

WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 18 MAY 2026, 7.15pm

Present: Cllr Denise Dearden
Cllr Jo Yarwood
Cllr Lynda Patrick
Cllr Becky Venton

Also present: Amy Tregellas (Parish Clerk)

There was one member of the public present.

- 1. Election of Chair for the 2026/27 Municipal Year**
The Council **RESOLVED** to election Cllr Denise Dearden to the office of Chair of the Council for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.
(Proposed Cllr Yarwood; seconded Cllr Venton)
- 2. To receive the Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
Cllr Dearden read out her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and duly signed the declaration.
- 3. Appointment of Vice-Chair for the 2026/27 Municipal Year**
The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Jo Yarwood to the role of Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.
(Proposed Cllr Patrick; seconded Cllr Venton)
- 4. To receive the Vice-Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Role**
Cllr Yarwood read out her Declaration of Acceptance of Role and duly signed the declaration.
- 5. Notice of Resignation**
The Clerk advised the Council that Cllr Sarah Johnson had resigned from the Council with immediate effect.
Councillors thanked Cllr Johnson for her work whilst on the Council.
- 6. Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Olive and Trimblett.
- 7. Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 8. Public Participation**
The member of the public present did not wish to speak
- 9. 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 20 April 2026.
(proposed by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Yarwood)
- 10. District and County Councillor reports:**

East Devon District Council (EDDC) Councillor report

Cllr Olive was not present and his update report had been given to the Whimble Annual Parish Meeting.

Devon County Council (DCC) Councillor Report

Cllr Connor was not present and had not sent a report.

11. Environment & Community

i) Community Speed Watch initiative

Cllr Yarwood advised that she was regularly having concerns raised with her by local residents about the speed of vehicles in the Village.

Discussion took place around:

- The fact that the Council had previously tried to set up a Community Speed Watch Scheme but that had only operated a short time due to the co-ordinator resigning and volunteers receiving abuse from drivers.
- The Council has asked for volunteers to start a new CSW Scheme, but no one has come forward.
- Whether something could go into the next Whimble News Article asking drivers to slow down when driving through the Village and pedestrians to be mindful of where they walk.
- Whether the Clerk could find out if Cranbrook have a way of messaging local residents to remind those with children at Whimble Primary School to drive slowly through the Village
- For future planning applications to repeatedly make the request that traffic calming measures needed to be considered for the Village
- To find out information about the cost of extending the 20mph zone

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

The Clerk advised that Creative Play had originally confirmed that the Play Area would be installed in the week commencing 29 June 2026, but this had been moved back a week to start in the week commencing 6 July 2026 (due to WhimbleFest).

The Clerk is meeting with Creative Play on Wednesday 17 June 2026 for the pre installation run through.

Liaison is taking place with colleagues at EDDC regarding the installation of the Proludic equipment.

The Clerk also advised that the S106 agreement had been received from East Devon District Council. She had gone back to EDDC to query the information in the agreement relating to marketing and signage and a satisfactory response had been received from EDDC.

The Council confirmed it is not planning to put up a plaque in the vicinity of the Play Area.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the Clerk sign the S106 agreement with EDDC as the Council's Proper Officer.

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

iii) Village Maintenance

No updates on this item

iv) Village Maintenance Schedule

Councillors raised a number of issues:

Parish Field Planting

Councillors asked that this item be added to the June 2026 agenda for further consideration. Before the meeting the Clerk to investigate if there are any organisations giving away free trees in the autumn.

The Council **RESOLVED** to revisit the proposals for planning the Parish Field Boundary at the June 2026 meeting.

(Moved Cllr Patrick; seconded Cllr Venton)

Footpaths

Councillors raised the issue that the Town Lane path is overgrown. There are trees hanging down on the path going towards The Green. Clarification is needed as to who the land belongs to, i.e. is responsible for cutting the trees and foliage back.

Councillors also raised the issue that the Dince Hill Footpath through to West View Close is overgrown due to conifers growing out from a private residence. Cllr Yarwood to provide the Clerk with the What3words reference so this can be reported to Devon County Council so they can write to the homeowner.

Riverbank and Riverbed in The Square

Councillors raised the issue that the foliage will need attention and to be cut back again this year. Also weeds, grit, stones and mud needs to be carefully removed from the Riverbed without damaging the stone lining of the river. Councillors asked the Clerk to obtain quotations for this work being carried out.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the Clerk obtain quotations which come back to the next available meeting.

(Moved Cllr Yarwood; seconded Cllr Venton)

Shed in the Parish Field

Cllr Venton asked if there was any update on the signage and cones that the Council were hoping to store in the shed in the Parish Field. Cllr Dearden confirmed that she would be 'stocktaking' the list of items next week and would provide an update after that.

Parish Car Park

Councillors raised concerns that a number of cars had been keyed in the Parish Car Park. The Clerk confirmed that she had reported the issue to the local Police Team and they advised all members of the public that had their vehicles damaged to report it to the Police.

Councillors discussed whether it would be appropriate to install CCTV but it was felt it would be cost prohibitive and inappropriate as, if an individual is determined to cause damage they would likely damage the CCTV camera as well as vehicles.

Councillors asked the Clerk to chase DCC Highways again to fix the streetlight in the Car Park. The Clerk advised that DCC had previously responded that, as it is on Whimble Parish Council land they were not responsible for fixing it. However, the Clerk had gone back to them to ask if they would repair it and send the Parish Council the bill.

Land immediately outside of the Parish Field pedestrian entrance

The Clerk advised that she had received a response from the officer at EDDC regarding the individual that has been selling vehicles from the patch of land immediately outside of the Parish

Field pedestrian entrance on Broadclyst Road. DCC are going to write to the individual as the land belongs to DCC, rather than the individual.

Condition of the roads – Lilypond Lane and Woodhayes Lane

The Clerk advised that she had followed up complaints from local residents with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer at DCC Highways and received the following response:

'I attended Lilypond lane recently and made sure that all the safety defects have been reported to our contractor correctly. I was shocked with the number I found so hopefully they will be repaired soon as I gave them a high rating on the risk assessment.

I am aware of the drainage issues on Woodhayes Lane, unfortunately there is an issue with the pipe that runs under the road here. Given the road category it is going to be difficult to get this repair approved however I will discuss this with the highway engineer.

Please encourage anyone who mentions defects to continue reporting them online through our dedicated pothole category. It is by far the quickest way of getting them repaired as it will be sent to our dedicated highway inspection team. A what3words location is great as it will aid the inspectors to find the exact location of the defect.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>

Defibrillator

The Clerk advised that the problems with registering the defibrillator outside the Victory Hall has now been resolved and the machine is now showing as available on The Circuit. Regular checks would be carried out by the Clerk or Cllrs Dearden or Venton.

12. Allotments

The Clerk updated that there is one plot still to be allocated at Heberton Close Allotments as the person offered the plot declined to take it. Another person had enquired about allotments so, subject to them completing the paperwork, they would be offered the plot.

The Clerk confirmed that she had visited the Grove Road site before the meeting and met with one of the allotment holders regarding the rubbish at the allotment and a couple of areas that could be turned into additional plots. Clearance works are needed to

The Council **RESOLVED** to

1. Obtain quotations for the clearance of the rubbish at Heberton Close and Grove Road Allotments; and
2. Obtain quotations for the clearance of foliage and overgrown potential plots at the Grove Road Allotments.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick)

13. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Olive was not in attendance so no update was provided.

14. Planning

No planning applications had been received from East Devon District Council.

15. Finance

i) Summary receipts and payments for 2026/27 to 30 April 2026

The Clerk confirmed that receipts had been received into the current account in April relating to the 2025/26 VAT reclaim (2,500.30) and allotment fees (£400) from new tenants. The first part of the Precept (£15,173.50) had been paid into the Savings Account. The payments totalled to the April 2026 payment schedule.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summary of receipts and payments to 30 April 2026
(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

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

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank current account reconciliation to end April 2026, with the amount in the Current Account totalling to £561.54.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

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

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account 1 (earmarked reserves) reconciliation to end April 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 April 2026

In April a total of £1,464.59 had been transferred from the savings account into the current account (as approved at the April meeting) to cover the payment schedule for April 2026. The first half of the Precept had been paid into the savings account (totalling £15,173.50).

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Unity Bank savings account 2 reconciliation to end April 2026, with the amount in the Savings Account totalling to £31,788.20.

(Proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

v) To approve the payment schedule for May 2026 totalling £1,519.28, which included payments for:

Whimble Victory Hall hire April 2026 = £20.00

Pro Lawn grass cutting session 11/05/26 = £336.00

Clerk salary; May 2026 = £846.90

HMRC PAYE plus Employees and Employers NIC; May 2026 = £309.38

Unity Trust Bank service charge 01/04/26 to 30/04/26 = £7.00

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

(proposed Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

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

The transfer schedule for May 2026 totals £1,457.74. This is based on leaving £500 in the Current Account at the end of May 2026 (balance at 12 May 2026 was £561.54 less £500 = £61.54. May payment schedule = £1,519.28 - £61.54 = £1,457.74)

The Council **RESOLVED** to transfer £1,457.74 from savings account 2 to the current account to cover the payment schedule for May 2026.

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

vii) Budget Monitoring Report 2026/27 as at end April 2026

The Clerk confirmed that income received as at the end April 2026 was

315,754 which consisted of the first half of the Precept (15,174) and allotment fees £400).

The expenditure for April 2026 was £4303 (which included £452 of VAT).

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

viii) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Statement for the 2025/26 financial year

Councillors considered the CIL statement for 2025/26 which set out that the Council received £886.08 CIL funding in 2025/26. When added to the carry forward balance of £25,088.52 this gave a closing balance of £25,974.60. No CIL money was spent in 2025/26. The £886.08 was added to the earmarked reserve for the Town Lane Project. The remaining £25,088.52 had previously been allocated to the Parish Field Play Area Project.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the CIL Statement for the 2025/26 financial year
(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

ix) Financial Report for the 2025/26 financial year

Councillors considered the financial report for the 2025/26 financial year. This set out details of the Council's receipts and payments in 2025/26. The Council is in a sound financial position. At the end of the financial year the closing balance (i.e. reserves) was £79,378, which is an increase of £4,682 from the previous financial year.

Of the closing balance, £60,155 was in the Earmarked Reserves for various projects (set out in minute 16) and General Reserves totalled £18,723 (£19,223 minus the £500 used to balance the 2025/26 budget)

The report is to be published on the Council website so that the Council is being open and transparent about its finances.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Whimple Parish Council Financial Report for the 2025/26 financial year and to publish it on the Council website.
(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

16. Reserves Policy and Balances as at 31 March 2026

The Council considered the Clerk's report which consisted of the Reserves Policy, the current balances of Earmarked Reserves (EMR) and details of movement to EMR during the start and end of the 2025/26 financial year.

The Clerk set out that the Council's Policy uses the recommended levels of General Reserves as set out in the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's Guide which states '*The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure*' and '*The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months*'.

Whimple Parish Council's policy is that a prudent level of reserves is the equivalent level of 6 months' annual expenditure. The budget for 2026/27 is £32,084 so 6 months would equate to £16,042. Currently the Council is holding £18,723 in General Reserves.

The Earmarked Reserves balances as at 31 March 2026 are:

Village Maintenance	£4,600.00
Neighbourhood Plan	£7,500.00
Elections	£1,100.00

Parish Field Play Area Project	£37,806.05
Town Lane Project	£6,626.08
Parish Field Goal Mouth	£2023.40
Defibrillator (pads and battery fund)	£500.00
Total held in EMR	£60,155.53

Councillors decided that each of the EMRs would be discussed in detail at the next meeting, once the quotes for a number of pieces of work had been received.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Reserves Policy for 2026/27 and to note the balances as at 31 March 2026 and movement in the EMR during 2025/26.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

17. Internal Auditor's Report 2025/26

The Council considered the Internal Auditor's Report for the 2025/26 financial year. The Clerk advised that she had redacted the Internal Auditors signature and the last four digits of the bank account numbers that had been published in the report.

The Auditor had ticked 'yes' to all internal control objectives on the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 (which forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return [AGAR]), with the exception of the area relating to digital and data management / compliance

The reason the Auditor ticked 'no' to this area was due to the Council not having the following in place:

- The Council website does not comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2AA. Currently it only achieves 56% in the accessibility test and the minimum is 70%. It currently only meets WCAG 2.1AA.

The Internal Auditor also recommended that the Council:

- Undertakes a data audit and present to the Council for adoption
- Adopts a Subject Access Request Procedure
- Adopt a Data Retention Policy
- Organise GDPR Training for staff and councillors
- Ensure that both hard copy and electronic data have relevant protections in place. For hard copy records this will be identified by the audit. For electronic data it is recommended that your IT provider outlines what protections are in place, how often data is backed up and how it is sorted. Ensure that all computers have some level of virus protection.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council was already taking steps to address these issues. Quotations will be considered by the Council at the June 2026 meeting for email and data management system and a new website that meets WCAG 2.2AA.

The Clerk advised that she already uses the National Association of Local Council's Document Retention Policy for determining the length of time electronic and hard copy data and information is held for. She is now going to put this into a Council Policy and bring it to the June 2026 meeting for signing off along with the Subject Access Request Procedure.

An action plan will be prepared and presented to the Council at the June 2026 meeting.

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the Internal Auditor's detailed Report and the AGAR Annual Internal Audit Report for 2025/26.

(Moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

18. AGAR 2025/26 Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement

Councillors considered the Annual Governance Statement and decided to tick 'Yes' to all statements other than statements 9 and 10. The Council ticked 'not applicable' to the Trust Funds questions as the Council doesn't have any Trust Funds. The Council ticked 'No' to statement 10 due to the website accessibility issues raised and discussed as part of the Internal Auditor's Report.

The Clerk advised that she had also produced an update report on the 2024/25 Improvement Plan, which related to Risk Management and had been fully delivered. This would be published on the Council website along with the AGAR.

The 2025/26 Improvement Action Plan had been drafted and would come to the June 2026 meeting to provide councillors with an update on progress being made on delivering the actions.

The Council **RESOLVED** to tick 'Yes' to statements 1 to 8, N/A to statement 9 and 'No' to statement 10. (and N/A to the statement regarding Trust Funds) in the Annual Governance Statement and approved that the Statement be signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

The Annual Governance Statement was duly signed by the Chair and Clerk.

(moved Cllr Venton; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

19. Accounting Statements for the 2024/25 financial year

Councillors considered the Accounting Statements for the 2025/26 financial year, which had been prepared and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statements for the 2025/26 financial year and that they be signed by the Chair.

The Chair duly signed the Accounting Statements

(moved by Cllr Yarwood; seconded by Cllr Patrick)

20. Notice Period for the Exercise of Public Rights for the 2025/26 AGAR

Councillors reviewed the notice of public rights and publication of the AGAR.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the dates for the notice of public rights relating to the 2025/26 AGAR are Wednesday 3 June to Tuesday 14 July 2026.

(moved Cllr Baker; seconded Cllr Stroud)

21. Policies and Procedures

The Council considered the list of policies and procedures below, which had been updated for the 2026/27 Municipal year.

The Clerk advised that amendments had been made to the Financial Regulations and Statement of Internal Control to better reflect the working practices of the Council. The changes to the Financial Regulations were around budget setting, banking and payments and the electronic payment process. The changes to the Statement of Internal Control added in the changes with regard to the Internal Control checklist and what the Council does have in place for Assertion 10 – Data and Digital Management.

A minor amendment had been made to the Risk Management Strategy to add in the strategic risk relating to Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillors raised the issue that the Statement of Internal Control and Internal Control Checklist need to have a minor amendment made to them relating to the procurement limits reflected in the Financial Regulations. The Clerk confirmed this would be actioned as soon as practicable.

All policies and procedures would be updated on the Council's website.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Statement of Internal Control
- Risk Management Strategy
- Risk Assessment
- Code of Conduct
- Scheme of Delegation

Subject to the minor amendments to the Statement of Internal Control and Internal Control Checklist re the procurement limits (and to ensure they match those listed in the Financial Regulations)

(moved by Cllr Dearden; seconded by Cllr Patrick)

22. Insurance Arrangements

The Clerk confirmed that this was on the agenda due to the list for the Annual Parish Council Meeting in the Standing Orders. It was confirmed, and councillors agreed that the Council's Insurance arrangements (including the Policy Schedule being compared to the Asset Register) had been fully reviewed prior to renewing the insurance at the 19 January 2026 meeting.

23. Banking Arrangements and Signatories

Councillors considered the banking arrangements and list of authorised signatories.

Discussion took place around:

- The current arrangements with Unity Bank are working well and the interest received is better than previously received from Santander Bank.
- To keep the current account and savings accounts with Unity Trust Bank for the next year
- That the list of four authorised signatories is appropriate

The Council **RESOLVED** to

1. Keep its current account and savings account with Unity Trust Bank for the 2026/27 financial year

2. That Cllr Becky Venton is added to the authorised signatory list and completes the appropriate paperwork at the June 2026 Council meeting.

(moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Yarwood)

24. Councillor Responsibilities

Councillors considered the Clerk's Report and considered the following items:

Rather than setting up a specific Planning Committee, the 'Planning Meetings' held on the first Monday of the month (if needed) would, from this point forward be called Extraordinary meetings of the Council.

Setting up a councillor Working Group to work on the Neighbourhood Plan so that the work can be distributed more fairly across a number of councillors.

The list of roles and responsibilities, and agreed to the following:

Area of responsibility (lead councillor/champion)

Allotments (including inspections) – Cllr Patrick

Planning – Cllr Yarwood

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Olive and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Finance, Internal Control & Risk Management – Cllr Dearden

Snow Warden – Cllr Patrick

Road Warden – TBC once the Lengthsman role has been discussed further

Footpath Warden – Cllr Yarwood

Play Area (including inspections) – Cllr Patrick

Emergency Plan – Cllr Venton

Outside Appointments

OSM Locality Health & Care Team – Cllr Yarwood

Whimble Victory Hall Committee – Cllr Patrick

Whimble Recreation Trust – Cllr Venton

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve:

1. That from this point onwards the 'Planning Meetings' held on the first Monday of the month (if needed) will be called Extraordinary Council meetings.
2. The setting up of a Councillor working Group called the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to consist of Cllrs Olive, Yarwood and Venton.
3. The appointments set out above and to publish them on the website.
(*moved Cllr Dearden; seconded Cllr Patrick*)

25. Forward Plan

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

- The normal finance reports
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Planning Applications
- Update on recommendations from the Internal Auditors Report
- Data Retention Policy
- Subject Access Request Procedure
- Quotations for the replacement of the Email system and website
- Grounds maintenance contract schedule of works for 2027/28 onwards
- Parish Lengthsperson role
- Quotations for allotment works
- Quotations for Riverbank and Riverbed works in The Square
- Earmarked Reserves for 2026/27
- Planting of the boundary in the Parish Field

26. Correspondence

The Council considered the following correspondence:

1. The Chair has received an invite to attend the Tale Valley Choir Concert on 20 June at 7.30pm at Whimble Parish Church. The Chair confirmed she would be attending.

2. Email from Dave Whelan at EDDC regarding Community Emergency Hub Workshops taking place in June 2026. Cllr Venton confirmed that she would not be able to attend but would contact Mr Whelan for more information.
3. Email from EDDC confirming that the second East Devon Heritage Strategy for 2024 – 2042 had been approved.

32. Chair's Business

There were no items of Chair's Business.

The meeting closed at 9pm

The next Planning Meeting will be held on Monday 1 June 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 15 June 2026 at 7pm.

Signed by Chair:

15/06/2026