

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Parish Council Meeting  
Wednesday 26 March 2025**

Present: Cllrs. Brice (chair), Cooke, Ellison, Farr, Jeffery, Newberry, Pengilley, Cllr. Elliott (Torrige District Council / TDC) and Sharron Newberry

25.21 Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Apologies had been received and accepted by Cllr. Lock (TDC) and Cllr. Saywell (DCC)

25.22 Public Participation and Feedback

None

25.23 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

*County*

Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation

As previously reported, the Government set a deadline for March 21 for interim local government reorganisation proposals to be submitted. Following meetings with Government officials, the Council has received guidance that multiple indicative proposals can be submitted.

A Special Full Council meeting was held on March 20 to discuss this matter and a huge amount of work has taken place on these indicative proposals, working with a myriad of community partners to assess the pros and cons of the following potential models:

1. two unitary authorities, one covering Plymouth and another covering the rest of Devon
2. a two-unitaries North Devon / South Devon split, with one council for Plymouth, Teignbridge, South Hams and Torbay, and another for Exeter, East Devon, North Devon, Torrige, West Devon and Mid Devon
3. a three-unitaries option of Plymouth, greater Exeter (formed of Exeter, East Devon and Mid Devon) and the rest of Devon
4. a three-unitaries option, with Plymouth remaining on existing boundaries, a new unitary council formed of Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torrige, and another made up of Torbay, South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon

Also modelled for benchmarking purposes only is the option of a single unitary authority covering the whole of Devon.

The proposals align with ministerial guidance which says that new unitary councils should have minimum populations of 500,000 people each and align with existing district council boundaries.

These proposals are indicative only. Within the tight deadline the Government gave us, none of the Councils in Devon has the data available or analysed properly to work out which options work or do not work.

With the County Election on the first of May, it's important that this document is a sound basis for the new Council to pick up the work over the coming months. The new Council will make the decision on what to submit to government on 28 November 2025.

The two key points I would make, whatever is finally agreed, are: 1) the unitary/unitaries [must] work for the residents of Devon; 2) [the solution] has to be financially sustainable.

Other Matters — County Council Budget: The final budget was agreed by DCC Full Council in February. Despite the loss of the rural services grant, additional income from the second homes council tax has ensured we have a balanced budget and no major service reductions or cuts. There will be an additional £4m going into the Highways Budget . . . though had the Rural Services Grant not been taken away I think we could have found an extra £10m from the Second Homes Council Tax for Highways. Instead, this funding has had to go into other services to prevent major cutbacks within Adult Social Care or Children's Services.

Overall the net revenue budget rises to £784 million, of which approximately £383 million is for Adult Social

Care (up 8.2%) and £237 million is for Children's Services (up 5.5%). That leaves a rather more modest circa £164 million for everything else from roads to libraries.

Again, I'm happy to talk in more detail on the budget at the next meeting. And finally — as you may have seen, I will be standing down from the County Council in May to pursue a new career in the aviation industry as a commercial pilot. I have outlined my reasons why in the email I sent to the Parish Clerk so won't repeat them here. However, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their support over the eight years I've had the honour to represent them in local government. I will miss working with Yarnscombe Parish Council, it is a lovely community to represent and, despite all of the challenges, we have got things done. I remain fully committed to my role until polling day on May 1 so any problems between now and then please do get in touch as I am still here to help until then!

*District*

**Levelling up partnership** — now called "Torridge Regenerative Partnership", The government has awarded Torridge £20,070,000 for the following projects:

- A) Bideford Business Park (£2.6m) — acquisition and development toward high value manufacturing and engineering facilities
- B) Bideford Pannier Market (£1.475m) — modernisation and improvements to make it fit for future and wider use
- C) Hatchmoor Industrial Estate (£1.6m) — taking forward the development of high value manufacturing and engineering facilities
- D) Holsworthy Agri-Business Park (£7.3m) — taking forward the development of agri-related innovation, retail and professional space
- E) Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre (£2m) — cost pressures and unanticipated engineering challenges (quay wall) have led to value engineering tensions to ensure delivery of the site that this additional injection of funding will relieve to ensure the most impactful innovation centre is delivered
- F) Agri-tech nutrient pilot (£0.3m) — testing the adaptation of the slurry condensing unit to recover nutrients and reduce the pollutants going into rivers; will be applied to a moderate size dairy unit just outside Bideford
- G) Westward Ho! Water Quality Monitoring Buoy (£0.1m) — Installation of water quality monitoring buoy to provide real-time water quality data for beach users, tourism businesses and for managers of environmental systems
- H) Cleave Wood (£1.2m) — development of site for residential purposes
- I) Social housing decarbonisation and EPC rating improvements (£1.5m) — pipeline of works to improve 57 properties with E and F ratings to C or B.
- J) Bideford Hospital (£0.75m) — reconfiguration site to create a "Community Health and Wellbeing Hub" with multipurpose space
- K) The Globe Hotel (£0.52m) — Initial capital works on Grade II Listed long-derelict hotel to redevelop into an 11-bedroom hotel and restaurant (in a town with neither) with a strong training presence; this funding will be allocated upon successful completion of a community share issue and acquisition of the building by The Globe Hotel Torrington community ownership project
- L) Holsworthy Manor Offices (£0.725m) — Phased redevelopment including decarbonisation, remodelling to enable improved accessibility, flow and to increase opportunity for flexible community space (e.g. co-working).

### **Planning Enforcement**

To date (2025) 31 enforcement cases reported. (291 reported in total throughout 2024)

- A) As of the end of February, 311 open cases (to date, 332)

- B) 2024 saw the closure of 344 cases, 2025 so far stands at 32
- C) Appeals:
  - I. 13 in the last 12 months
  - II. 8 undetermined
  - III. 5 determined
  - IV. 4 successful
- D) [At the] end of Quarter 3, TDC was ranked fourth out of the 27 councils across the South-West for action taken on enforcing planning.
- E) The department has set up monthly meetings between themselves and the legal department
- F) Planning support team are helping enforcement team on admin.
- G) I requested for a timescale to be added for second visits when the first was unsuccessful; the planning manager took this for consideration and will hopefully implement.

### **Temporary Accommodation**

49 families in accommodation

- A) 24 of those are in TDC-owned accommodation
- B) 19 in rented accommodation
- C) 6 in Bed and Breakfast
- D) Numbers are up by 2 from when I last reported on this, but more are in TDC-owned accommodation so the costs are down.

### **Cyber security**

Police attendance at full council. Superintendent Toby Davies.

- 2) Village Hall / Social Club — None
- 3) Youth Club — None
- 4) PCSO/Police Report

Clerk was informed by PCSO Gutteridge that monthly Teams meetings will take place every fourth Wednesday at 7pm from today. The Parish Council meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm so there will be times when clerk is able to join meeting (unless she has other work commitments).

**Actions taken:** Clerk to try and join online before Parish Council meeting as often as possible.

- 5) Playing Field — None
- 6) Snow warden — Nothing to report, to be taken off agenda next month until October

#### 25.24 Minutes of Meeting of 26 February 2025

Minutes were approved and signed off as a true record.

#### 25.25 Matters arising from last Meeting

Disposal of old PC documents stored in Village Hall — Update by Cllrs. Brice and Newberry  
Cllrs. Brice and Newberry are still waiting to receive key from Village Hall Committee member to access remaining parish council documents.

**Actions taken:** Cllr. Brice and Cllr. Newberry to update councillors next month.

Purchase of fireproof storage boxes — Postponed until amount of documents to be stored is known.

**Actions taken:** None at present.

#### 25.26 New Matters

Yarnscombe website — New photos of councillors/clerk for website

Sharron Newberry provided progress report regarding new website. She had received positive feedback from

Village Hall Committee and Parochial Church Council (PCC). Info covering Village Hall Committee will include sport groups and bar facilities. The order of pages for PCC is still to be changed.

Sharron Newberry took up-to-date photos of current councillors and clerk, to be included on new website.

**Actions taken:** None at present

25.27 PROW Monthly Report

None

25.28 Planning

Highfield, Yarnscombe, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3LR, Ref. No.: [1/0044/2025/FUL](#), Demolition of garage and porch, erection of single storey extension — application permitted

25.29 Additional Planning

[1/0204/2025/FUL](#) Agricultural building at Grid Reference 255977 123750, Yarnscombe, Demolition of existing stables and sheds and erection of replacement shed for agricultural purposes

The view of immediate neighbours was not known at point of meeting, councillors made the following observations:

Being within the village boundary and very close to residential properties it would, due to its size, disrupt village character (clash with scale and character of village).

Impact on surrounding area: negative impact on surrounding landscape views and adjacent properties. Traffic issues: an oversize commercial building could generate increased traffic potentially straining the village's infrastructure.

25.30 Accounts

Clerk informed council that interest rates for 32 days access account had gone down.

Meeting ended at 8.05pm.

9th April 2025