

WITHERIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Council Meeting held 05/06/25, 19:00 at Witheridge Parish Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr Harvey	Chairman	Cllr Bibby	Cllr Fox	Cllr Northam
Cllr Cunningham	Vice Chairman	Cllr Dorow	Cllr Goodwin	Cllr Richardson
				Cllr Smith

In Attendance:

County Cllr R Hopley
District Cllr P Jones

3 Members of the public
Parish Clerk

"Minutes of proceedings of a council and of its committees must be kept. They are intended to be formal records of official acts and decisions, not reports, still less verbatim reports of speeches..." Local Council Administration.

1. **To receive the following Reports (strictly maximum 15 minutes – long reports should be submitted in advance to allow circulation to councillors prior to the meeting– submitted reports will be appended to meeting minutes):-**

- 1.1. **County and District.**

Cllr Smith arrived.

- 1.2. **Police Advocate update.**

<https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/councillor-advocate-scheme>

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/devon-and-cornwall-police/south-molton/>

- 1.3. **Parish Groups with Council Representatives.**

2. **Public Session (maximum 3 mins per subject overall max. 15 minutes).**

(Please note in accordance with Council Standing Order 3(h) a question shall not give rise to a debate or require an immediate response).

Parish Council issues raised:-

- Potential for the waste land adjacent Merryside Villas to be re-purposed.

Council Session – No public participation

3. **To Approve Apologies for Absence.**

RESOLVED: Apologies approved from Cllr Cunningham.

4. **Minutes.**

4.1. **22/04/25.** To sign if approved, minutes of the Council.

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Fox seconded and all were in favour approval.

4.2. **01/05/25.** To sign if approved, minutes of the Council.

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Fox seconded and all were in favour approval.

5. **To consider Code of Conduct Matters:-**

- 5.1. **Written councillor dispensation requests arising.**

None.

- 5.2. **Declarations of Interests.**

(Code of Conduct available on website under Finance & Policy*).

Agenda	Councillor	Reason	Dispensation
8.2.3	Cllr Bibby	Contracted	n/a

Initialled:

Chairman.

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None.

6. To consider the following Planning & Licensing Matters.**6.1. Planning list.**

See report appended.

6.2. Planning applications received following agenda publication.

None.

6.3. Enforcement Issues Arising.

None.

7. To consider the following Finance & Policy matters:-**7.1. Finance update circulated to councillors' for review.**

RESOLVED: Cllr Fox proposed, Cllr Goodwin seconded and all were in favour to note 03/06/25 Report and Bank Reconciliation including online banking payments raised reviewed with no issues.

7.2. Sanction payment schedule appended & instruct signatories.

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Goodwin seconded and all were in favour settlement accounts 7.2.1 through 7.2.15, **clerk to setup online payments, Cllr Goodwin and Smith to authorise.**

Item 7.2.16 deferred pending clarification on what if any additional parish hall legal costs following their solicitor's correspondence dated 06/05/25. **Chairman to liaise with Parish Hall Committee Chairman.**

7.3. Receive corrected Internal Audit Report Year Ending 31/03/2025.

Noted.

7.4. Approve payment of twenty hours clerk's accrued overtime.

RESOLVED: Cllr Goodwin proposed, Cllr Richardson seconded and all were in favour approval. **Clerk to action.**

8. To consider the following Property/Environment matters:-**8.1. Highways, Drainage & Public Rights of Ways Issues.**

<https://devon.roadworks.org/> | <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

Maint road hedge adjacent to Willow Rise northern public open space was reported impeding footpath. **Cllr Jones to liaise with developer.**

8.2. Public Toilet Building.**8.2.1. Leased Room - Tenant proposed change in services provided.**

RESOLVED: Cllr Goodwin proposed, Cllr Bibby seconded and all were in favour delegation to the clerk seeking legal advice as to the impact on the current lease provisions and any changes required, subject to a budget limit of £1000. **Clerk to action.**

8.2.2. Leased Room - Annual Lease Renewal.

See item 8.2.1.

RESOLVED: Cllr Bibby proposed, Cllr Richardson seconded and all were in favour a rent increase of 3.5% on renewal. **Clerk to action.**

8.2.3. Contractor Roof Quotation Update.

REOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Smith seconded and all were in favour acceptance excepting Cllr Bibby who abstained as the contractor. **Clerk to action and clarify vat position in respect to part of the premises being leased.**

8.2.4. Wallgate - Service Report.

Noted.

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The Chairman reported the parish hall playground signage had not been retained by the railings contractor therefore a new sign would be required. **Clerk to action.**

The Adventure Playground signage required repositioning for accessibility. **Cllr Richardson to action.**

Concern expressed some items on the reports had been addressed already. **Clerk to review.**

8.3.2. Parish Hall Playground - Bennock Fencing railings update.

Additional snagging identified:-

- Gates had dropped.
- Chipped paintwork.
- No rubber liner on pedestrian gate buffer plate.
- Redundant gate stay on pedestrian gate impeding closure.

Clerk to action.

8.3.3. BMX Track Restorations Update.

Cllrs considered outline drawing prepared by Cllr Bibby. **Cllr Jones to raise with Planning Dept.**

8.3.4. Skatepark Tender Update.

Additional designs being sought to reduce costs if needed.

8.3.5. Skateramp Repairs Update.

Contractor correspondence dated 04/06/25 advising works to be undertaking in the next two weeks noted. Cllr Smith suggested a notice be prepared and erected detailing the works being undertaken.

8.3.6. Parish Hall Playground Lease.

Parish Hall Committee solicitor's correspondence dated 06/05/25 concerning the current hall charitable objects did not include provisions for a children's playground or lease of the playground land and therefore a recommendation that Charity Commission consent should be sought.

RESOLVED: Cllr Bibby proposed, Cllr Northam seconded and all were in favour seeking clarification on what if any impact this would have on the agreed legal costs; if no change to costs then to proceed with lodging funds requested by the parish council's solicitors otherwise re-agenda July meeting. **Chairman and clerk to action.**

8.3.7. Willow Rise Northern Open Space (NPOS) transfer Update.

The NPOS redundant sales office site had now been cleared but required seeding.

8.4. Parish Clock Repair Quote.

RESOLVED: To refer to Finance and General Purposes Committee 19/06/25 for budget review.

Clerk to action.

8.5. Concessionary Green Waste Bin Application.

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed, Cllr Goodwin seconded and all were in favour. **Cllr Northam to action.**

8.6. Parish Council Section 106 Working Group Update.

Cllr Fox updated council on the meeting hosted to form a working group to develop proposals for a community orchard was successful. However the open space land at Cannington Road to the rear of Drayford Lane had sold and identification of the new owner was awaited.

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8.7. Village Litter Picking Schedule of Dates.

RESOLVED: Cllr Richardson proposed , Cllr Northam seconded and all were in favour the following dates:- 21/06, 20/09 and 13/12. **Cllr Richardson to action.**

9. Correspondence / Consultations Received for consideration:-

9.1. Residents - Concerns Traffic Speeds in village.

Cllrs considered reports related to children leaving the parish hall site.

9.2. RESOLVED: To seek advice from Highways/Police on participating in the “20s Plenty” campaign and erecting local highway’s signage. **Cllr Smith to action.**

9.3. NDC - Code of Conduct Training.

Date of next training 03/07/25 noted.

10. Dates of Next meetings recommended:-

10.1. Parish Council - 03/07/25 - agenda deadline noon 20/06/25.

Noted.

10.2. Agenda Items for consideration by the next meeting.

None.

Meeting closed 21:30.

Planning

Application No.	Description
79809	Ground floor extension to existing care home at The Firs 27 Fore Street Witheridge EX16 8AH Grid Ref: 280625; 114354

Payments

Item	Ref	Payee	Purpose	£
7.2.1.	OB	Hooper Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance *363	1191.60
7.2.2.	OB	S Sandland	Toilet Management & Cleaning Contract	220.00
7.2.3.	OB	Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	Qtly Playgrounds Inspection Reports *444	395.28
7.2.4.	OB	Source for Business (SWW)	Toilet Block Water & Sewerage Charges	139.96
7.2.5.	DD	EDF Energy	Toilet Block Electricity Charges *011	119.67
7.2.6.	OB	Witheridge Voice	Annual advertising invoice *522	119.00
** Staff Salaries & Expenses – May **				
7.2.7.		Redacted under GDPR	Total:-	1101.20
7.2.8.				
7.2.9.				
7.2.10.				
To Ratify:-				
7.2.11.	OB	S Murphy	Public Noticeboard (Square) Lettering	80.00
7.2.12.	OB	Ben Nock Ltd	Parish Hall Playground Railings 6600	14592.70
7.2.13.	OB	Paul Russell T/AS Parish & Town Auditing Services	Internal Audit IA/0114/25	225.00

Invoices Received after Agenda compilation - To Be Ratified

7.2.14.	DD	EDF Energy	Public Toilet Electricity Charges *012	97.20
7.2.15.	CC	McAfee	Computer Security *579	74.99
7.2.16.	OB	Bertram Law	Parish Hall Playground Lease Legal Fees	3475.20

Signed:

Chairman.

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Agenda Item 3 – Reports

District & County Cllrs.

District Cllr Jones:-

- Continued work on supporting applications for the L&G social housing.
- Thanks to Cllr Fox for organising the community meeting to facilitate formation of a community orchard working group.
- Request from residents to lobby the District Council to enforce the maintenance of the Cannington Road open space.
- Update on S106 Public open space funding issues and impact on projects seeking matched funding, specifically the recreation field all weather pitch provision.

County Cllr Hopley:-

- Meeting with Police to discuss ASB.
- Dealing with Highways issues.
- Dealing with Bus service issues

The Chairman raised progress on the implementation of the agreed changes to access of The Bow.

A member of the public raised use of Willow Rise S106 Highways Contribution to implement further traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the Willow Rise junction.

A member of the public sought an update on the Lakelands bus shelter works and was advised this had been completed.

Police – Report provided by Cllr Smith

Police Advocate Report for the 5th June 2025

1. It is just over 10 years since a determined collaboration between police, fire, and health services to improve early intervention, prevention and operational response led to the creation of pioneering new responders called Tri-Service Safety Officers (TSSOs).

They are making an absolute real difference to people's lives within the communities they serve. Their unique role involves working with Devon & Cornwall Police, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS), South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) and Cornwall Council's antisocial behaviour team, to help protect communities and respond to emergency incidents.

Improving public safety, reducing risks and early intervention in hard-to-reach communities is an issue that can only be dealt with collaboratively. TSSOs are proof that different services and organisations coming together to bring about change can significantly improve outcomes for people.

2. £1m hotspot policing scheme extended to new areas in Devon & Cornwall

While the priority is to prevent crime, the targeted approach to patrolling places police and partners in the right place at the right time, enabling proactive action. In the past year, this has led to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • 26,821 hours of hotspot patrols | • 52 offensive weapons seized |
| • 2,211 pieces of intelligence submitted | • 248 pieces of property seized e.g. drugs or stolen goods |
| • 190 Public Protection Notices or safeguarding referrals | • 177 enforcements of Public Spaces Protection Orders |
| • 1,467 ASB incidents attended | • 8,022 other ASB Crime & Policing Act 2014 powers used |
| • 256 arrests | |
| • 274 stop and searches | |

In the year ahead, hotspot policing will continue in the following areas:

- | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| • Camborne | • Exmouth | • Plymouth | • Bodmin (new hotspot) |
| • Barnstaple | • Newton Abbot | • St Austell | • Newquay |
| • Bideford | • Paignton | • Torquay | • Tiverton (new hotspot) |
| • Exeter | • Penzance | • Truro | |

New accountability board will ensure Devon & Cornwall Police is effectively scrutinised and making improvements.

A new way of holding Devon & Cornwall Police to account and ensuring it is delivering an effective and efficient police service is being achieved through the formation of a new accountability board.

Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez has begun to host a monthly Commissioner's Accountability Board to discuss a range of topics relating to key police performance indicators.

Following each meeting, she then makes a judgement of assurance to indicate whether improvement plans are required or not, including details of how she has reached her decision.

The Commissioner has committed to sharing her levels of judgement with the public and external stakeholders to increase transparency in policing and the criminal justice system.

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On last month's agenda, three specific areas of performance were scrutinised. The first was complaint handling and service delivery which was given a current performance rating of 'not assured' meaning improvements are required.

Commissioner Hernandez concluded neither are yet at an appropriate or acceptable standard, but said she is confident that the police's improvement plan will deliver effective improvements. Reassurance was provided that the police's complaint backlog is starting to reduce.

The second topic was how Devon & Cornwall Police is continuing to rectify concerns identified following a review last year by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - which has statutory responsibility for the inspection of the police forces of England and Wales.

It remains in the 'engage' process with the inspectorate over contact, crime data recording and investigations, with further improvement work required.

Commissioner Hernandez was satisfied that comprehensive plans to address all three areas are delivering improvements which provide 'confidence' that the issues can be rectified, but as further work is required her overall judgement was 'part assured'.

The final topic of the Accountability Board was the force's response to the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2025-29 which sets out her key priorities – antisocial behaviour, serious violence, theft and drugs and alcohol. Her judgement was 'assured' that the work already taken by police has been 'comprehensive and appropriate'.

At the meeting, Chief Constable James Vaughan also gave an update on the police budget and financial performance, recent homicides and serious crimes, as well as areas of concern and success.

Commissioner Hernandez said: "The role of Police and Crime Commissioner was created to help make the police more accountable to the people they serve, and the holding of our local police to account on behalf of the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is my core responsibility.

"I do this in a number of ways and, recently, I have convened a new Accountability Board at which as Chair, I select a number of areas of policing activity and related performance, and scrutinise them in detail, requiring the Chief Constable and his team to explain both current performance and any plans they have in place to make improvements where required.

"Following this, I then make a judgment on how assured I am, again both in terms of current police performance and the quality of any improvement plans. I then publish a statement describing my levels of assurance for the public to see, along with the agenda and attendance at each board to ensure as wide a visibility as is possible.

"I remain committed to ensuring that Devon & Cornwall Police delivers a service to our communities as effectively and efficiently as is possible, and my office and I will continue to not only scrutinise and challenge robustly, but also to celebrate and champion whenever appropriate, on behalf of the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly."

Mr Vaughan added: "I welcome the launch of the Commissioner's Accountability Board as it gives me the opportunity to give an update on areas of our performance where we are making significant improvements or where further work is taking place to ensure our communities receive the service they deserve.

"The board will allow the public to see where we are performing well and offer them reassurance that the Commissioner is quite rightly scrutinising those areas where improvements are required."

To view Commissioner Hernandez's statement of assurance please visit Commissioner's Accountability Board – Your voice in policing where the full board agenda can also be found.