

WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2025, 7pm

Present: Cllr Todd Olive
Cllr Angela Trimblett
Cllr Lynda Patrick
Cllr Becky Venton
Cllr Denise Dearden

Also present: Amy Tregellas (Parish Clerk)

There was one member of the public present, who left the meeting after public participation. Devon County Councillor (DCC) Cathy Connor arrived to the meeting at 8pm, provided an update and left at 8.15pm.

75. Appointment of Chair for the meeting

As per Standing Order 3p, and due to the fact that Cllr Dearden was late to the meeting (Chair) and Cllr Yarwood had sent apologies (Vice-Chair), councillors **RESOLVED** that Cllr Olive take the role of Chair until Cllr Dearden arrived to the meeting.
(moved Cllr Trimblett; seconded Cllr Patrick)

76. Declaration of Acceptance of office for newly co-opted councillor

To receive newly co-opted Councillor Becky Venton's Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Cllr Venton read out the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and then signed it.

77. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Yarwood and Johnson. Cllr Dearden had sent apologies that she would not be arriving to the meeting until after 8pm.

78. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

79. Public Participation

The Clerk read out an email from Mrs Marvin, a resident from Broadway, which stated:

'On behalf of the residents of Broadway, I am writing to request that the safety of said residents be included as an agenda item at the next WPC meeting. I have spoken before about the speeding that occurs daily, more accurately, hourly, and had hoped the community speed watch might of addressed that, but today I witnessed what can only be described as utter chaos and like the speeding motorists, something which has already caused damage to my property and more than one near miss involving pedestrians.

Broadway, other than for say a small family sized car and possibly a cyclist or a pedestrian, can not accommodate two vehicles side by side at the same time with adequate passing room without the chaos I witnessed this morning. This, combined with the mindset of drivers who seem to think they need to speed from the direction of School Hill to beat anyone who dares approach and enters Broadway from the Square and the give way opposite the old post office, or those who don't even give way at all from the Square, choosing to swing around, often at speed, is quite frankly a recipe for disaster.

Something needs to be done about educating drivers with regards who has right of way and

where. To my mind, the give way opposite the old post office should be a Stop sign, and there should be another sign erected Broadway side of the Bridge that indicates who has right of way, perhaps another of the attached and a bollard which makes the road suitable only for one vehicle at a time. I appreciate this would need to be tractor / HGV width.

The incident this morning (11/8) is indicative of the poor driving, speeding and lack of spatial awareness, I witness daily and I am sick to the back teeth of our property being damaged and the shouting matches and expletives I hear from motorists who think they're in the right.

Please please can this issue be discussed and something done before someone is injured.'

Discussion took place around:

- Whether any volunteers have come forward to re-start the Community Speed Watch initiative (the Clerk confirmed that currently no volunteers have come forward)
- That there is more traffic moving through the village and more traffic observed speeding
- Whether it would be possible to have a stop sign located from the Square side of Broadway, or traffic lights either side of Broadway (Councillors commented that this worked well during recent works to the building in The Square)
- The need for something to be done, especially if more housing is to be considered for the village.
- The need to invite the Highways Neighbourhood Officer to come out to walk the village and discuss areas of concern.
- Whether the 20mph zone could be extended outwards from the centre of the village.

The Council **RESOLVED** to invite the Neighbourhood Highways Officer and DCC Councillor Cathy Connor to visit Whimple and meet with Councillors to discuss concerns around traffic and speeding in the village (including Church Lane, Broadway and School Hill).

(Moved Cllr Olive; seconded Cllr Trimblett)

As Mr Goodman was in attendance, Cllr Olive proposed, and councillors agreed to bring forward agenda item 8v on the Parish Field.

The Clerk set out that the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor had removed wooden posts and barbed wire that was in the exposed ground in the Parish Field along the perimeter of the Parish Field adjacent to the houses. Following this work being completed, Mr and Mrs Goodman had very kindly removed the remaining detritus and weeds.

The Clerk advised that Mr and Mrs Goodman had submitted a proposal to the Council asking for £600 to plant this area of the Parish Field.

Mr Goodman spoke and commented that *'we are asking for £600 to plant trees and shrubs along the perimeter of the Parish Field. This area has now been fully weeded and would look good if planted up with plants that will support nature. Once planting is completed the unplanted spaces will be covered with bark/mulch to preserve moisture and suppress weeds. The estimated cost is £600 but that doesn't include the bark/mulch. The proposal was discussed with a neighbour who is a Royal Horticultural Society Qualified green spaces designer. A local nursery have agreed to supply at cost and would be willing to invoice the Council directly. An application has also been made to the Whimple Fest Committee for help with the funding.'*

Discussion took place around:

- Whether the Council would be able to obtain some free trees to plant in this area. Councillors asked the Clerk to investigate this
- That councillors would like to see planting in keeping with the rest of the Parish Field and not plants that be in someone's garden

- Concerns regarding some of the plants on the proposed list – given that some of them might be poisonous for children or dogs.
- That the planting list needs to be reviewed, with councillors offering to liaise with Mr and Mrs Goodman
- Whether this is an opportunity for school children to get involved with planting this area.
- The cost of the bark/mulching is expensive and whether additional funding could be applied for
- Whether to apply to the DCC Locality Fund for some funding.
- How the Council would fund this. The Clerk confirmed that there is no money available in the budget but it could be funded from the village maintenance ear marked reserve or from the 2022/23 VAT reclaim that would be applied for shortly.

Councillors **RESOLVED** that they support the proposal in principle and will fund up to the value of £600. Councillors Patrick, Venton and Trimblett will liaise with Mr and Mrs Goodman to firm up the details of the proposal, including the proposed planting list and costs.
(*moved Cllr Patrick; seconded Cllr Venton*)

Councillors thanked Mr & Mrs Goodman for the work that they had carried out on the Parish Field.

80. Minutes of the previous meeting of Whimble Parish Council

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Whimble Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 21 July 2025.

(*proposed by Cllr Olive; seconded by Cllr Trimblett*)

Clerk provided the following updates (for those items not covered in the agenda):

- Minute 56 (Public Participation) – The Council has received the funding from WACY. This will be discussed under the Finance proposal (agenda item 13)
- Minute 56 (Public Participation) – The noticeboard has been fixed and is now accessible and is being used again
- Minute 56 (Public Participation) – 20 mph speed limit. 20 mph speed limits is being considered generally by DCC, as they have received lots of requests from Town and Parish Councils. However, it is likely that Town and Parish Councils would have to fund schemes themselves as well as the design work, which is likely to cost £000s. A survey would be needed to provide an evidence base for the proposal.
- Minute 58 (County Councillor update) – chapter 8 training. Following the last meeting, the Clerk forwarded the information on Chapter 8 training to all councillors for them to sign up, if they so wished. To date no councillors have registered for the training.
- Minute 69 (Schedule of meeting dates) – The Clerk confirmed that Whimble Victory Hall bookings have now been made on the new Hallmaster system.
- Minute 74 (Chair's Business) – the Clerk is continuing to liaise with councillors and Whimble Fest volunteers to arrange a meeting to discuss the new shed in the Parish Field
- Minute 74 (Chair's Business) – the Clerk confirmed that Mr Griffiths had provided contact details for the Whimble Recreation Trust.

81. District and County Councillor reports:

East Devon District Council (EDDC) Councillor report

Cllr Olive gave a verbal update to the meeting:

- The new settlement name has been confirmed and it is to be called Marlcombe. The EDDC Strategic Planning Committee will be considering a large amount of documentation relating to the delivery of the new community at forthcoming meetings.
- Housing Service – A survey of the 3,500 housing stock owned by EDDC has been completed and published. EDDC have had a visit from the Housing Ombudsman and received a grade of 2 out of 5 (with 1 being the best score). This is a big improvement and very few Councils score higher than a 3.
- Housing – EDDC are looking to invest £100m to build and buy 500 new homes (250 Council homes and buy 250 affordable home).
- Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 2 September 2025. Whim_11 site has not changed and will remain in the Emerging Local Plan. Whim_08a, Cllr Olive asked the Committee to reduce the number of homes and introduce restrictions to boost protection from the large remaining area of Green Wedge between Whimble and Cranbrook. The Strategic Planning Committee agreed to amend the wording in the Local Plan to 'up to 50 homes', and to introduce a restriction requiring any new housing to not visually breach the ridgeline on the west side of the site.

Devon County Councillor Connor arrived to the meeting at 8pm.

Devon County Council (DCC) Councillor Report

Councillor Connor gave a verbal update to the meeting:

- An update from the DCC Leader Cllr Julian Brazil covering the first 100 days had been sent to the Clerk earlier today
- DCC are working on their Local Government Reorganisation proposal to be submitted to the Government at the end of November 2025. Currently the favoured option is that Plymouth and Torbay remain as Unitary Councils and a new Unitary Council is created for the rest of Devon.
- Foster carers – there is a shortage of foster carers in Devon. Cllr Connor confirmed that she wants to promote this across her patch to encourage people to become foster carers as it is beneficial for the child but also is cheaper for the taxpayer
- Locality budget – Cllr Connor still has money available in her Locality Budget pot, which she wants to spend on local projects before the end of the financial year
- 20 mph – the current process was considered at the Council meeting on 4 September where a more proactive approach to working with communities that wish to see a new 20mph speed limit introduced was agreed. Better advice and guidance has been produced including a step by step guide including costs involved.
- Phones in schools. Also at the 4 September Council meeting a motion was agreed to support the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign and to endorse the principle of a countywide ban on student smartphone use during the school day, coming into effect from the start of the academic year in September 2026. Whilst DCC do not have legal powers to ban smartphones at school, they will be encouraging schools to adopt one of the following options:
 - Phones not brought into school at all
 - Phones handed in at arrival and returned after school
 - Phones stored securely (e.g. lockers), inaccessible until the end of day
 - Phones kept out of sight and unused during the school day

82. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon

The Clerk confirmed that she had a number of updates following the EDDC LGR briefing, the Exeter City Council briefing and the Devon Association of Local Councils LGR Steering Group.

The key updates are:

EDDC:

- EDDC's proposal will still focus on the 1:4:5 model (Plymouth Unitary; Unitary comprising of Torbay, West Devon, South Hams and Teignbridge; Unitary comprising of Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge)
- Unitary councils should ideally have a population that doesn't exceed 500,000.
- As part of the Government Bill there will be a new duty on local authorities to ensure there is effective neighbourhood governance and this will need to be reflected in the final proposal to the Secretary of State
- The current timeline is, as follows:
 - Proposals submitted to the Government by 28 November 2025
 - Public consultation to take place in Spring 2026, closing after the May 2026 elections
 - The Government announce the chosen option(s) for Devon before the summer recess in July 2026
 - From Autumn 2026 to late 2026/early 2027 – legislation laid in Parliament and Structural Change Order is approved.
 - A shadow Council is then created to work on setting up the new Council(s).
 - Elections will take place on 6 May 2027 to elect councillors to the new Unitary Council(s) (shadow authority to start off with)
 - New Unitary Council(s) go live on 1 April 2028
- Once the Structural Change Order has been approved by Parliament, current councils will have to ask permission from the 'new council' for their area if they wish to spend over £100,000 revenue or £1m capital (Section 24 notice)
- Devolution – the Government are making it clear that they want to see a Mayor at Strategic Authority level and that it will be harder to draw down funding without it. Types of funding for transport, local infrastructure, skills and employment, housing, strategic planning, economic development and regeneration, environment and net zero, public safety.
- The Government want to see areas join up to have a Mayor for combined areas. The areas need to have a minimum population of 1.5 million. Locally that would potentially mean Devon and Cornwall having a Mayor. However, Cornwall are not keen on this proposal.
- Community Asset Transfer – EDDC are keen to start conversations with Town and Parish Councils regarding the transfer of assets, which could include public toilets, public realm, children's play areas, car parks, parks/country parks, sports pitches and cemeteries.

Exeter City Council:

- Exeter City Council's proposal will focus on 3 Unitary councils
 - A Unitary council based on Exeter City Council and surrounding area (including 28 parishes from East Devon [including Whimble], 15 parishes from Teignbridge and 6 parishes from Mid Devon);
 - A unitary council based on the City of Plymouth and adjacent areas;
 - A unitary council covering the rest of Devon focusing on the rural and coastal areas
- The reason for this proposed model from Exeter is to promote the two growth hubs of Exeter and Plymouth, as well as the coastal and rural nature of the rest of Devon.
- The proposal is absolutely not about abolishing existing Town and Parish Councils

- The Government do not support the setting up of a Town Council for Exeter so it would be an unparished area.
- Exeter City Council are keen to work with the Town and Parish Councils included in its proposal to understand the challenges facing them and how this would feed into the new unitary (whichever model is chosen).

DALC Steering Group

- Devon County Council are keen to work with the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) to start considering what Local Area Networks/Committee might look like
- A number of District Councils are already arranging meetings with Town and Parish Councils to discuss asset transfer
- Concern over how assets will be impacted in unparished areas (e.g. Exeter and Plymouth if they are not able to set up a Town Council)

Councillor Dearden arrived to the meeting at 8.20pm and chaired the meeting from this point onwards.

83. Environment & Community

i) Community Speed Watch initiative

The Clerk confirmed that, following the last meeting and article in Whimble News, no volunteers had come forward to join the Community Speed Watch Initiative.

Discussion took place around:

- Given the matters discussed earlier in the agenda regarding increased traffic and speeding, a Community Speed Watch group really is needed in order to lobby other organisations to make changes in the village
- An evidence base is needed to show traffic and speeding as being a sustained and consistent problem (across seasons, school holidays, non school holidays)
- Ottery St Mary monitored traffic and speeding for a prolonged period of time, to build up the evidence base before changes were made.
- The Council is not really going to be able to do anything if it doesn't have the evidence to demonstrate the need for change and it needs the support of the village to achieve this

Councillors asked the Clerk to do a final call for Community Speed Watch volunteers in the next edition of Whimble News, on Facebook and on the Council website and noticeboard.

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

The Clerk updated that she had met with Cllrs Trimblett and Patrick to review the information that had come forward from the play equipment suppliers. At that meeting the councillors discounted a number of options which they felt were not in keeping with the Parish Field or were too expensive. Four suppliers remain on the list, and the Working Group now plan to meet with them to discuss their proposals further.

The Clerk is now in the process of liaising with Cllrs Trimblett and Patrick and the chosen play equipment suppliers to get meetings in the diary.

iii) To receive an update on the Town Lane Project

The Clerk confirmed that she is liaising with the selected supplier to arrange a date for the works to be carried out.

iv) Village Maintenance Schedule

The Clerk confirmed that Martin Jelf and his team had completed the works to clear the weeds from the riverbank and riverbed in The Square. This had been publicised on Facebook and received very positive feedback, which was passed to Mr Jelf and his team.

Devon Arborists have now confirmed that they no longer wish to carry out the works to the Parish Council Car Park. Therefore, the Council will need to revisit the previous quotes and consider these at the next meeting, in order to appoint a new contractor.

The Council **RESOLVED** that quotations for the works to the Parish Council Car Park are added back onto the agenda for the 20 October 2025 meeting.
(*moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive*)

v) The Parish Field

The proposal from Mr and Mrs Goodman was considered under minute 79 and no further discussion took place under this agenda item.

Councillors raised concerns regarding the need to weed the footpaths around the Parish Field as they are looking overgrown. The Clerk to raise this with the Grounds Maintenance contractor.

Councillors also raised concerns regarding the build up of mud to the entrance to the Parish Field, following a period of inclement weather. Discussion took place around the fact that to make structural improvements to the path a structural consultant would need to advise on it and the Environment Agency would need to be contacted if it is in a flood zone.

vi) Other Environment and Community issues

The Clerk provided the following update on issues raised at previous meetings:

River adjacent to footpath between the School and Station

Following the July meeting, the Clerk contacted Network Rail to ask them to cut back and tidy up this area. They confirmed that the responsibility for this area falls to South Western Railway. South Western Railway were then contacted and they have confirmed that the Station Manager is aware of the issues but has identified an ecological issue relating to newts. The Clerk is liaising with the Station Manager for an update.

Hedge adjacent to Heberton Road Allotments

Following the July meeting the Clerk liaised with the Council's Grounds Maintenance contractor regarding the hedge on the highway adjacent to Heberton Close allotments. Mr Jelf quoted a price of £450 plus VAT to cut back the hedge from the start of the allotment boundary to the end of the allotment boundary. The Clerk visited the site with Mr Jelf and advised councillors that the hedge does not look that overgrown and if it is properly cut back it will look distinctly different to the rest of the hedge along that road.

Cllr Dearden suggested that she will liaise with a local farmer to see if they will be cutting back the hedgerow along the length of that stretch of road.

Footpath between Dince Hill Close and West View

Following the July meeting the Clerk logged the complaint regarding the overgrown footpath with DCC Highways. They have been out to inspect it and updated that the overgrown area is in a private garden. DCC are writing to owner under section 154 of the Highways Act 1980, to ask them to cut back the overgrown area within 14 days. If the individual fails to comply with the notice within the period specified, DCC may carry out the work required by the notice and recover the expenses reasonably incurred by them in so doing from the person in default.

The Clerk posted an update on a number of these matters and Mrs Hansford's daughter got in touch. She advised that she has been in touch with DCC to ask them to make the Parish Council responsible for the area of land currently owner by her late mother's estate.

Discussion took place around:

- The fact that this area of land needs to be sorted out
- This area is private land and it would be inappropriate for the Parish Council to become responsible for this area of land or to spend local taxpayers money on it.

The Council **RESOLVED** that:

1. It does not wish to have the ownership of the land currently owned by the late Mrs Hansford's estate
2. The Clerk liaise with Devon County Council to ask them to write to Mrs Hansfords Estate and Daughter with a Section 154 notice.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Venton)

Arch over pedestrian exit from Parish Car Park

Following the July meeting the Clerk contacted DCC and Mr Griffiths to try and ascertain who owns the arch over the pedestrian exit from the Parish Car Park. DCC have confirmed that it is not them but have completed a Land Registry search and provided details of the owners. The Clerk will be writing to them shortly and will provide an update at the next meeting.

Overgrown trees in The Square

Following the July meeting the Clerk reported the overgrown trees in The Square to DCC. They have been out and inspected them and cut back the trees adjacent to the Highway.

84. Allotments

The Clerk advised that Mr Jelf and his team have now cut back and tidied up Heberton Close Allotments and would be doing Grove Road Allotments shortly. Mr Jelf has suggested that it would be sensible to add the communal areas to the schedule of works. He has quoted £75 plus VAT per cut – this would cover the orchard/tree section at the end and the communal section at the top of Heberton Close.

Councillors asked the Clerk to liaise with Mr Jelf to update the schedule of works for 2026/27.

The Council **RESOLVED** to add 4-5 cuts a year of the allotment communal areas to the Grounds Maintenance schedule of works for 2026/2027 onwards.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)

The Clerk confirmed that once the grounds maintenance works at Grove Road have been completed, she will liaise with people on the waiting list to arrange visits to show them around the allotment sites and to let them know which plots are available.

The Council discussed the future of the allotments given that Exeter Diocese are likely to try to increase the rent charge price again next year. Councillors asked the Clerk to contact Savills

(the Diocese's representatives) to find out if they are planning to increase the rent charge and to ask what their long term plans are for the Grove Road site. Once the Council receives an answer to that, the Council will consider all options and consult with allotment tenants.

85. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Olive updated that he is working on the Landscape Assessment which will form part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan. He is also working with the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at EDDC to contact the landowners to discuss obtaining their land for affordable housing.

Discussions took place around:

- The timeline for completing and submitting the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors expressed concerns that a number of members of the public were asking when the Neighbourhood Plan would be completed.
- Whether or not to include an allocation for affordable housing within the Plan. Based on public feedback obtained during the process, the Council resolved to include a site allocation for affordable housing within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- What the process would be if no affordable housing allocation were to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Olive advised that if this were the case the draft Plan could come to the Council at the December meeting. If approved, it would be submitted to EDDC. Two rounds of consultation would then need to take place (Regulation 21 and 22). Following that a formal examination of the Plan would take place and then a Referendum would take place for local people to vote on whether to adopt the Plan.
- Whether the Plan could be submitted without the affordable housing allocation and then an affordable housing allocation added further down the line.
- Previously the Council employed a consultant to vet the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultant has already been paid from the previously obtained Neighbourhood Plan grant funding so councillors felt it would be appropriate to have the Plan independently reviewed before submitting to EDDC.

The Council **RESOLVED** to ask Cllr Olive to liaise with the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at East Devon District Council on the council's options for bringing forward the Neighbourhood Plan without a housing allocation and then adding one in afterwards.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)

86. Planning

i) Planning application **25/1674/FUL – Larkbeare Court, Holly Ball Lane, Whimple, Exeter, EX5 2QX**. Roofing over existing slurry store (1).

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

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Trimblett)

ii) Planning application **25/1675/FUL – Larkbeare Court, Holly Ball Lane, Whimple, Exeter, EX5 2QX**. Roofing over existing slurry store (2).

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

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Trimblett)

iii) Planning application **25/1098/FUL – Lane West of Escot Park Estate Talaton**.

Construction and operation of a ground mounted solar farm and associated landscaping and ecological habitat, with permission being required for 40 years, comprising solar arrays, equipment housing, sub-station, fencing, ancillary equipment and associated development; temporary change of use of land for construction compound (off site).

Discussion took place around:

- The Council has been consulted on this application as a neighbouring Parish Council as it sits outside of the Whimble boundary.
- Concerns that the roads around the construction site are not wide enough for large vehicles and will cause problems for local road users
- Concerns that the development is a large scale development in green fields and will have a material impact on the landscape character and visual impact

The Council **RESOLVED** to object to the application on the grounds of accessibility and traffic to site, and the landscape character and visual impact.

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)

87. Finance

i) Summary receipts and payments for 2025/26 to 31 July 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summary of receipts and payments to 31 July 2025
(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive)

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

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end July 2025, with the amount in the Current Account totalling to £20,330.15.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive)

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

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

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive)

iv) Summary receipts and payments for 2025/26 to 31 August 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summary of receipts and payments to 31 August 2025
(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive)

v) Unity Bank current account reconciliation as at the end August 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end August 2025, with the amount in the Current Account totalling to £18,326.96

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive)

vi) Unity Bank savings account reconciliation as at the end August 2025

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account reconciliation to end August 2025, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £59,823.37.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive)

vii) To retrospectively approve the schedule of payments for August 2025 totalling £2,003.19, which included payments for:

Whimble Victory Hall hire July 2025 = £12.50

Pro Lawn grass cutting session August 2025 = £264.00

Pro Lawn clearing and tidying of riverbed and riverbank in The Square = £660.00

Clerk salary; August 2025 = £781.33

HMRC PAYE and Employers NIC; August 2025 = £279.36
Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/07/25 to 31/07/25 = £6.00

As per the Council's Scheme of delegation (approved in May 2025) the process to be following during the summer recess is that the Parish Clerk sends the schedule of payments and invoices to councillors, with written permission being obtained from the Chair and/or Vice Chair. Payments are then made as per the normal online banking being signed off by two councillors. The schedule of payments to be formally ratified at the first available properly convened meeting of the Council.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the retrospective schedule of payments for August 2025.
(*proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive*)

viii) To approve the schedule of payments for September 2025 totalling £1,958.29 which included payments for:

PKF Littlejohn External Audit Fee for 2024/25 = £378.00
Vision ICT annual website and email hosting and support = £513.60
Clerk salary; September 2025 = £781.33
HMRC PAYE and Employers NIC; September 2025 = £279.36
Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/08/25 to 31/08/25 = £6.00

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments for September 2025.
(*proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive*)

ix) Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26 as at end August 2025

The Clerk confirmed that funding from WACY totalling £2,023 had been received into the savings account.

£500 had been moved from the Locality Budget Ear Marked Reserve to the general fund to cover the works to the riverbed and riverbank in The Square, which totalled to £550 (excluding VAT).

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the budget monitoring report as at end August 2025
(*Proposed by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Olive*)

x) Local Government Pay Award 2025/26

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the LG Pay Award for the 2025/26 financial year taking the hourly pay from £16.10 to £16.62 per hour, and to pay backpay to the Clerk from April 2025. This is to be calculated as part of the Clerk's Salary payment for October and brought to the meeting in October for approval.

(*moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive*)

88. Finance Proposal

Councillors considered a proposal from the Clerk regarding opening another savings account and moving money into a new Ear Marked Reserve.

New Savings Account

The proposal is that a new savings account is set up with Unity Trust Bank to maximise the interest that the Council receives. Once opened the Council would transfer all but £500 from the current account into the savings account and the precept would be paid into this account in future years. Money would be transferred from the savings account to the current account to cover the monthly schedule of payments.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

1. Set up a second savings account with Unity Trust Bank
2. Once set up, transfer all but £500 from the current account into the savings account
3. Each month a transfer schedule (covering the total amount of the schedule of payments) is approved by the Council.

(Moved Cllr Olive; seconded Cllr Venton)

Ear Marked Reserve

The amount of £2023.40 has been received from WACY and this is now in the savings account containing the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR). The proposal is to set up a new EMR to be called Parish Field Goal Mouth and the sum of £2023.40 to be transferred across to it on the finance system.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

1. Set up a new EMR called Parish Field Goal Mouth
2. Transfer the sum of £2023.40 to the new EMR when it has been set up on the

(Moved Cllr Olive; seconded Cllr Dearden)

89. Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024/25 – External Auditors report

The Clerk confirmed that the External Audit by PKF Littlejohn has been completed, and the Council has been given a clean bill of health. The audited Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, External Audit report and Notice of conclusion of audit have been published on the Council website and on the Noticeboard.

The external audit report raised other matters relating to the Council's Risk Management arrangements and VAT reclaims. Both of these items were flagged up by the Council and included on the Internal Auditors report. A statement containing the Council's response to the external auditors comments has been published on the website and contains the following information:

Risk Management

During the 2024/25 financial year, Whimble Parish Council had a Risk Management Strategy and considered risks while discussing plans and actions. What was not in place was an up to date risk assessment that was considered on a regular basis. The Council has an action plan to strengthen its risk management arrangements during the 2025/26 financial year. This includes:

- ✓ Reviewing and approving the Risk Management Strategy (approved by Council on 19 May 2025 and published on the website)
- ✓ Reviewing and approving the Council's risk assessment (approved by Council on 19 May 2025)
- ✓ Reviewing the risk assessment on a quarterly basis to identify and new and emerging risks as well as tracking progress of existing risks (Quarter 1 review went to the Council on 21 July 2025 and Quarter 2 will be considered in October 2025)

VAT reclaim

The VAT reclaims for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years were completed in a prompt manner in April 2024 and 2025 respectively. The Clerk (as the Responsible Financial Officer) completes the VAT reclaim in April each year immediately after the financial year end has finished.

The Clerk identified that an old VAT reclaim had not been completed for the 2022/23 financial year. A VAT reclaim was received in May 2023 and it was assumed that this was for the

2022/23 financial year when it was actually for the 2021/22 financial year. This was during the period when the former clerk left in early 2023, an interim clerk was in post until July 2023 when the current clerk started in post. The Clerk has pulled together all of the VAT invoices for the 2022/23 financial year and a reclaim will be submitted to the HMRC shortly.

90. Whimble History Society Funding

Cllr Dearden advised the Council that she had discussed funding with a representative from Whimble History Society who have a revenue funding shortfall. The History Society has asked if the Parish Council would be able to assist them with funding for day to day revenue spending.

Discussion took place around:

- The Council recognises the good work carried out by Whimble History Society.
- Whether it was appropriate for the Parish Council to spend taxpayers' money on supporting the Whimble History Society
- That as a registered charity the Whimble History Society is able to apply for funding from a range of organisations.
- The Council has regularly provided funding for projects being undertaken by Whimble History Society
- The Council's Grant and Donations Policy does not allow the Council to provide additional funding to the History Society due to the following criteria:
 - Only one application for a grant in each financial year
 - Ongoing commitments to award grants in future years will not be made
 - A limit of £300.00 per organisation will be applied except for exceptional circumstances.
 - The organisation may be asked to demonstrate a clear need for financial support by providing a description of the project / activity for which a contribution is needed
 - A set of audited accounts or suitable financial statement may be required to ensure there is a genuine need for a grant

The Council **RESOLVED** that it would not be able to provide Whimble History Society with additional funding and asked the Clerk to write to them to confirm this.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)

91. Cranbrook Community Governance Review

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

- The Cranbrook Community Governance Review is now live
- There is a page on the EDDC website relating to the Community Governance Review which can be found at <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/community-governance-review>
- EDDC have sent a letter and leaflet to residents, businesses and organisations that are in the potentially affected area. This explains what the review is, why it is being carried out and invites them to respond to the consultation.
- Asking for the council's help to promote the consultation locally, particularly with smaller organisations such as charities, community groups, voluntary organisations etc that do not have a fixed premises
- There will be social media posts and press coverings in the coming weeks also to bring the review to peoples attention.
- The consultation closes on 24th October 2025.

- In the meantime, if anyone has any queries or requires assistance responding, please email cranbrookcgr@eastdevon.gov.uk

The Council **RESOLVED** that the Council's response to the Cranbrook Community Governance Review be considered at the Planning Meeting taking place on Monday 6 October 2025.
(*Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Olive*)

92. Community Engagement – Improving Communication

Councillors considered the Clerk's paper containing suggestions for improving the council's communication with local people.

Discussion took place around:

- Adding a QR code to each agenda so that members of the public can scan it and be taken to the full agenda pack on the Council website
- Continue to post details of important items – e.g. East Devon District Council Local Plan, consultations, road closures, Cranbrook Community Governance Review, Local Government Reorganisation, etc on the Council website and both the Whimble Parish Council and Whimble What's On Facebook pages
- After each meeting (Planning and Council) publish a list of decisions that have been made – on the website, Facebook pages and noticeboard. On the noticeboard copy add a QR code to take people to the full minutes.
- Do a regular update on what the Council is working on, on the Whimble Parish Council and Whimble What's On Facebook pages
- Continue to do a regular column in Whimble News.
- Produce articles to talk about the projects the council is working on
- Do updates to explain what the Parish Council can and can't do, and how the Council works
- Putting together a communications plan focused for groups of residents that might be impacted by specific issues (e.g. allocations in the EDDC Emerging Local Plan) – Cllr Venton offered to put something together to bring back to the October Council meeting
- That the photos on the website need to be updated. Cllr Olive offered to take photos of councillors and forward them to the Clerk so that they could be updated on the website.

The Council **RESOLVED** to implement the above listed bullet points to improve communication with local people.
(*Moved Cllr Olive; seconded Cllr Venton*)

93. Forward Plan

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

- Financial reports
- Planning applications (if appropriate)
- Risk Assessment review – quarter 2
- Internal Control checklist – quarter 2
- Local Government Reorganisation
- Communications Plan
- Christmas plans
- Data Protection Policy (update)
- Data Breach Policy (update)
- Freedom of Information Policy and Model Publication Scheme (updates)

- Privacy notices (update)

94. Correspondence

The Council considered the following correspondence:

- i) An email from Ms Snell regarding Slewton Play Area and whether a 'no dogs' sign could be located there. *The Clerk advised that she was liaising with EDDC over this request.*
- ii) An email from EDDC regarding how EDDC communicates and collaborates with Town & Parish Councils. The consultation closes on 27 October 2025. *Councillors asked the Clerk to add this item to the October Council meeting.*
- iii) An email from the Neighbourhood Planning Officer which included the Neighbourhood Plan newsletter for summer. *The Clerk confirmed that this had been sent this to all councillors prior to the meeting.*
- iv) Emails from DCC Highways regarding road closures. The Clerk advised that Plumtree Lane would be closed from Tuesday 28 to Thursday 30 October 2025 and that no alternative route would be available during that time.
- v) An email from Whimble News regarding a request for funding from the Parish Council. *The Clerk confirmed that she had sent Whimble News colleagues the Grants and Donations Policy and application form and advised that applications would next be considered at the November 2025 Council meeting.*
- vi) An email from Whimble News advising that the deadline for the next article is Friday 19 September 2025. *Councillors agreed that the items to go into the article would be a final call for volunteers for the Community Speed Watch Initiative, works to the riverbed and riverbank in The Square, council meeting dates for the rest of the year, the setting up on a page on the website relating to the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan, councillor vacancies and details on how the Council is looking to improve the way it communicates with local people.*
- vii) An email from Mr James Woollam asking for the Council's permission to temporarily close the Parish Field on Saturday 1 November 2025 for the bonfire night celebrations. Mr Woollam had confirmed that the Parish Council doesn't need to do anything in respect of this request. *Councillors were happy to agree to this request and asked the Clerk to let Mr Woollam know.*

95. Chair's Business

The following items were raised under Chair's Business:

- Cllr Dearden asked the Clerk to liaise with Ms Fiona Clark and the Church to confirm the arrangements and timings for Remembrance Sunday.
- Cllr Olive raised the idea of having a Parish Council logo and to discuss this with the Primary School again to float the idea of having a competition that school children could participate in.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

The next Planning Meetings will be held on Monday 6 October 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 20 October 2025 at 7pm.

Signed by Chair:

20/10/2025

DRAFT