

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Annual Parish Meeting, Annual Parish Council Meeting
and Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday, 28th May 2025
Village Hall, 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs Brice (Chair), Ellison, Jeffery, Newberry, Pengilley. Elliott (Torridge District Council/ TDC). Sharron Newberry (website administrator). Martina Dymond (Clerk)

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

25.41 Chairs Annual Report

This report will be published on the website and in The Eagle)

This, for the council, has been a quiet year, with no major events of note other than those amongst the parish of a Catholic faith, following the death of Pope Francis, a new pope has been elected, Pope Leo XIV, the first American to become pontiff.

During June 2024 we installed a new galvanised metal fence along the playing field, upper boundary, following deterioration of the old wooden fence. With the help of small grants from the district and county councils this was adequately funded from YPC reserves. Thanks must also be offered to those local residents who helped in this enterprise, saving both the PC and in consequence the citizens of this parish, thousands of pounds. Hopefully this fence will last a good 10+ years, rather than the 4 to 6 years of the wooden type, saving the residents of Yarnscombe Parish, a considerable amount of money, in the long term.

Following a fire inspection of the village hall, it came to light over 70 years of Parish Council records were stored in the hall loft. This was deemed a fire hazard and had to be removed. Finding we had no suitable storage facilities for the 20+ boxes involved, a check of legal requirements meant we could cull quite a lot. Myself and Cllr Ian Newberry have, after much effort, reduced the paperwork involved to 2 boxes, now stored next to the filing cabinet in the village hall small storeroom. We will be looking at further files in the near future, hopefully placing these in the metal filing cabinet.

For reference over the last 5 years we have been keeping most records digitally, though deeds, insurance documents are kept by the parish clerk in a fire proof safe box.

You may have noticed the Yarnscombe Parish website has changed. This has been reformatted, streamlined and funded by YPC to meet our modern age. I would like to give a big thank you from both myself and the parish council members to Sharron Newberry, without whose skill and perseverance this task would neither have been attempted nor completed. I would also pass on a big thank you to Richard Pengilley, who both created and maintained the old Yarnscombe website over many years.

Chris Brice
Chair, Yarnscombe Parish Council

25.42 Any matters arising

Clerk raised issue of bus shelter needing to be cleaned, which led councillors to query whether it was still needed and served a purpose. It is one of council's assets and houses the notice board. It was erected to provide shelter for children waiting for the school bus and people taking the weekly bus into Barnstaple. At present, people are waiting for bus in the square and children are using hall lobby as shelter. If bus shelter is not needed any more, in

long term, notice board would need to be “rehomed”.

Actions taken: Clerk to ask parishioners for their views in next Eagle article and put Bus shelter/Notice board on next agenda.

Clerk had forwarded details and email of new county councillor to parishioner who had voiced his concerns regarding mud on road.

Actions taken: None at present.

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

25.43 **Signing of Acceptance of Office Forms**

All present signed forms, Cllr. Brice will pass on form to Cllr. Cooke and clerk will email form to Cllr. Farr.

Actions taken: None at present.

25.44 **Election and Acceptance of Office of Chair**

Cllr. Newberry proposed, Cllr. Jeffrey seconded. All agreed. Cllr. Brice accepted Office of Chair and was duly elected.

25.45 **Election and Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chair**

Cllr. Jeffrey proposed, Cllr. Brice seconded. All agreed. Cllr. Newberry accepted Office of Vice-Chair and was duly elected.

25.46 **Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Cooke and Farr and Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin (Devon County Council/DCC). There were no declarations of interest and no requests for dispensations had been received.

25.47 **Minutes of last Annual Parish Council Meeting, 22nd May 2024**

Minutes had been signed off and approved as a true record on meeting of 26th June 2024.

25.48 **Review of the Council’s Standing Orders, Financial Regulations (including Separation of Duties) and internal control documents**

This had been done during last year, documents up-to-date.

25.49 **Receipt of a statement of the council’s account for the period ending the previous 31st March**

At the end of the financial year the council’s Treasurers Account balance stood at £5,959.02 and the balance of the 32 days Notice Account was £10,367.25. The Instant Access Account had been closed down and monies transferred to Treasurers Account in order to pay playing field invoice. The precept for the year 25/26 had been set at £8300, first instalment is due to be paid by end of April. Also outstanding is a VAT recovery payment of £2,392.44.

Since beginning of year, the Lloyds Bank has charged £4.45 monthly service charge and fee for cheques banked. Council is in process of switching over to electronic payments, where 100 transactions/month would be free of cost. Councillors are also investigating whether banks would offer community accounts without charging fees.

- 25.50 **Election of Representatives**
Parochial Church Council/PCC – Cllr. Pengilley
Youth Club – M. Dymond(Clerk)
Playing Field – Cllr. Cooke
- 25.51 **Review of Asset List**
Asset list now includes fence in playing field.
Actions taken: Clerk to send updated version to website administrator, so it can be published on website.
- 25.52 **Review and confirmation of insurance cover in respect of all insured risks**
Clerk had circulated insurance quote and council is at moment in second year of a 3 year agreement. Renewal quote of £415-70, Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr. Newberry seconded. All agreed to accept renewal quote.
Actions taken: Cheque written out and countersigned, clerk to send off.
- 25.53 **Review of Subscriptions**
Yearly subscriptions include payments to DALC, ICO and Parish Online. Councillors confirmed these subscriptions.
- 25.54 **Review of Complaints Procedure and Grievance and Discipline Procedures**
No update needed, review had taken place during course of last year.
- 25.55 **Review of Data Protection Policy**
No update needed, review had taken place over course of last year..
- 25.56 **Review of remaining policies and documents**
- i. Press & Media Communications
 - ii. Action Plan – to be renewed
 - iii. Emergency Plan/Emergency Plan Data Regulations
 - iv. Grant Awarding Policy
 - v. Training Policy and Record
 - vi. Risk Management
 - vii. Equality Policy
 - viii. Health & Safety Policy
 - ix. Parish Council Information
 - x. Playing Field Conditions of Hire
 - xi. Staff Appraisal Process
- All other remaining policies and documents are up-to-date
- 25.57 **Date, time and place of ordinary parish council meetings**
This was confirmed as the 4th Wednesday of every month, Yarnscombe Village Hall, 7.30pm.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

- 25.58 **Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations**
See APCM, item 25.46

25.59 **Public Participation and Feedback**

Concerns had been raised about planning application 1/0951/2022/FUL. Building had stopped some time ago and had recently been started again. Originally, objections were raised mentioning loss of light. Cllr. Elliott investigated and received following reply from planning enforcement officer Grant McGill:

"I recently visited this site; the building being constructed is under 1/0951/2022/FUL and at this stage of building it is not yet much above the first-floor level and appears to be built in accordance with the agreed plans. At the time of my site visit I was told by the builders that the loss of light issues was civil matter and have been settled to both parties' satisfaction. In this instance I do not think that a new case needs to be raised as there are no identifiable breaches,"

25.60 **Representatives Reports**

1) County/District Councillors

County

Firstly, hello as your new county councillor! It's great to finally meet you all and I look forward to working with you. Over the past few weeks we have had our induction and training sessions as well as our first full council AGM and cabinet meeting.

The county results for the new council are that there is no single party control. Of the 60 seats, the Lib Dems won the most with 27, Reform UK, new to the council won 18 seats; the Conservative Party – 7 seats; Green Party – 6; Independents – 2; with the Labour Party now having no seats on the council. This is a significant change at County Hall, where the Conservatives had been in control since 2009. 80% of the county councillors are new. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/new-leader-makes-vulnerable-children-and-fixing-roads-two-of-his-top-priorities/>

Cllr Julian Brazil was voted in as our leader and I was really honoured to be asked to be on his cabinet with the portfolio for rural affairs. This is a brand new role that has been formed at the County Council and I really look forward to what it will bring to the council as a whole. Torrington's new county councillor given rural affairs cabinet role - North Devon Today. I attended the Devon County Show and was pleased to speak alongside Cllr Brazil about rural isolation here in Devon, including the lack of public transport and poor access to services as well as the isolation experienced by farmers and the farming community.

At our AGM we also voted to install "swift boxes" to some of DCC's buildings, a quick and easy way to protect this declining species, and we will be lobbying central government to require all new builds to install "swift bricks" as standard. At our first cabinet meeting we heard about plans to improve support for foster carers and agreed to bring allowances in line with national levels, reduce council tax charges for registered foster carers in line with neighbouring authorities, and have also introduced an "equipment fund" to provide carers with equipment such as new mattresses, buggies and car seats. We hope this will show how much we value our foster carers and the important job they do, and increase retention rates across Devon. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/news/councillors-agree-improved-support-for-devon-foster-carers/>

I have lots of informal meetings lined up to be briefed on various issues including broadband,

and also a day with our neighbourhood highways officer to have a look at the state of our roads and finding out what has been prioritised for future work as well as highlighting with him the many roads that have been raised with me by local residents in the past few months.

District – Cllr. Elliott gave a brief, informal update regarding Local Government Reorganisation(LGR). For most areas this would mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more, but there may be exceptions to ensure new structures make sense for an area. Cllr.Elliott indicated that more should be known by last quarter of the year.

2) Village Hall / Social Club – Village Fete, request had been made to erect small marquee in corner of field during village fete. Councillors had no concerns, as long as dimensions of marquee didn't interfere with landing site.

3) Youth Club - None

4) PCSO/Police Report – no Teams meeting advertised and no crime report received.

Actions taken: Clerk to contact Donna Gutteridge at Devon & Cornwall Police

5) Playing Field – There has been an ongoing issue with the portable goal posts. Parishioners had reported that they had been left in middle of field, thereby compromising ability of Air Ambulance to land. Councillors agreed to do the following; put notice in Eagle and on Village Website/Facebook about importance moving goal posts into corner or far side after use; clerk to contact DAAT for site plan to obtain definite answer on area needed.

25.61 **Minutes of Meeting of 23rd April 2025**

Minutes were approved and signed off as a true record.

25.62 **Matters arising from last Meeting**

Disposal of old PC documents stored in Village Hall Update by Cllr. Brice and Newberry – Two boxes left to check, probably will be done by mid June.

Actions taken- Once all documents have been checked, potential purchase of fireproof storage boxes will be considered. Item to be put on June agenda.

25.63 **New Matters**

Yarnscombe website – Website is live, agendas and minutes are uploaded. As yet, search facility not available, Sharron Newberry will investigate options available. Cllr. Cooke has a new computer, but is unwell at present, so unable to access emails as yet. Cllr. Farr also not able to access emails (clerk contacts him via personal email) and Sharron Newberry and Cllr. Brice will meet up before next meeting to resolve any issues.

Actions taken: Progress report at next month's meeting.

25.64 **PROW Monthly Report**

None.

Actions taken: Clerk to contact Prow and report back next month.

25.65 **Planning**

1/020204/2025/FUL Agricultural building at Grid Reference 255977 123750 Yarnscombe, Demolition of existing stables and sheds and erection of replacement shed for agricultural purposes – Application withdrawn.

Part retrospective application for the change of use of agricultural barn to dwelling (self build)
Building At Gibbings Down Yarnscombe Barnstaple Devon EX31 3LJ, Ref,1/0270/2025/FUL –
Application permitted

25.66 **Additional Planning**

None.

25.67 **Accounts - Internal Audit**

Council had passed internal audit. Document laid out several recommendations and areas to improve in, it will be published on website in due course. Council retained status of exemption.

Actions taken: Relevant documents will be posted on website in due course and clerk will send off Certificate of Exemption to external auditor.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

