

**WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2026, 7pm**

Present: Cllr Denise Dearden
Cllr Jo Yarwood
Cllr Sarah Johnson
Cllr Lynda Patrick
Cllr Becky Venton
Cllr Todd Olive

Also present: Amy Tregellas (Parish Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

Cllr Connor was present to provide her County Councillor report and left the meeting after that item of business.

177. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Trimblett.
Cllr Johnson arrive to the meeting at 7.10pm.
Cllr Olive arrived to the meeting at 7.35pm

178. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

179. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

180. Minutes of the previous meeting of Whimple Parish Council

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Whimple Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 19 January 2026.

(proposed by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Patrick)

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

- Minute 159 (Previous minutes) – The abandoned vehicle left in the Parish Car Park was seized by the Police and removed from the car park.
- Minute 162 (Village Maintenance) – The Clerk advised that she sent an email to the Neighbourhood Highways Officer regarding the tarmac asking for advice, but to date no response has been received
- Minute 166 (Insurance) – the new Insurance Policy is up and running.
- Minutes 168, 169, 170, 171 and 172 – Internal control checklist, risk assessment, asset register and IT policies have been published on the website.

Cllr Johnson arrived to the meeting at 7.10pm.

181. District and County Councillor reports:

East Devon District Council (EDDC) Councillor report

Cllr Olive was not at the meeting at this point and had not sent a report.

Devon County Council (DCC) Councillor Report

Councillor Connor had sent a report and was present to provide an update.

Cllr Connor confirmed that roads is the key area of focus at the moment. She advised that prior to last week there were 2,900 road safety deficits outstanding and a further 1,600 reports have been made in the last week. DCC Highways teams are assessing 600 issues a day and Highways officers have been redeployed from proactive works to deal with the potholes. Cllr Connor advised that in some cases the repairs are classed as an emergency repair to make the highway of a useable standard. The wet weather means that some potholes will have to have further works done to them in the near future. Highways teams are working weekends and evenings due to the high priority of fixing the roads. DCC are also encouraging the Road Warden Scheme where local residents undergo Chapter 8 training and are then able to carry out repairs to the roads with materials provided by DCC. The plus of having local Road Warden teams is that the repairs can be carried out when the weather is good.

Councillors raised a number of concerns with Cllr Connor that had been raised by local residents. This included the concerns raised on Facebook relating to blocked drains and standing water, with this potentially leading to potholes developing. The Clerk advised that she had been urging local residents to report the issues on the DCC website so that DCC know the extent of the problem. However, local residents have said that they get little or no response from DCC Highways. Councillors raised specific concerns that had previously been report including the state of Grove Road and Aller Grove and the blocked storm drain on Talaton Road between The Limes and Station Road. Cllr Connor confirmed that she would look into these matters.

Councillors discussed whether the Parish Council should consider employing a Parish Lengths person to carry out tasks like clearing drains and repairing potholes on an as and when needed basis. Councillors asked the Clerk to look into this in more detail.

Cllr Connor left the meeting after giving her report.

182. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon

The Clerk advised that the public consultation on the options for LGR in Devon is open and closes on 26 March 2026. Councillors asked the Clerk to include this on the Planning Meeting agenda on Monday 2 March so that it is considered before any pre-election period commences. The Clerk confirmed that she would also post the information on Facebook and refer the public to the website www.devonlgr.co.uk

Cllr Olive arrived to the meeting at 7.35pm, during this item of business.

183. Environment & Community

i) Slewtton Crescent Play Area Report

The Clerk advised that two out of three of the preferred suppliers had not provided the information in time for the report to come to this meeting. The information has now been received. The Clerk is meeting with the Councillor Working Group on Friday 20 February to consider the final proposals and quotations and to review the report. The report will come forward to the 16 March 2026 Council meeting.

ii) Village Maintenance

No issues were raised under this item of business.

v) Other Environment and Community issues

Items relating to drains, flooding and potholes had been raised with DCC Councillor Cathy Conor under minute 181. Councillors raised the following items:

Fencing near the water treatment works is falling over and needs to be fixed / replaced.
The fence alongside the Dince Hill footpath needs to be repaired as it is starting to fail.

Councillors asked the Clerk to follow up with the relevant people regarding the removal of items from the former Chair's barn.

184. Allotments

The Clerk advised that a lot of work had been done on allotments since the January meeting. Invoices were sent to all allotment holders on 27 January 2026. A significant number of people have already paid and reminders were sent out today to those that had not yet paid. The Clerk confirmed that if individuals haven't paid by the end of February then they would forfeit their allotment plot and it would be allocated to someone on the waiting list.

In terms of current tenants, a number of individuals had not been heard from for the 18 months – 2 years so it has been assumed that they no longer wish to have the plot. These plots have been allocated to people on the waiting list.

After the last meeting, the Clerk posted information on Facebook and in Whimble News asking anyone interested in having an allotment to get in touch so that they could be added to the waiting list. This generated a significant amount of interest and all people on the waiting list have been allocated a plot. As per the Allotments Policy, Whimble residents have been allocated plots first. The Clerk has met with people at the allotments so that they could view the plots and has allocated them based on their position on the waiting list. Contracts have gone out to all new allotment holders.

Grove Road

Now have 100% occupancy

Heberton Close

7 new tenants who are Whimble residents. The last two people on the waiting list are non-Whimble residents and there are two plots left to allocate. Once this has been done there will be 100% occupancy.

The Clerk advised that she would visit the allotments when the weather has improved to clearly mark out and number the allotment plots at Heberton Close so that the new tenants a clear as to the footprint of their allotment.

The Clerk also advised that some new tenants had asked if they could request permission to plant fruit bushes and to erect items such as a rabbit proof barrier, a shed, greenhouse or polytunnel. A question was also asked as to whether dogs were allowed within the allotment site.

The Allotment Policy does not allow pets on site. Councillors confirmed that they were happy for fruit bushes to be planted as long as they are kept within the appropriate plot and are kept under control. Councillors were also agreeable to sheds or greenhouses being erected but in terms of a polytunnel asked that the size be confirmed before permission is granted.

185. Neighbourhood Plan

The councillors considered the report and draft sections 1 to 4 of the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) which included:

- Section 1 – Introduction
 - The Neighbourhood Area

- Welcome to Whimble: Parish Profile and Plan Context
- Structure of the Plan
- Section 2 – Contextualising the Plan
 - Hierarchy of Planning Policy
 - Sustainable Development and National Planning Policy Framework
 - Local Policy Context
 - Requirements and purpose of the Whimble Neighbourhood Plan
- Section 3 – Our Plan Vision, Aims and Objectives
- Section 4 – Landscape and Natural Environment
 - Context
 - Landscape Conservation
 - Ecological Conservation and Enhancement
 - Whimble Orchards

Discussion took place around:

- The chapters being well written so that they could be easily understood by members of the public who do not have a planning background.
- Whether the vision should be shorter. Cllr Olive confirmed that the National Planning Policy Framework and guidance asks that the vision sets out the aspiration as to what people want the local area to look like, hence the list of pledges.
- Whether Policy one should make reference to the Green Wedge. Cllr Olive confirmed that this is covered in the chapter on the Built and Historic Environment. It was suggested that it could be mentioned in Policy One with a note to confirm where it is covered in the Plan.
- Whether the wording should be ‘Whimble’ or ‘We’ (particularly in relation to Section 3: Our Plan Vision, Aims and Objectives).

Cllr Olive asked councillors to send any final comments to him by the 28 February 2026. This part of the Plan can then be submitted to the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at EDDC for review.

Cllr Olive provided an update of actions that had taken place since the January meeting, which included:

- The EDDC Neighbourhood Planning Officer is working on the scoping report on whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment will be needed.
- A letter has been drafted to go out to local landowners in respect of whether they would be willing to make their land available for an affordable housing allocation. Once responses have been received the Council will consider this information and will have a clear picture as to whether there are any potential sites for affordable housing.
- A specification has been drafted relating to Masterplanning the two sites in the emerging EDDC Local Plan i.e. Whim 08 and Whim 11. It is anticipated that bids would be considered at the March Council meeting.

186. Planning

The Council considered the following Planning Applications:

- i) **26/0114/HRN – Larkbeare Court, Holly Ball Lane, Whimble, EX5 2QX**
Removal of 18m of hedgerow

Discussion took place around:

- This being a straightforward application
- No public comments or comments from statutory consultees.

The Council **RESOLVED** that it had no objection to the application.

(Moved Cllr Yarwood; seconded Cllr Dearden)

ii) 26/0125/FUL – Oak Grove, Strete Raleigh, Whimple, EX5 2PP

Agricultural and forestry storage building with extension to existing access (resubmission of 25/2254/FUL).

Discussion took place around:

- There are no public comments on this application
- There were statutory consultee comments from Exeter Airport and the East Devon District Council Tree Officer.
- The EDDC Tree Officer comments set out some points that should be adhered with.

The Council **RESOLVED** that it has no objection to the application, as long as all comments from the EDDC Tree Officer are adhered with.

(moved Cllr Yarwood; seconded Cllr Dearden)

187. Finance

i) Summary receipts and payments for 2025/26 to 31 January 2026

The Clerk advised that the summary included income from allotment rents and bank interest of £115.49 on the second savings account (for the period of 1 November 2025 to 31 January 2026). Expenditure was as listed on the payment schedule for January 2026.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summary of receipts and payments to 31 January 2026
(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

ii) Unity Bank current account reconciliation as at the end January 2026

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end January 2026, with the amount in the Current Account totalling to £670.69.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

iii) Unity Bank savings account 1 reconciliation as at the end January 2026

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account 1 (earmarked reserves) reconciliation to end January 2026, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £60,487.04.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

iv) Unity Bank savings account 2 reconciliation as at the end January 2026

The Clerk advised that no bank interest totalling £115.49 had been received at the end of January 2026. In January a total of £2,107.43 had been transferred from the savings account into the current account (as approved at the January meeting) to cover the payment schedule for January 2026.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account 2 reconciliation to end January 2026, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £19,617.64.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

v) To approve the schedule of payments for February 2026 totalling £1,161.84 which included payments for:

Whimple Victory Hall hire January 2026 = £20.00

Clerk salary February 2026 = £833.65

HMRC PAYE and Employers NIC; February 2026 = £301.19

Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/01/26 to 31/01/26 = £6.00

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments for February 2026.
(*proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood*)

vi) Transfer of funds from Savings Account 2 to the Current Account

The transfer schedule for February 2026 totals £755.87. This is based on leaving £500 in the Current Account at the end of February 2026 (balance at 10 February 2026 was £905.97 less £500 = £405.97; February schedule of payments = £1,161.84 - £405.97 = £755.87)

The Council **RESOLVED** to transfer £755.87 from savings account 2 to the current account to cover the payment schedule for February 2026.
(*moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood*)

vii) Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26 as at end January 2026

Income: The Clerk confirmed that £170 income from allotment rents and £115.49 bank interest had been received in January 2026.

In terms of overall position, to the end of January 2026 income received is £32,944 compared to the budget of £29,293, i.e. better than budgeted by £3,651.

Expenditure: No expenditure other than the January 2026 payment schedule.

The total expenditure figure for the year to date (taking into account any expenditure taken from Ear Marked Reserves) is £25,654. Compared to the budget of £29,793 this gives a small underspend of £4,139. However, the Clerk advised that February and March payments still have to be made so the underspend figure will reduce.

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the budget monitoring report as at end January 2026
(*Moved by Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood*)

188. Cranbrook Community Governance Review (CGR) Consultation

The Clerk advised that the Cranbrook CGR was out for the second round of consultation. The consultation is asking the same questions as the first round of consultation and they are not proposing any changes to the boundaries.

Councillors agreed that the Council's position has not changed since the first round of consultation and that the same comments should be submitted.

Councillors asked the Clerk to promote the consultation on Facebook so that local people have the chance to give their feedback to EDDC, and to make them aware of the Parish Council's response.

The Council **RESOLVED** to submit the same response to the second round of consultation on the Cranbrook Community Governance Review, which was:

*Whimble Parish Council agrees with this proposal, and have the following comments:
The people of Whimble want green space between Whimble and Cranbrook.*

Whimble Parish Council is of the view that the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs) will provide more protection to Whimble than a Green Wedge would as well as the fact that you cannot build through a SANG and the Cranbrook boundary would not be able to come any further East towards Whimble.

The cost of administering and maintaining the Travellers Site and SANGs is expensive. Where the boundary is currently located, these costs would fall to the taxpayers of Whimble even though the proposal is part of the Cranbrook Plan.

Whimble Parish Council has no objection to this proposal so that the Cranbrook boundary matches the Cranbrook Plan and the residents of Cranbrook are taxed for the Travellers Site and SANGs.

*There are no dwellings in Area D so households currently sitting under the Whimble Parish area will remain in that area and would not become part of the Cranbrook Parish area.
(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Venton)*

189. Whimble Annual Parish Meeting 2026

Councillors discussed the date for the Whimble Annual Parish Meeting for 2026. The Clerk confirmed that she could then give local people notice of the date and time of the meeting (in the next edition of Whimble News, on the Council website and on Facebook) and to ensure that reports are received from appropriate people (e.g. DCC Councillor, EDDC Councillor and Chair of the Parish Council),

The Council **RESOLVED** to set the date and time for the Whimble Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 18 May 2026 at 6.30pm.
(moved Cllr Olive; seconded Cllr Patrick)

190. Forward Plan

The Council noted the Forward Plan, which had been updated until the end of the Municipal Year (end of April 2027). Key items to note for March 2026 are

- Finance Reports
- Planning Applications (if appropriate)
- Grant Applications
- Draft Neighbourhood Plan report
- Asset Register
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return timetable for 2025/26

Cllr Venton asked if the updating of the Emergency Plan needed to be added to the forward plan. She advised that she had booked onto a free Devon Community Resilience Forum event. The Clerk confirmed that she would liaise with Cllr Venton about working on the Emergency Plan and the timing of it coming forward to the Council for approval.

191. Correspondence

The Council considered the following correspondence:

Email from EDDC relating to public consultation on the proposed Cranbrook Leisure Centre. *Councillors asked the Clerk to post this information on Facebook so that local residents have the opportunity to comment.*

Email from EDDC regarding consultation on the Draft Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy. *Councillors didn't feel that it was appropriate for the council to respond to this consultation.*

Email from the Devon Association of Local Council's regarding the annual update of the Council's details including any changes to the Clerk or councillors. *The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted the information for Whimble.*

Email from Whimble Victory Hall confirming that they are putting the hire prices up from 1 June 2026. The cost of hiring the Committee room will increase from £5 to £5.50 an hour.

Email from EDDC asking local businesses to complete a survey relating to the cumulative impact of the recent storms.

Email from EDDC inviting the council to a Local Government Reorganisation briefing session on 3 March 2026. *The Council will consider its response at the Planning Meeting on Monday 2 March 2026 so wont attend this session.*

192. Chair's Business

The following items of Chair's business were considered:

Sue Ayres had provided a map of the footpaths. This is to replace the map on the noticeboard in The Square. Cllr Yarwood confirmed that she would look at how easy it would be to replace the existing map.

Councillors raised concerns that a local resident is still trading vehicles from the grass verge near the pedestrian entrance to the Parish Field. This has previously been reported to EDDC and the Clerk confirmed that she would follow it up again.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm

The next Planning Meetings will be held on Monday 2 March 2026 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 16 March 2026 at 7pm.

Signed by Chair:

16/03/2026