

**WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
MONDAY 20 APRIL 2026, 7pm**

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

**Also present:** Amy Tregellas (Parish Clerk)

There was one member of the public present (who left the meeting after the planning application was considered).

**210. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Trimblett and Olive

**211. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**212. Public Participation**

There was one member of the public present who wished to speak on planning application 26/0175/FUL – County House Estate, Whimble, EX5 2NL. Mr Bowker confirmed that he is the applicant and had taken on the electric vehicle charging site in October 2025. He apologised for the retrospective application and confirmed that he was not aware of the need for a change of use when taking on the site. Mr Bowker explained that they had acted quickly to put in facilities due to two people defecating in the electric vehicle charging area, due to the lack of toilet facilities being available. Members of the public have to wait 20 to 30 minutes for their vehicle to charge and public feedback has indicated that the site needs facilities to enable people to go to the toilet and get a drink. The previous application had been refused by East Devon District Council (EDDC) as they suggested people could walk to the Hand and Pen area for facilities. Members of the public have said they don't want to leave their cars whilst they are charging. The application is for temporary facilities for a period of 3 years. The application covers card operated coffee and vending machine and portaloo toilets. They are available for use between the hours of 8am to 6pm at the moment and the electric vehicle charging site is open 24 hours a day. The rental of the building is for 3 years. Mr Bowker confirmed that in the longer term they will be considering different options.

Cllr Dearden decided to move forward agenda item 10 – planning applications so that councillors could ask questions of Mr Bowker.

**213. Planning application 26/0175/FUL – Country House Estate, Whimble, EX5 2NL**

Discussion took place around:

- Whether Mr Bowker was the site owner – he confirmed that he was not. Mr Bowker confirmed that he is renting the area that is a converted double garage where the toilet and vending machines are located.
- That there were two public comments, both of which were objecting to the application
- Whether the length of the application (temporary for 3 years) was appropriate given that the Daisymount services are likely to be up and running in the next 12 months or so

- That EDDC had objected this application recently. The last application had been for building on the field but this one relates to a change of use for an existing barn
- That the electric vehicle site is there and being used. Councillors could see the sense in having facilities there from a public health point of view
- The fact that the application is temporary and can be reviewed again by EDDC when the service station is built
- No cash machines so not encouraging burglars
- The facilities would only be open from 8am to 6pm so could still have the same problem outside of these hours as the charging site is open 24 hours. Mr Bowker confirmed that the person who opens and closes the site several days a week lives very close to the site.
- Whether, if a picnic area was put in, this would make the area more of a destination and the noise would negatively impact on local residents.
- The application would be unlikely to increase traffic to the site as it will just be used by people charging their vehicles

The Council **RESOLVED** that it has no objection to the proposed temporary use application on hygiene and Environmental Health grounds. However, it would not like to see further development on what is already there.

*(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Venton)*

Cllr Dearden thanked Mr Bowker for attending. The Council moved back to agenda item 4

#### **214. 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 16 March 2026.

*(proposed by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Johnson)*

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

- Minute 206 (Local Government Reorganisation consultation) – The clerk confirmed that she had submitted the Council’s response to the consultation.

#### **215. District and County Councillor reports:**

East Devon District Council (EDDC) Councillor report

Cllr Olive was not present and had not provided a report

Devon County Council (DCC) Councillor Report

Councillor Connor was not present but had sent a report. There was no discussion on Cllr Connor’s Report.

#### **216. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon**

The Clerk confirmed that the deadline for the Government consultation on the LGR options for Devon had passed. It is now up to the Secretary of State to decide which option would be best for Devon. According to the timetable, the decision will be announced before the Parliamentary summer recess in July 2026.

#### **217. Environment & Community**

##### **i) Parish Field Play Area Update**

The Clerk advised that the S106 Officer at EDDC had confirmed that her report regarding Whimble S106 monies has been considered and approved by the Leadership Team. We will now be sent the S106 legal paperwork to consider and then the funding will be transferred to the Council.

The Clerk also updated that she had sent the link to all councillors relating to the contract with Creative Play. Councillors didn't have any comments and confirmed they were happy for the Clerk to sign the document on behalf of the Council.

The next steps are:

- Liaising with Creative Play regarding the installation date and pre installation checklist.
- Liaising with the officers at EDDC regarding the installation of the Proludic play equipment
- The need to work out where the Proludic kit would be installed and whether the BMX grass mounds need to be flattened.
- Getting quotes if the grass mounds need to be flattened
- Whether the Council could make an application to DCC Cllr Connor's Locality Budget to go towards the cost

## ii) Parish Lengthsman

Councillors considered the draft job role that the Clerk had put together.

The Clerk advised that she had obtained the job role from North Tawton Council and had amended it to meet the jobs required in Whimple.

The grass cutting and dog and litter bin emptying had not been included in the job role because the Council already has contractors doing that work.

Discussion took place around:

- The draft job role being a good starting point for discussion and consideration
- Whether the role would be an employee of the Council or a self employed role
- The fact that the Council has not set a budget to cover this work
- Whether the money in the Village Maintenance Earmarked Reserve (EMR) would be used to cover this role
- Whether the role of footpath inspector should be included in the job role. Councillors felt it should.
- Whether hedge cutting should be added
- To include carrying out visual checks and reporting defects relating to electrical issues such as streetlights.
- Whether other Councils could provide information on the number of hours for their roles and potential cost.
- The Clerk to review the list and split into the jobs per month to give a clearer picture of what would be needed, when.
- Whether the filling of potholes would allow DCC to avoid their responsibility for potholes in the village in the future
- Consideration as to how the individual would be managed
- The Grounds Maintenance contract needs to be reviewed this year

The Council **RESOLVED** to bring back the list of tasks split by month as well as a rough idea of costs to the June 2026 meeting. That the schedule of works for the Grounds Maintenance contract is also brought to the June meeting for consideration.

*(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)*

## iii) Village Maintenance

No matters for this item of business

## iv) Other Environment and Community issues

The Clerk advised that a local resident had been in touch about the BMX grassy mounds in the Parish Field and had asked for permission to do some maintenance on them. The request was

refused due to the potential play area changes. The Clerk confirmed that she went back to the individual and explained why the answer was 'no'.

Several local residents have been in touch about the terrible state of Lilypond Lane and Woodhayes Lane. They are asking the Council to liaise with Highways to get repairs carried out. The road issues have previously been logged with highways but nothing has happened to date. The other issue is that the drains have not been cleared for years which is also contributing to potholes due to standing water during periods of inclement weather. The Clerk advised that she had contacted the Neighbourhood Highways Officer an email and copied Cllr Connor into it to ask when these roads will be repaired.

A local resident has been in touch regarding the possibility of constructing a bridge over the stream from Slewtton Crescent. He asked if the council does not currently have plans or the appetite to pursue such a project, would it be open to a group of volunteers coming together to build the bridge themselves? The Clerk advised that she had responded to the member of the public explaining the history and current position of the Council, and that any bridge would have to meet strict conditions set out by the Environment Agency.

A local resident has been in touch to ask the Council to chase Vistry Homes up regarding the grass cutting in Slewtton Crescent. The Clerk confirmed she has sent Vistry an email.

Councillors again raised concerns about the member of the public selling cars on the grass area near the pedestrian entrance to the Parish Field. The Clerk advised that she is liaising again with EDDC regarding this matter and would chase up the relevant officer.

Councillors raised concerns about dumpy bags of rubbish that had been dumped along the public footpath entrance to the Parish Field. The Clerk to report this to EDDC.

The Clerk advised that she had been having problems registering the defibrillator machine at the Whimple Victory Hall due to the device having been partially registered before by the former councillor. The guidance sent across by the Ambulance Trust did not assist as it didn't look anything like the actual online site screens the Clerk was being directed to. The Clerk advised that she would continue to liaise with the relevant people to try to get this matter resolved and the device registered as soon as possible.

## **218. Allotments**

Following on from the March meeting update, the Clerk advised that:

- Allotment receipts have been fully reconciled to the finance system and bank statements. Total income received in 2025/26 was £743.24
- Invoices were sent to all new allotment holders on 1 April 2026. All but one have now paid
- Allotment receipts reconciliation will be completed at the end April to come to the May meeting.
- All allotment plots have potentially been taken. Two plots still vacant but two people on the waiting list so should be allocated in the next couple of weeks.
- In the letter sent to all new allotment tenants with the invoice, it asked them to let the Clerk know if there is any rubbish left by the former tenant that needs to be removed. Once the Clerk has an idea of this arrangements will be made for someone to collect and dispose of it.
- Allotment inspection planned to take place in May 2026.

**219. Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr Olive was not present and there was no update on the Neighbourhood Plan. It was decided to set up a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group at the May 2026 meeting.

**220. Finance**

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

The Clerk advised that the summary included receipts of £107.02 allotment fees and bank interest of £ 375.63 (covering 1 January to 31 March 2026). The expenditure was as listed on the payment schedule for March 2026.

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

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

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end March 2026, with the amount in the Current Account totalling to £500.00.

*(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)*

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

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account 1 (earmarked reserves) reconciliation to end March 2026, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £60,799.00.

*(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)*

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

In March a total of £846.15 had been transferred from the savings account into the current account (as approved at the March meeting) to cover the payment schedule for March 2026. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account 2 reconciliation to end March 2026, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £18,079.29.

*(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)*

**v) To approve the schedule of payments for April 2026** totalling £4,303.36 which included payments for:

Whimple Victory Hall hire March 2026 = £20.00

Devon Association of Local Councils annual subscription = £656.11

Pro Lawn grass cutting sessions February and March 2026 = £643.20

Pro Lawn strimming Parish Field boundary = £324.00

Pro Lawn grass cutting and weed spraying = £420.00

Pro Lawn grass cutting in communal areas = £204.00

Rialtas Finance System annual support and maintenance charge = £621.60

Paul Russell, Internal Audit = £225.00

Source for Water bill; Parish Field = £26.17

Clerk salary April 2026 = £847.10

HMRC PAYE and Employers NIC; April 2026 = £309.18

Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/03/26 to 31/03/26 = £7.00

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments for April 2026.

*(proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)*

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

The transfer schedule for April 2026 totals £1,464.59. This is based on leaving £500 in the Current Account at the end of April 2026 (balance at 14 April 2026 was £3,338.77 less £500 = £2,838.77; April schedule of payments = £4,303.36 - £2,838.77 = £1,464.59)

The Council **RESOLVED** to transfer £1,464.59 from savings account 2 to the current account to cover the payment schedule for April 2026.  
(*moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood*)

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

The Clerk confirmed that the year end report for the 2025/26 financial year would be coming to the May meeting.

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

**viii) VAT Claim for 2025/26**

The Clerk confirmed that the VAT reclaim for 2025/26 had been submitted to HMRC on 7 April 2026 for the amount of £2,500.30, and the amount had been received into the Council's bank account a few days later.

The Clerk advised that she had found a slight issue with the VAT report generated from Rialtas. It didn't balance to the cashbook due to the expense claim made which included some items that had VAT and others that didn't. Liaison with colleagues at Rialtas has resolved this issue and the adjustment has been made to the VAT reclaim for 2026/27 (totalling about £6).

**221. Progress update on the 2025/26 financial year**

The Clerk confirmed that the year end close down process has been completed.

The year end balances held by the Council match the information on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) so everything balances.

The information was sent to the Internal Auditor at the start of April. The Internal Audit has been completed and the report will be considered at the May 2026 meeting along with the AGAR paperwork.

**222. Update on Reserves as at 31 March 2026**

The Clerk updated councillors that the balance held in the Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2026 is £60,155.53, which is split as follows:

- Village Maintenance £4,600 (£400 spent during 2025/26 on clearing the overgrown weeds, foliage and brambles from the Parish Car Park).
- Neighbourhood Plan £7,500
- Elections £1,100
- Lomas Seat £nil (£500 spent on repairs to the seat in 2025/26 and the remaining £500 moved into General Reserves)
- Parish Field Play Area £37,806.05
- Town Lane Project £6,626.08 (£886.08 of Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] paid into the EMR and £1,260 spent on clearing the old furniture and shelter and cutting back the trees overhanging the site)
- Parish Field Goal Mouth £2,023.40 (money given to the Council by former organisation WACY)
- Defibrillator £500.00

The Clerk advised that the Reserves Policy and update on the balances would be on the May 2026 agenda.

**223. Internal Control Checklist – Quarter 4 2025/26**

The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Trimblett had been sent the relevant information in order to complete the review of the Internal Control Checklist for the period of 1 January to 31 March

2026. Cllr Trimblett had emailed to confirm that she was happy with the checklist plus evidence and that everything was in order. Cllr Trimblett had signed off the checklist.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Internal Control checklist for quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year.

*(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)*

#### **224. Risk Assessment – Quarter 4 review**

The Clerk advised that no new or emerging risks had been added to the risk assessment. Councillors did not have any risks to add at this time.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the risk assessment for quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year.

*(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)*

#### **225. Email and Website Provider**

Councillors discussed and considered whether to switch the Council's email and website provider following a number of issues including the recent email system outage which lasted for 6 days.

The Clerk confirmed that this was not the first time that there had been problems with both the email system and website. Councillors confirmed that they were not happy with this and the lack of communication as to when the system would be back up and running again.

The Clerk also advised that they had not been helpful regarding the website accessibility statement, expecting the Council to pay £145 plus VAT to have a health check MOT rather than just making the amendments to the website to ensure it met the Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.2AA.

At the Planning Meeting on 7 April 2026, councillors asked the Clerk to obtain quotations for the replacement of the email system and website.

The Clerk confirmed that she wanted to be clear on what the Council wants to see from other suppliers in terms of a specification. The Clerk also confirmed that it would be likely that the Council would need to have two different companies – one for the email system and one for the website.

Discussion on the specification was, as follows:

- The email system should be Microsoft based.
- For the website it needs to meet WCAG 2.2AA
- Ensure that agenda pack items can be published with the agenda and minutes on the website
- Ensure that the agenda / minutes page and finance page can be split into financial years
- The Council needs to be able to amend the design of the website and load information ourselves rather than having to rely on the supplier to do it.
- Quotes should consider online cloud storage for council documents
- The font size and layout needs to render to laptops, pcs, tablets and phones.

The Council **RESOLVED** to obtain quotations for both the email system and website, and for them to be considered at the June 2026 meeting.

*(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)*

#### **226. 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 May 2026 are

- Election of Chair for 2026/27 Municipal Year

- Appointment of Vice-Chair for 2026/27 Municipal Year
- Usual Finance Reports
- Planning Applications (if appropriate)
- Neighbourhood Plan report
- Reserves Report
- Finance Report for 2025/26
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26 (including the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements)
- Internal Audit Report for 2025/26
- Updating Policies and Procedures

## 227. Correspondence

The Council considered the following correspondence:

EDDC – invite to Clerk and Planning Chair to attend Parish Forum meeting on 11 June 2026 6pm to 8pm. Covering items relating to planning and LGR

East Devon Listening Event invite 22 April 2026 10am to 12.30pm, Mackerness Hall, Honiton. Focus on VCSE and to share whats been delivered and learnt over the last 3 years.

Jenny Fells re Whimble Fest Community Hub and whether we want a space. This has been confirmed with the Committee and Cllr Venton confirmed she was completing the paperwork.

EDDC – May 14 People’s Emergency Briefing Film. Scott Cinema Exmouth 7.15pm to 9pm. After the film there will be a discussion about what it means for community in Exmouth

Aura Power re construction plans for the solar farm. Road closures Newtown to Whimble Road (south of site) 19 May (3-4 weeks) and then 22 June (1 week).

EDDC Commonplace consultation on East Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan

National Highways – responsibility for the day to day operation, maintenance and renewal of route will transfer to National Highways at the end of September 2026. Applies to A30/35 which is currently under Private Finance Initiative. Email also contains details of list of works taking place over next few months

## 228. Chair’s Business - There were no items of Chair’s business

The meeting closed at 9.01pm

The next Planning Meeting will be held on Tuesday 5 May 2026 at 7pm \* *A planning meeting will be cancelled if no new planning applications are received by the date that the agenda is published (due to the early May Bank Holiday weekend the agenda will be published on Tuesday 28 April 2026).*

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 18 April 2026 at 7pm.

Signed by Chair:

18/05/2026