

DOWN ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 8th July 2025 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr A. Clark, Mrs J Bennett, Mr A. Baker, Mr W. Jones, Mr S. Keable and Mr A. Martin [Clerk]

In attendance: Mrs T. Pluck, Mr D. Cox

[2025/7/1] Apologies: Mr M. Austin, Mrs D. Cridland, Mr A. White, Mrs. N. Letch.

[2] Mr Baker disclosed an interest in a planning application

[3] The **Minutes** of the meeting held on 13th May 2025 which had been circulated were approved and signed.

[4] **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME;** Mr Cox described the flooding on 13th June which had affected his house as well as the bottom of Union Hill and the Station Approach.

Mrs Pluck asked if the notice of the AGM had been posted on the notice board. She also commented on the discussion about the access to Longmeadow Barn.

Mrs Pluck asked why there had been no election for a Parish Clerk at the annual meeting of the council. The chair replied that in all the time he had sat on the council, he had never witnessed an election for the post of Parish Clerk. They are employed by the council. He has since researched this and parish clerks are employed by the council at all times, they have to be independent, objective and professional. He/she is also responsible financial officer. The clerk is the point of contact for the council.

[5] Mr Pluck had put his application for co-option on hold.

[6] **Public Conveniences:** There was concern that the signage was poor as the one toilet in use was set back. People were thinking that it was closed and were making use of the area behind. No reply had yet come from MDDC. Pressure needed to be put on MDDC. New sign to be erected. Mr Keable hoped to arrange a meeting with Steve Densham. The application to rent to the site appeared to have failed.

[7] **Village Green:** The bushes outside Windwhistle Cottage had not yet been cut back. It was necessary to contact Mr Leach and arrange a date. There was a problem with the fir tree hedge at the start of Middle Yeo Road which was obstructing the highway. This could be reported on the website.

Signed

Date

[8] **Bus Shelter:** Still waiting for work to begin.

[9] **Roads including flooding:** Mr Cox had previously made a formal complaint to DCC that the gullies near his house did not drain efficiently. The water backed up from Knighty Brook and pooled at the bottom of Union Hill. The course of the gullies did not appear on the plans. They were blocked with sediment. On 13th June, the water had started to come into his house. Six rooms were flooded and the contents destroyed. The floors needed replacement. At present, the embankment blocks the exits for the water. The water had been 2ft deep. Station Approach Road had also been flooded. Some of the water had been trapped by the sewage pipe from the new houses.

Mr Keable thanked Mr Cox for his report. There were similar problems in other nearby villages He said that he was seeking a resolution.

Mrs Bennett commented that if there was any crack in the underground pipe or chambers, there was a risk of a sinkhole or subsidence.

Mr Cox would put in a formal complaint and Mr Keable would follow it up.

There was a pilot project of a new contract for fixing the roads. The previous contract had been called in to the audit committee.

[10] **Finance:**

Current Account Balance as at 1/5/2025£26,218.53

RECEIPTS *not yet on statement*

Rev. R. Barrett [Donation].....£50.00

Lindfield Day Opportunities [Sale of Marquee]£800.00

CHEQUE CASHED:

436 A.V. Martin£500.00

PAYMENTS MADE

Down St Mary Village Hall [Rent 7/6/25]£22.50

Mr M. Leach [Grasscutting May]£220.00

Current Account Balance as at 30/5/2025£25,476.03

Signed

Date

PAYMENTS NOT YET ON STATEMENT

SSP Direct [Twenty is Plenty Signs].....£404.70
Stapletons [Accountant]£108.00
Mr M. Leach [Grasscutting June]£220.00
Mrs D. Cridland [Expenses]£43.20
Community First [Insurance].....£189.40

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Business Reserve Account Balance as at 1/5/2025.....£11,951.96

Interest:

May£10.81

Business Reserve Account Balance as at 30/5/2025£11,962.77

REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT:

MDDC [Public Conveniences]£830.00

[This request has been put on hold]

[11] **Planning :**

1; Variation of Condition 1 of planning permission 22/01490/ARM (Reserved Matters for the erection of four dwellings with associated garaging and parking following demolition of existing buildings following outline approval 19/01461/OUT) to allow substitute plans relating to change of house design Land and Buildings at NGR 274927 105148 Morchard Road Devon Ref. No: 25/00650/ARM

The Council considered this application and made the following comments:

This development requires a SUDS system to control surface water runoff.
The current proposal for drainage to a ditch on Network Rail land is a concern as at the moment at times of heavy rainfall this ditch is unable to cope with the flow and has led to flooding of the station approach road by backing up through existing drainage pipes as

Signed

Date

happened on Friday 13th June 2025.

Any soakaway would require percolation testing (BS6297:2007) as it would be draining into clay and the shale base. This should be carried out during a period of heavy rainfall to see if it would work as the area has known drainage issues.

They are proposing a bore hole soak away for the foul water .Do they work after heavy rain if the water table rises as the development is sandwiched between the road and railway?

The surface water drainage needs to prove it can cope with potentially much greater than normal amounts of rainfall so would need to be constructed with 'foreseeable future-proofing' rather than simply adequate for present rain levels.

The Council would leave the calculations to the planners regarding the borehole but it is going to have to be extremely robust to cope with 4x 4bed houses. Also, will it work 100% in 20 years time? Can a borehole be jetted out for cleaning?

On these points the council think it needs to be proved these systems will be able to cope with a greater margin of water and use and that they are easy to maintain and will not degrade in the foreseeable future.

Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the waste water plant ? Will it be the developer or the group of householders? The council prefer it to be the householders as they will be permanent.

Are the houses going to be affordable for local people and beneficial to the area?

There is no mix of two-, three- or four-bedroom homes to cater for various levels of affordability. Should there be 1 or 2 smaller homes instead of 4 four beds?

Is there going to be provision of electric charging in the provided garages?

The Parish Council also think that the speed limit on the A377 should be reduced to 30mph with some traffic speed reduction measures due to the increased use of the roads around the junction. This limit should be along all the built up areas of Morchard Road including the houses on Union Hill.

2: Erection of dwelling and associated works following demolition of barn and ancillary buildings utilising the Class Q fallback position Land and Building at NGR 274946 104857 (Bramley House) Morchard Road Devon Ref. No: 25/00627/FULL. The Council had already discussed this item.

3: 25/00617 Longmeadow Barn. Planning Permission had now been granted and a new deed would be needed. Mr Jones suggested that a row of trees should screen the access. There was a query over whether the council would be indemnified if the right of way needed to be repaired.

Signed

Date

[12] **Emergency Planning:** Mrs Cridland had prepared some forms. If the Village hall was to be used as a centre, it would need to be accessible via a keypad. This suggestion would be passed to the Village Hall Committee. A portable generator would be useful and several local farmers would have these. Producing a plan was a huge task and Mrs Cridland would need some assistance. If no one from the council volunteered, then she would reach out to the residents.

[13] **Defibrillators:** Training had been held and had gone well.

[14] **Road Warden Scheme:** Mr Baker had signed up for this scheme. Up to two wardens could be trained. Up to 6 volunteers could have basic safety training. Signage and other material would be provided. Third party insurance would be necessary. One place that needed attention was the overgrown pathway between the Devonshire Dumping and the Station.

[15] **Residents' Survey:**

Mrs Bennett produced the results of the survey of ideas to improve the village using money from the solar farm. The suggestions were:

- 1- Village sign posts to be repainted and/or repaired
- 2- Tubs of flowers around the green and extra seating
- 3- 20 mph speed limit on all roads into the village and road calming devices [This was the responsibility of Devon Highways]
- 4- Road Repairs [Also Devon Highways]
- 5- Half width of grass in front of cottages turned into parking spaces [The Council were unwilling to lose part of the village green]
- 6- Children's play area [No suitable site had been identified]
- 7- Village Green to be terraced into three level areas. [This might prove impractical]

The Council decided to proceed with the first two suggestions. The Speed limit was up to DCC.

Mrs Bennett promised to investigate the state of the orchard. It needed more care and spraying.

[16] Grants: No new information.

[17] Future of Councils: MDDC had launched a consultation on the plans for re-organising county and district councils. An event would be held and a decision would be made by November.

Signed

Date

[18] There were no reports from councillors

[19] There were no members of the public to comment.

[20] Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9th September

Future Meetings: List of provisional dates for 2025: Tuesday 14th October, Tuesday 11th November, Tuesday 9th December

Anthony Martin, Clerk

24/7/2025

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Signed

Date