

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday, 23rd July 2025
Village Hall, 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs. Brice (Chair), Ellison, Newberry, Jeffrey, Pengilley, Elliott (Torrige District Council/TDC), Cottle-Hunkin (Devon County Council/DCC), Sharron Newberry (website administrator) and M.Dymond (clerk)

25.78 Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllrs. Cooke and Farr, also from Cllr. Lock (TDC). There were two declarations of personal interest (see 25.83) and no requests for dispensations had been received.

25.79 Public Participation and Feedback

Hedge at Clogshill Cross – Cllr. Cooke had cut back hedge. Councillors expressed their gratitude on behalf of parishioners, as cutting back of hedge improved visibility.

Scaffolding at Greenacre, Yarnscombe – At present, scaffolding is still in place see item 25.80/1

25.80 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin attended meeting and apologised for not being able to attend previous meetings. She highlighted issues of plans to phase out first responders, the pothole fixing blitz project, increased co-operation between secondary schools and DCC, Stagecoach fare rises and post 16 transport costs in general, the offer of buying shares to bring back the Globe Hotel I Torrington and the patching of road surfaces in Yarnscombe. She also sent this more detailed report:

Following up on the shock news about the plans to phase out fire service co-responders across the Southwest, and the decision to move solely to volunteer community first responders: The ambulance trust was called in for scrutiny by Devon County Council's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny committee which was held last week. The committee heard from a large number of members of the public talking passionately about the need to retain the service, and the Southwest Ambulance Trust was heavily scrutinised by councillors. The recommendation from the committee was that SWAST should pause the termination of fire co-responders, respond within 28 days with more detail and metrics, and come back to committee in September, as they were not satisfied by the detail and reasoning that was provided. At our most recent cabinet meeting we presented a large number of reports which have all been reported on the DCC website. Most notable decisions included the agreement "to trial pothole repair blitz as part of £83 million road maintenance programme" Our highways teams will carry out a repair blitz on potholes, where all potholes would be filled, rather than just dealing with safety defects, in a few trial areas of the county. Although the exact details are still to be agreed, this pilot would be used to establish the budget implications of changing maintenance procedures. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/council-to-trial-pothole-repair-blitz-as-part-of-83-million-road-maintenance-programme/> And we also agreed to "Improve the outcomes of our most vulnerable children through new 10-year

plan" A new long-term plan to improve the outcomes of Devon's most vulnerable young people by overhauling how they are supported and cared for has been approved by our cabinet. Councillors have agreed to an ambitious multi-million investment programme to establish 12 new children's homes; 20 specialist foster places; and up to four new therapeutic schools, over the next 10 years <https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/news/new-cabinet-vows-to-improve-the-outcomes-of-our-most-vulnerable-children-through-10-year-plan/>

A few weeks ago I was really pleased to visit a place where I have spent a huge amount of time in the past- both as a pupil and as a teacher! Great Torrington School. I want to thank headteacher Andy Bloodworth and chair of governors Ian Newberry (who I think you may know...!) for inviting me in, in my new role as County Councillor. They showed me around and I heard about the challenges and things that have changed since I was there 6 years ago. A big thing that I took away was the will and the need for more collaboration between Devon County Council and the school and that is one of the things I will be working on over the next few years. I also attended Chulmleigh College soon after, along with other county councillors including the leader and deputy leader of DCC. We had very open discussions with the headteachers of Chulmleigh, South Molton and Ilfracombe and a lot of similar issues were raised including the need for more face to face contact with DCC staff. We look forward to working more closely with schools across Devon. Also earlier this month, as county councillors we were all invited down to a farm near Ivybridge. This was organised by the NFU South team, helping to build relationships and was a great opportunity for councillors to learn about the issues and especially the recent challenges we are facing in the farming sector. The family farm tax, the closure of the sustainable farming incentive, and unfair trade deals to name a few. As well as a presentation from the NFU and having a tour of the farm, we also heard from the Rural Affairs team at Devon & Cornwall Police about the different challenges in rural areas- from flocks of more than 100 sheep being stolen overnight, to GPS systems being stolen and ending up as far away as the USA and Mexico. These are highly organised crimes and we were urged to report any suspicious behaviour that we see in the countryside to them. As cabinet member for Rural Affairs I look forward to working together with organisations such as the NFU - National Farmers' Union, sharing knowledge and information with fellow councillors, and helping us to make informed decisions, allowing Devon County Council to be a bigger voice for our rural communities. Finally... another reminder to please support the Globe Hotel in Great Torrington I believe there is currently more than £190,000 raised with just £40,000 to go!. Luckily they have been able to extend the deadline to raise the money, the final deadline is now 18th August. Once the amount is raised the hotel will be owned by the community and a grant of more than half a million pounds will be released by central government towards its renovation. The aim of the globe project is to provide a training hotel to train young people in the hospitality sector. It would raise aspirations and would transform the town centre. Community shares start at just £50. There are also tax reliefs and benefits for businesses that invest. Please spread the word with everyone and encourage them to invest. Link to crowdfunder here: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/the-globe-hotel-torrington#start> On Yarnscombe specific issues I have been contacted by residents within the area and have

travelled around many of the roads with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer Mark James. We specifically looked at Oaken Hill and Mark is looking at getting it patched in the short term and has put it down to be a "recycled road" in the long term- a new and innovative process suitable for rural roads that have fallen into serious disrepair. We also noticed fly tipping of a large trailer and a gas cylinder in the layby at Cranford Cross which I reported to TDC. We also looked at the road past Rooks Cross? And Mark said he would speak with the contractor about moving ahead with patching here. Many thanks to Cllr Elliott for including me in correspondence re the scaffolding and I hope this will soon be resolved.

District

Cllr. Elliott informed councillors that scaffolding license expires on 6th August 2025 and cannot be renewed.

2) Village Hall / Social Club Village

Fete Feedback – The fete had been very successful and raised £700 for Village Hall funds and £420 towards church funds. Outcome of fire safety check to be ascertained. Cllr. Farr is committee member, put on agenda to ask him at next meeting.

3) Youth Club – None

4) PCSO/Police Report – Specific crime report for Yarnscombe not available, clerk accessed Devon and Cornwall Police website, where crime statistics for Torrington Rural are only available up to end of June. Most commonly reported crimes were: 23 Violence and sexual offences, 11 criminal damage and arson, 9 anti-social behaviour offences and 5 drugs offences.

5) Playing Field – An inspection by an DAAT representative took place on 23rd July on playing field. Also present were Cllr. Brice and council clerk. To ensure a safe landing area for helicopter, it was decided to place goalposts 55metres apart and to peg them in permanently. **Actions taken:** Cllrs.Brice and Newberry to meet the following Saturday morning and permanently fix goal posts into position.

Damage to playing field shed – Clerk had been informed of damage and on inspection had found that perspex windows had been pushed/punched out of window frames. Person responsible has been identified and windows will be replaced. **Actions taken:** None at present.

25.8 Minutes from Meeting of 28th May 2025 – Minutes were approved and signed off as a true record.

25.82 Matters arising from last Meeting

Disposal of old PC documents stored in Village Hall – Update by Cllr. Brice and Newberry

Documents will now fit in filing cabinet in Village Hall. Council minutes from 1938 onwards available, either in paper or digital form. Final outcome of fire safety check to be established.

Actions taken: Councillors to ask Cllr. Farr, as he is member of Village Hall committee.

Yarnscombe website councillor's email addresses – Parish Online offer of gov.uk address
All councillors will have to be able to receive and send council emails via the @yarnscombe.org.uk address. This forms part of Assertion 10, a new component of AGAR for councils in 2025/26. All councillors, apart from Cllr. Jeffrey are able to do so. The website administrator will provide Cllr. Jeffrey with relevant instructions and Cllr. Pengilley will also be able to provide assistance.

Parish Online offered to set councillors up with gov.uk email address and domain. For the next 3 years, the annual cost would be £200. Councillors decided that cost outweighed the benefits and will not take up offer.

Actions taken: Ensure that by next month Cllr. Jeffrey's email address is set up and working.

Data Protection Compliance Toolkit – Clerk, Cllr. Pengilley and website administrator registered to access services. At last meeting council had signed up to Breakthrough Communications who provide ongoing assistance to ensure that councils fulfil all criteria of assertion 10. This assistance may take form of webinars, templates or help with drawing up policies. Clerk, Cllr. Pengilley and website administrator are now registered to access services. Sharron Newberry, the website administrator had attended webinar dealing with accessibility of parish councils, in order be able to sign off assertion 10.

She highlighted various issues:

Accessibility of website and availability of councillors, meaning printed material, on social media in person. This must mean availability to all, special consideration should be taken to include people with hidden disabilities (hearing/sight issues, neurodivergence etc.) Anyone should be able to navigate website with mouse (for instance via smartphone) The content and the make up of website should include hyperlinks to parish council documents and the use of acronyms should be avoided, unless they are fully explained. The website must also include access to a microphone, fully adjustable sound for potential upload/ viewing of videos.

Actions taken: Copy of webinar to be be emailed to councillors/clerk by website administrator.

25.83 New Matters

Set up of electronic payment system – Since the beginning of this year, the council has to pay a monthly fee for Treasurers Account and also each time a cheque was paid in, whereas the first 100 electronic payments were free of charge. Clerk had tried on numerous occasions to set up electronic payment system. After visits to the bank and advice from their business manager, clerk and Cllr. Pengilley are now both able to access statements and pay invoices electronically. It was suggested to purchase a tablet specifically for use by clerk to access electronic payment system, as on laptop you were unable to see whether Caps lock was engaged, which had made it difficult to confirm password needed to set up electronic payment system. Clerk and Cllr. Brice had a look at available tablets and cost ranges between £100 to £150. Seeing that assertion 10 also requires an IT policy, obtaining another electronic device would mean another potential threat to IT security and its use would need to form part of IT policy. Clerk suggested a trial period of 3 month with laptop and then re-visit issue.

Actions taken: Potential purchase of tablet to be put on November agenda.

Cleaning of bus shelter – Sharron Newberry had proposed a handyman/gardener she had employed in the past who would clean shelter for £30. Cllrs. Ellison and Newberry declared a personal interest. Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr. Pengilley seconded. All agreed to pay £30 for cleaning of shelter.

Actions taken: Invoice to be presented at next meeting.

DALC Training events (see email) – Clerk had circulated email about forthcoming training events. The chairman’s training (Cllr. Newberry) and the New Councillor’s training were suggested as potentially useful.

Actions taken; Councillors to decide if/what training to attend and inform clerk.

25.84 PROW Monthly Report – update by Dave Trickett (DCC contractor)

Clerk had written to new DCC Rights of Way Warden, but he is dealing with a backlog of emails and funding requests. The local current PROW is able to walk footpath and reports essential repairs, but doesn’t carry out strimming or minor repairs. This is done by Dave Trickett, a DCC contractor who visited Yarnscombe at the end of June.

22.85 Planning – None

22.86 Additional Planning -None

22.87 Accounts

Breakthrough Communications Electronic Payments £594-00

Invoice had been paid electronically by clerk in presence of Cllr. Brice.

Invoice had been signed off by Cllr. Pengilley and Cllr. Brice at previous meeting.

Bank reconciliation April 2025 to June 2025

Bank reconciliation had been carried out and cash book signed.

Meeting ended 8.30pm