillors considered a report detailing the quotations that had come forward from suppliers to remove the rotten furniture and equipment at the Town Lane site and to cut back the overhanging trees.

Discussion took place around:

- The list of suppliers that were contacted were those that came forward expressing an interest when the Council advertised on the Council and Whimble What's On Facebook pages
- The Clerk had sent a specification of works (including asking for a drawing of the location of the trees they would cut back) and confirmed that the deadline for quotes was 12 noon on Friday 23 May 2025.
- Six suppliers had submitted quotations
- The Clerk had to go back to a number of suppliers to ask for further clarification regarding the cutting back of the overhanging trees.
- All suppliers had the requested £5m public liability insurance
- Six suppliers had quoted for the work with prices listed as:
 - Supplier 1 = £895 plus VAT (only cutting back the Willow Tree near the shelter)
 - Supplier 2 = £1260 plus VAT (included a map listing the location of the trees that would be cut back)
 - Supplier 3 = £3,260 plus VAT (£2,330 plus VAT for the removal of the furniture and £930 plus VAT for the cutting back of the trees)
 - Supplier 4 = £660 plus VAT (removal of overhanging branches rather than cutting trees back)
 - Supplier 5 = £1,400 plus VAT (£600 to cut back trees, £750 to remove furniture and £50 to cut grass prior to starting work)
 - Supplier 6 = £940 plus VAT (no diagram included and lack of detail as to the location of the trees)

Councillors discussed the quotes and felt that whilst supplier 2 was not the cheapest option, they provided the best value for money as they have clearly set out in a drawing that they will be cutting back a number of overhanging trees around the perimeter of the site. Supplier 1 confirmed that they were only including the cutting of the willow tree in the quotation. Suppliers 4 and 6 had not specified which trees they were proposing to cut back and not included the requested drawing.

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint MRW Landscaping and Groundworks (supplier 2) to carry out the works at the Town Lane site as set out in the specification document.
(*moved Cllr Patrick; seconded Cllr Trimblett*)

iv) Village Maintenance Schedule

The Clerk confirmed that Devon Arborists were meant to be carrying out the works in the Parish Car Park today but had been unable to do this due to a number of vehicles remaining parked. They were blocking access to the site and continuing with the works could have resulted in damage to the vehicles. The Clerk confirmed that information about the car park works was in the last edition of Whimble News asking people to look out for information on Facebook. Three reminder posts were put on Facebook and posters were put up in the car park approximately a week ago.

The Clerk confirmed that the contractors and Council had posted pictures of the vehicles on Facebook in order to attempt to contact them directly as to the date when the works are

rescheduled. The contractor has been contacted regarding a revised date and this will be promoted more widely when it has been agreed.

Councillors agreed that when the date is known that it is advertised on Facebook, the noticeboard, in the village shop, by dropping notices through letterboxes of residents living in the locality of the car park, bigger signage and bollards in the car park and leaving notices on vehicles in the car park.

v) The Parish Field

The Clerk confirmed that Pro Lawn had removed the barbed wire and wooden posts in the Parish Field and the invoice was included in the schedule of works.

vi) Quotes for the clearance of the riverbed and riverbank in The Square

Councillors considered a report detailing the quotations that had come forward from suppliers to remove weeds from the riverbed without damaging the lining stones of the river and cut back the overgrown foliage and weeds on the riverbank.

Discussion took place around:

- The list of suppliers that were contacted were those that came forward expressing an interest when the Council advertised on the Council and Whimble What's On Facebook pages
- The Clerk had sent a specification of works and confirmed that the deadline for quotes was 12 noon on Monday 14 July 2025.
- Two suppliers had submitted quotations, which were:
 - Supplier 1 = £895 plus VAT
 - Supplier 2 = £550 plus VAT
- Both suppliers had the requested £5m public liability insurance
- Councillors thanked a local resident for doing some tidying up of the riverbank but confirmed that this had not affected the work covered by the quotations
- Councillors expressed concerns that if the weeds are pulled out of the riverbed at the root it would likely damage the stone lining and potentially cost a lot to repair. There is also a risk that would also impact on potential flooding. Therefore, the successful supplier to be asked to just cut back the weeds and not to pull out weeds in the riverbed specifically.
- The cutting back of the weeds to be added to the maintenance schedule in the future.

The Council **RESOLVED** to

1. Appoint Pro Lawn Garden Services (supplier 2) to carry out the works to the riverbed and riverbank.
2. Ensure that the contractor is asked not to pull the roots out when removing the weeds in the riverbed i.e. just cut the weeds back as much as possible.
3. This work is added to the grounds maintenance contract when it is considered again later this year.

(moved Cllr Yarwood; seconded Cllr Trimblett)

vii) Any other arising environment and community issues

Councillors raised the following issues:

- Who is responsible for clearing the river near the Primary School. Councillors confirmed that falls under the responsibility of Network Rail and asked the Clerk to contact them to request that they clear and tidy the area.
- Who is responsible for the hedge adjacent to Heberton Close Allotments which is overgrown. Councillors confirmed that it could be Devon County Council highways but it is

probably the Parish Council as the landowners of the allotments. Councillors asked the Clerk to look into this matter.

- Footpath linking Dince Hill Close and West View. This area is looking overgrown and is in need of tidying up. Councillors asked the Clerk to report this to DCC Highways.
- The roof over the entrance pathway to the parish car park. Councillors raised concerns regarding the stability of the arch and asked the Clerk to investigate whether the Council owns this as part of the car park or if it belongs to another party.

62. Allotments

Councillors considered a report detailing the quotations that had come forward from suppliers to:

1. Cut the overgrown grass, weeds and foliage in the communal areas at Grove Road Allotments
2. Cut the overgrown grass, weeds and foliage in the communal areas at Heberton Close Allotments
3. Cut back the overgrown allotment plots on both sites – quoting separately for the individual plot clearance.

Discussion took place around:

- The list of suppliers that were contacted were those that came forward expressing an interest when the Council advertised on the Council and Whimble What's On Facebook pages
- The Clerk had sent a specification of works and confirmed that the deadline for quotes was 12 noon on Monday 14 July 2025.
- Two suppliers had submitted quotations, which were:
 - Supplier 1 = £2,105 plus VAT for all communal areas and all plots
 - Supplier 2 = £695 plus VAT for communal areas at Grove Road, £1,395 plus VAT for communal areas at Heberton Close and cost for clearing individual plots ranged from £295 plus VAT to £495 plus VAT for Grove Road and £275 plus VAT to £475 plus VAT per plot for Heberton Close.
- To compare quotes the grand totals per supplier are – Supplier 1 £2,105 plus VAT; Supplier 2 £6,760 plus VAT
- Both suppliers had the requested £5m public liability insurance
- Councillors discussed that it would be appropriate to have all overgrown areas of the allotments cut back as there had been complaints from existing allotment holders and may put off potential allotment holders.
- Councillors asked the Clerk to investigate whether a deposit could be charged to new allotment holders that is only paid back when they quit the plot if it is left in a good condition.
- The suppliers both confirmed that they would not be removing the roots so councillors decided that potential allotment holders be offered a rent free period to dig out the roots and rotavate the plot before it can be used.

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Pro Lawn Gardening Services (supplier 1) to carry out the works at Grove Road and Heberton Close allotments.

(moved Cllr Patrick; seconded Cllr Dearden)

63. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Olive outlined that the draft Neighbourhood Plan was handed over to the Council by the POWR Group in late 2023. Following review and discussion with the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at EDDC, the decision was made to do more work on the Plan to reflect the feedback from local residents and the ambitious aspirations of the Parish Council.

Since then, work has been completed on:

- A Design Code which will reflect the local character and design preferences for the local area in terms of any development.
- A Housing Needs survey which identified that local people wanted to see affordable housing to enable local people to remain in the village.
- A Site Options and Appraisal Report to assess a number of sites in the village where an affordable housing allocation could be located.

Earlier this year the Council resolved to investigate sites Whim_03, Whim_07, Whim_13, Whim_18 and Whim_20 for a potential allocation for affordable housing. The Council asked Cllr Olive to submit grant funding requests to Localities (the Government department) for Site Viability work, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Masterplanning the potential sites in the EDDC Emerging Local Plan (i.e. Whim_08a and Whim_11).

In April it was resolved that £7,500 be allocated in an Earmarked Reserve (EMR) for the Neighbourhood Plan work.

Cllr Olive advised that he has sought advice from the Neighbourhood Planning Office at EDDC to gain an understanding of the costs involved with these pieces of work. Cllr Olive and the Clerk are working up a specification for the Masterplanning work and this will be sent to appropriate companies shortly. The cost of this work would likely need to be funded from the Council's EMR.

As part of the recent Government Spending Review they removed the Localities funding support for Neighbourhood Planning. This means that the Council now has to decide whether it still wishes to include an affordable housing allocation making the Plan more robust.

The next steps are potentially:

- Masterplanning the sites in the EDDC Emerging Local Plan, i.e. Whim_08a and Whim_11
- If the Council wishes to proceed with an allocation for affordable housing to speak to the site owners and liaise with statutory consultees to get their views.
- Once this work has been completed and incorporated into the Plan to submit a draft to EDDC for them to screen to see if a Strategic Environmental Assessment is needed.
- If an SEA is needed this could cost in the region of £5,000 to £6,000.

Discussion took place around:

- A number of other approved Neighbourhood Plans have not included a specific site allocation
- The need to work with landowners to obtain the land for affordable housing
- One of the sites has been turned down for planning approval before due to constraints that need to be investigated and a decision made as to whether they could be overcome
- The Council could put an allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan and EDDC might turn down a planning application. If this happened the Council could appeal the decision and the Planning Inspectorate would have to consider it. Having the allocation in a Neighbourhood Plan would add weight to the Council's position as it would be classed as a rural exception site.
- The fact that local residents had previously fed back that they want to see a small affordable housing allocation in the village, so the Councillors want to support what the public wants.

The Council **RESOLVED** to continue with the work on the Whimple Neighbourhood Plan to include an affordable housing site allocation.

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

64. Planning

Planning application **25/0690/FUL – Whimble Victory Hall, Whimble, Exeter, EX5 2TS**
Extensions to existing single storey community hall, all at ground level.

The Council **RESOLVED** that it has no objection to this application.

(moved Cllr Yarwood; seconded Cllr Dearden)

The Clerk advised that EDDC had notified the Council that a Tree Preservation Order has been made for land north of The Grange Cottage, Gribble Lane – reference 25/0006/TPO.

65. Finance

i) Summary receipts and payments for 2025/26 to 30 June 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summary of receipts and payments to 30 June 2025

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

ii) Unity Bank current account reconciliation as at the end June 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end June 2025, with the amount in the Current Account totalling to £27,574.61.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

iii) Unity Bank savings account reconciliation as at the end June 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account reconciliation to end June 2025, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £57,799.97.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

iv) To approve the scheduled of payments for July 2025 totalling £7,244.46, which included payments for:

Whimble Victory Hall hire June 2025 = £20.00

Whimble History Society – grant funding = £148.50

Devon Association of Local Councils – new councillor training = £48.00

Pro Lawn stimming of Parish Field boundary = £324.00

Pro Lawn grass cutting session 27/06/25 = £306.00

Pro Lawn grass cutting session 02/07/25 = £294.00

Pro Lawn removal of barbed wire and wooden posts in Parish Field = £252.00

EDDC Dog and litter bin emptying for 25/26 = £4,742.40

Grove Road Allotments water bill = £21.70

Recreation Ground water bill = £21.17

Clerk salary; July 2025 = £781.53

HMRC PAYE and Employers NIC; July 2025 = £279.16

Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/06/25 to 30/06/25 = £6.00

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

(proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

v) Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26 as at end March 2025

The Clerk confirmed that savings interest had been received totalling £264.81 for the period of 1 April to 30 June 2025. The overall budget for interest was £100 for the whole year so the Council is already performing better than the budget.

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the budget monitoring report as at end June 2025

(Proposed by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Yarwood)

66. Internal Control Checklist – Quarter 1 Review

The Clerk confirmed that she had met with Cllr Trimblett last week to go through all of the paperwork relevant to the Quarter 1 review. Cllr Trimblett confirmed that she was happy that everything was in order and had, therefore signed off the checklist.

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the Internal Control Checklist for quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial year.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)

67. Risk Assessment – Quarter 1 Review

Councillors reviewed the risk assessment and asked the clerk to add the following risks:

- Local Government Reorganisation
- Neighbourhood Plan

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the risk assessment subject to the above listed risks being added.

(Moved Cllr Olive; seconded Cllr Dearden)

68. Applications for Grants and Donations

The Clerk confirmed that the Council had received a grant funding application from the Whimble History Society and due to timing restraints had considered it under the Council's scheme of delegation. The Clerk had written to all councillors to seek their views on the application and the majority of responders were in favour of approving it. As a result of this the payment was processed and signed off by two councillors (as per the normal process).

Cllr Dearden confirmed that she had met with representatives from the History Society and had been asked about the possibility of additional grant funding. Cllr Dearden asked that this be added to the agenda for the next Council meeting on 15 September 2025.

69. Schedule of meeting dates to the end of the 2026/27 Municipal Year

The Clerk confirmed that room bookings for Whimble Victory Hall are now required to be made on their new booking system. The Council had been notified that from early August members of the public will be able to book rooms themselves so the clerk confirmed that she wanted to block book the Planning meeting and Council meeting dates up to the end April 2027.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of meeting dates to the end of the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

70. Councillor responsibilities

Councillors considered the vacancies for the list of responsibilities:

Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator – remains vacant
Snow Warden / Road Warden – remains vacant
Emergency Plan – remains vacant

71. Cranbrook Community Governance Review

The Clerk confirmed that an email had been received from the Monitoring Officer at EDDC, containing the key points of:

- There has been a slight delay to the Community Governance Review (CGR) due to the Devon County Council elections and the pre-election period.
- The draft consultation document and questions are in their final phase of approval meaning the consultation should commence very soon. This will go live on a page on the EDDC website which will also include details on the timeline and the terms of reference for the review.
- There will be a dedicated email account for the review: CranbrookCGR@eastdevon.gov.uk
- Since the report (including the terms of reference and timetable) went to the Council meeting they have had to be updated slightly to push back the implementation order to 2027.
- EDDC anticipate completing the main part of the review by late Spring / early Summer 2026.
- Due to the nature of this CGR (i.e. likely boundary changes) a polling places and districts review will need to be completed after the completion of the CGR to consider the impact on the electoral arrangements (this normally takes 6 months). Any CGR that results in boundary changes will require an election to be held effectively simultaneously with the official CGR order taking effect and therefore, EDDC were advised that it is most appropriate for any official CGR order to come into effect in 2027, in line with the next district elections.
- EDDC explained that if an election was triggered as a result of the CGR order coming into effect in 2026, all of the parishes/towns involved would be responsible for paying for the election in full because it would not be being held at the same time as the District elections. This would therefore place an additional and unnecessary financial burden on the parish / town councils impacted by the CGR but these will be avoided by the new timetable.

72. Forward Plan

The Council noted the Forward Plan, and noted the items coming forward in September, which are:

- Financial reports
- External Auditors report on the 2024/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (providing PKF Littlejohn have completed their review)
- Planning applications (if appropriate)
- Roles and responsibilities for Community Speed Watch, Snow Warden / Road Warden and the Emergency Plan
- Cranbrook Community Governance Review
- Local Government Reorganisation
- Tree Management Policy

73. Correspondence

The Council considered the following correspondence:

- i) An email from Catherine Bailey from Go Compare asking the Council to share flood guidance on the Council website. Councillors felt that it would be inappropriate to publish information advertising a private company but that it would be a good idea to publish guidance from the Environment Agency.
- ii) Emails from DCC Highways regarding a number of road closures. The Clerk confirmed that they would be published on the website and posted on Facebook nearer the time of the closure
- iii) An email from Ali from the Whimble Victory Hall Committee confirming that works to the roof will be taking place in August so some of the car park will not be available during this time.

iv) Several emails from members of the public regarding the EDDC Strategic Planning Committee commenting that the public were given short notice of the meeting. Councillors commented that the dates of the meetings are publicly available on the EDDC website, members of the public can sign up to receive updates and at least 5 clear days notice has to be given in respect of publishing the agenda pack. Information has gone into the next edition of Whimble News and will be posted on the Council website and Facebook.

74. Chair's Business

Several items were raised under Chair's Business:

- Cllr Yarwood confirmed that she had been approached by Whimble Fest volunteers regarding the new shed in the Parish Field and whether it should be gifted to the Parish Council. Councillors agreed to have a separate meeting with the volunteers in September to discuss this further.
- Councillors asked the Clerk to contact Whimble Recreation Trust to ask them to send details of the dates of the meetings, agendas and minutes. Also whether they wish to have a sitting councillor on the committee.

The meeting closed at 9.47pm

The next Planning Meetings will be held on Monday 4 August and Monday 1 September 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 take place on Monday 15 September 2025 at 7pm (due to the summer recess).

Signed by Chair:

15/09/2025

Mr Richard Lawrence's Statement

Whimple Parish Council

21.07.25

I should like this statement to be read out and minuted verbatim at the next WPC Meeting on 21 July 2025.

Having spoken with the Monitoring Officer at EDDC I understand that there has been no complaint made regarding my behaviour. The Clerk was wrong in publicising this matter before any investigation had taken place, and as such should not have been entered in the minutes of the meeting and a retraction and public apology should be made.

I feel now is the time to respond to the allegations made about my actions with regard to the Parish Field Shed. You will recall that the shed was listed on the Parish Asset Register with a value of £600, as this was a gift to the Parish from the WACY Group and as such was rightfully listed on the Register.

This was confirmed to me by a former Clerk and members of the WACY Group who I contacted in order to clarify the situation.

We, the Council, resolved unanimously at the WPC Meeting of 22 April 2025 that the shed was indeed the property of WPC and as such would remain in situ and photographed prior to being sold, but in any event would need to be removed by the end of May in order for a replacement shed to be installed.

Subsequently, I was advised by Mr Martin Trimblett that it had been agreed between himself and a member of the Whimplefest Committee that they were to remove the shed the following week, as it was to be installed in a field for the use of Mr Tim Adkins.

I made it clear to Mr Trimblett and Councillor Angela Trimblett that the shed was on the Parish Register and therefore as such they should wait until such time as it had been sold, and they should not go against the resolution of the Parish Council.

This advice was obviously ignored because when the Clerk went to photograph it on Friday 2 May 2025 the shed had been removed, as confirmed in her email to all Councillors the same day. Councillor Lynda Patrick stated in an email that she had witnessed a tallish man with a grey beard loading the dismantled shed onto his trailer, which was being towed by a burgundy jeep type vehicle.

From the description I recognised that the person Cllr Patrick had witnessed was indeed Mr Tim Adkins of the Whimble Fest Committee. Subsequently, I had a discussion with Cllr Sarah Johnson regarding this matter, and later with Cllr Patrick, who both agreed that something should be done in order to conform with the WPC resolution.

I tried on numerous occasions to contact the Clerk and the Chair regarding the matter but unfortunately, because it was a Bank Holiday weekend I was unsuccessful in obtaining a response.

As a Parish Councillor and a resident of Whimble I decided that the best course of action, in order to bring about a speedy and just resolution to the matter, was to contact Mr Tim Adkins via email.

This email was also sent to The Clerk for transparency, but from comments made it is obvious that the rest of the Council were not aware of the contents, and most of the comments made against me by Councillors and some residents who attended the meeting, seemed to come from people who had not even seen the letter.

For clarity, the email was worded as follows:-

“Dear Mr Adkins

I am writing to you in the hope that you may be able to help with the return of the Parish Council Shed to the Parish Field. If you know the whereabouts of the shed, I would respectfully ask that you inform the people who have it, to return it immediately and rebuild it to its original condition. The shed is on the Parish Asset Register and as such was to be sold prior to the new shed being erected. The Parish Clerk recently went to take photographs to advertise the shed for sale and was surprised to find that it had been stolen. I wish to point out that no one is allowed entry to the Parish Field without the express permission of the Parish Council.”

You will see from this that at no time did I accuse Mr Adkins of taking the shed. He did respond in that as far as he was aware Mr Glen Starkey had been in regular contact with the Parish Council and been instructed that they had the go ahead to dismantle and remove the shed. As the Clerk was unaware of this it is most likely, therefore, that Mr Starkey was given permission by a Councillor who was obviously deliberately acting against the earlier decision made by the Council to leave the shed in situ.

From public comments made by Cllr Trimblett, she was of the opinion, following a conversation between the two of them, that Cllr Jo Yarwood was the person who gave Mr Starkey permission to take the shed anyway, totally against the WPC resolution. This single action led to this whole fiasco taking place! Should they not be answerable for their actions?

The character assassination by Mr & Mrs Olive at the WPC meeting of 19 May 2025 was disgraceful and I have had comments from a number of residents who see this purely as retaliation, clearly as a result of my opinion as a Whimble resident that I opposed the actions of Cllr Olive regarding his Proposing WHIM 08 as a suitable site for housing development. I must say that the inaction of the Chair in allowing these vitriolic comments was also appalling and not the way in which a Council Meeting should be conducted. This reprehensible series of events was only exceeded by the actions of "All Councillors" as according to the minutes you were unhappy with my actions. You all appear to have come to this decision without being in possession of the full facts, nor asking me for my input. Not one of you supported my attempts to uphold the wishes of the Council and protect Parish property from theft.

I should like to remind Councillors of all the good work I have contributed to this village which has now been tarnished by your lack of support and adverse judgemental attitude. I think that at least two Councillors, Trimblett and Yarwood, should be severely admonished for failing to carry out their duties in accordance with a Parish Council resolution, and with the required level of openness and transparency. Your actions in supporting the above have brought the Parish Council name into disrepute and made the members look incompetent and incapable of policing their own activities. It would seem that friends of councillors can act with complete impunity and have the freedom to do exactly as they wish without being accountable.

In conclusion, I should like to ask you all, what would have been the outcome if I had taken the shed for my own personal use? I feel sure the outcome would have been completely different.

Richard Lawrence

Whimble Parish Council response to Mr Lawrence's statement.

The Council notes the statement made by Mr Lawrence, which was read out verbatim to the meeting as per his request. The statement has also been attached to the end of the minutes.

The Parish Council's response to comments made by Mr Lawrence are as follows:

A complaint was made to the Parish Council by a member of the public that had received correspondence from Mr Lawrence (when he was a parish councillor) which he perceived as inappropriate. As set out in the minutes of the meeting on 19 May 2025, as per the Parish Council's complaints policy the Clerk contacted the Monitoring Officer at EDDC to ask for guidance as to whether this should be dealt with locally or under the Councillors Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer's response was to advise the member of the public to make their complaint to EDDC rather than dealing with it locally. The Clerk advised the complainant of this information. This matter was not discussed with anyone else.

At the meeting on 19 May 2025 a number of members of the public representing Whimble Fest including the complainant asked questions relating this matter during the public participation session. Questions were asked of the Council as to what they were doing to deal with this matter and the individual councillor.

Both the Clerk and Chair of the Council set out the advice from the Monitoring Officer at EDDC and stated that the Council could not comment further until any complaint had been through the process. No details of the complaint were discussed and the member of the public making the complaint was not identified by the Parish Council.

The Council approved the minutes from the 19 May meeting at the next meeting on 16 June 2025, confirming that they are an accurate account of what happened at the meeting. Therefore, they stand and will not be changed.

With regard to the timeline regarding the shed in the Parish Field:

Mr Starkey attended the Parish Council meeting on 18 December 2023 where he asked how the Parish Council would feel about an increase to the storage facility in the Parish Field. The minutes states *'Councillors confirmed that they would not have a problem supporting the increased storage facility but that the Whimble Fest Committee need to decide on the option to take forward and ensure that they check with EDDC as to whether planning permission would be needed.'*

At the Parish Council meeting on 17 February 2025, councillors considered a written proposal from Whimble Fest to upgrade the shed.

The proposal set out that the current shed was at the end of its life due to issues relating to the floor needing to be replaced due to being rotten, mice being able to access the shed and chew various items stored there and the shed being too small to accommodate the amount of equipment.

The proposal confirmed that they were looking to remove the existing shed, reconstruct the rotten wooden floor making it bigger and installing a larger shed. The proposal also set out the need for vehicle with a trailer to access the Parish Field to complete the work, i.e. to empty the existing shed, to remove the existing shed once dismantled, to deliver materials and the replacement shed, then to reload the shed with its contents. The proposal also set out that, if approved by the Council they would proceed with the replacement when the weather had improved enough so as not to damage the grass in the Parish Field.

The proposal concluded stating *'we are asking the Parish Council for your support in the form of agreement to proceed with this proposal.'*

The 17 February 2025 minutes stated that the councillors were supportive of the proposal and resolved to approve it. This was proposed by Cllr Richard Lawrence.

This resolution gave Whimble Fest the authority to go ahead with the removal of the old shed and installation of the new shed.

Mr Lawrence makes reference to the fact that the shed was recorded on the Council asset register at an amount of £573.25. However, discussions at Council meetings had confirmed that the Council had not paid anything for the shed as the money had been raised by other organisations and the shed had been gifted to the Council.

The Council was provided with the following information from a third party who was involved with the purchase of the shed, *It was paid for from a grant acquired by WACY in 2010. It contained garden equipment for use by the community - we had village tidy ups for years including the stream in the Square and stored things there. It also had a tug of war rope and a coconut shy for community events. The shed was handed over to the PC at that time. Then in 2011 Village Day moved from The Square and hall to the parish field so we started storing things in the shed - and the rest is history. In theory it belongs to the PC and the community.'*

At the meeting on 19 May 2025, the Clerk had advised that the shed had likely been incorrectly recorded in the Council asset register and should have been recorded at either zero or £1. Councillors then decided that the Council should not accept any money for the shed and that, due to its dilapidated condition it be listed as scrap on the Asset Register.

Mr Lawrence has included partial details of the email that he sent to Mr Adkins on 3 May 2025. The full email states (included with the permission of Mr Atkins):

'I am writing to you in the hope that you may be able to help with the return of the Parish Council Shed to the Parish Field. If you know the whereabouts of the shed, I would respectfully ask that you inform the people who have it, to return it immediately and rebuild it to its original condition. The Shed is on the Parish Asset Register and as such was to be sold prior to the new shed being erected. The Parish Clerk recently went to take photographs to advertise the shed for sale and was surprised to find that it had been stolen.'

We wish to point out that no one is allowed entry to the Parish Field without the express permission of the Parish Council.

If the shed is not returned by close of play on Monday 5 May 2025 we will have to consider reporting the matter to the Police. I should like to point out that another Parish Councillor witnessed the shed being stolen and loaded onto a trailer and can identify the vehicle in question.

We feel sure that common sense will prevail and look forward to seeing the return of the shed by Monday.'

Mr Lawrence makes the statement '*I tried on numerous occasions to contact the Clerk and the Chair regarding the matter but unfortunately, because it was a Bank Holiday weekend I was unsuccessful in obtaining a response.*'

The Council acknowledges that Mr Lawrence tried to contact the Clerk and Chair but respectfully suggests that this matter should have been picked up with the Clerk on Tuesday 6 May, following the Bank Holiday weekend. The Clerk only works 14 hours a week for the Council split across Monday to Friday.

The Parish Council wishes to clarify that the Council is required to make collective decisions as a whole and that an individual councillor cannot make decisions or act independently of the council without its permission.

The Council did not authorise Cllr Lawrence to contact Mr Adkins. At the meeting on Monday 19 May 2025 councillors stated that they were unhappy with his actions and that they didn't represent the Council as a whole.

The Council has no further comment to make on this matter, and it will not be discussed by the Council again.