

**DOWN ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr A. Clark, Mr M. Austin, Mr D. Cox, Mrs D. Cridland, Mr W. Jones, Mrs. N. Letch and Mr A. Martin [Clerk]

[2026/3/1] Apologies: Mr A. Baker, Mrs J Bennett, Mr A. White, Mr S. Keable.

Mrs Cridland updated the meeting with details of Mr Baker’s condition. The Council expressed their willingness to facilitate his return to the council if he wished. The situation would need to be considered after six months.

[2] There were no disclosures of interest

[3] The **Minutes** of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February which had been circulated were approved and signed.

[4] **Public Question Time:** There were no members of the public present.

[5] **Public Conveniences:** Mrs Letch reported that documents about the business rates had been submitted. The car park would continue to be rated. The Council would be able to refuse to take over the car park. MDDC would be sending a proposal.

There would need to be a calculation of the cost of water, public liability insurance and cleaning. Three quotes would be required for the cleaning. It would be possible to raise the precept.

Action Point: Mrs Cridland agreed to contact the lady who cleans at the Waie Inn and lives at Morchard Road and see if she would be interested in taking on the cleaning of the toilets.

[6] **Village Green:** The Green was currently full of daffodils. The grass would soon need cutting.

Action Point: Mr Clark said he would check the date of the expiry of the current contract.

[7] **Bus Shelter:** The refurbishment had been scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026.

Action Point: Mr Austin said he would send an email to the contractor confirming the start date.

Signed .....

Date .....

[8] **Transport:** Mr Clark reported that the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance had recently held their third annual convention. The convention was well attended and supported by local organisations. There are plans to improve the service and make it more resilient. This included two new passing loops and an extended loop between Coleford Junction and Newton St Cyres. The river flow was being monitored.

The long-term project was to extend the line to Bideford.

The roads were reported to be in a horrendous state, particularly on the A377, Barn Hill and Yeo Road. When there were repairs, potholes were not sealed and then tended to reappear.

[9] **Finance:**

Current Account Balance as at 30/1/2026.....£24,506.24

RECEIPTS

None

PAYMENTS MADE

Mrs D Cridland [Apple Trees].....£215.97

First Aid Education .....£540.00

Information Commissioner .....£52.00

Current Account Balance as at 27/2/2026 .....£23,698.27

Business Reserve Account Balance as at 30/1/2026.....£12,044.76

Interest:

February.....£8.78

Business Reserve Account Balance as at 27/2/2026 ..... £12,053.54

REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT:

MDDC [Public Conveniences] .....£830.00

[This request has been put on hold]

[10] **Planning:** None

[11] **Emergency Planning:** Everything was in place for the emergency plan except for arranging for keys to the Village Hall. The Village Hall Committee should be invited to a future meeting. It was possible to claim one emergency bag to be held at the hub.

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Signed .....

Date .....

Action Point: Mrs Cridland to send Mr Cox a copy of the draft response for major rail or road accident at Morchard Road.

[12] **Defibrillators and First Aid:** Mr Austin is to register the defibrillators once the new email addresses were in use.

[13] **E-mail services:** The new email addresses would be going live on 12<sup>th</sup> March.

[14] **Concerns raised by Councillors:** Mrs Letch reported on the slow progress of local government reorganisation. The councils were awaiting the decision of the government.

Mr Jones reported on a drain that needed cleaning out regularly. Mr Yendell had recently had to clean it after it flooded.

Mrs Cridland suggested that meetings should start at 7:30 pm. This suggestion was approved.

There were complaints about water pressure which could be reported on South West Water's website or on their phone line 0344 346 2020

Wires were being replaced to improve broadband reception.

[15] **Correspondence:** A letter had been received about fly-tipping in a field adjacent to the lay-by on the Morchard Bishop road. The council decided this should be forwarded to MDDC.

Action Point Clerk to forward letter to MDDC

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

[17] **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April

Future dates for 2026:

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November and Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

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Signed .....

Date .....