

Tuesday, 14th October 20

**Minutes of Yarnscombe Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday, 24th September 2025
Yarnscombe Village Hall, 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs.Brice(chair), Cooke, Ellison, Jeffery, Newberry, Pengilley, Cllr. Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin(joined meeting at 8pm) and M.Dymond (clerk)

25.98 Apologies, Declarations of Interests and Dispensations

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr.Elliott, Cllr.Lock and Cllr.Farr.

There were no declarations of interests and no requests for dispensations had been received.

25.99 Public Participation and Feedback

Feedback from Dragon patching of potholes – Feedback was generally positive, although not effective on small roads. The issue of drainage was raised, in order to prevent further flooding of roads.

Actions taken; Issue to be brought to attention of Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin.

Councillors mentioned that their water bill (on water meter) had doubled over last 9 months. It was suggested to get SWW to check for leaks in local area and track water pipe. Turn off all tabs and check meter.

25.100 Representatives Reports

1) County/District Councillors

County -

At the end of the summer, we spent a day on the edge of Exeter with Devon County Council's economy and skills teams. We visited Exeter SkyPark and Exeter Science Park (including the Zeal Hotel at the Science Park). At the SkyPark we viewed the range of spaces available- from small business units right up to large companies employing more than 200 people. I was so impressed by the Watercress Research Company and the passion and science behind their business and skincare products, with everything sourced and created locally. This is run by an Exeter University Professor and GP duo (Prof & Doc). We then had a visit to Stovax and Gazco, a large employer, researching and manufacturing high quality products right here in Devon. At Exeter Science Park we were welcomed and shown around by the CEO Dr Sally Basker. 800 people are registered to work at the Science Park which is the collaborative venture of Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council and Exeter University, structured as non-profit. 25% of the site is currently completed with big opportunities such as defence and offshore energy anticipated in the future. Finally we walked across to the Zeal Hotel within the Science Park, a new, net-zero hotel which opened March this year. The walls and roof are solar pv and generates more electricity than it uses! We learned about the design and the technologies used to build this hotel. They also use local businesses to source food, drinks and products, as well as having their own recipe for sausages 🍷 There are also two trees growing inside the hotel. It was so impressive as well as having a very calming atmosphere, oh and brown toilet paper (it cuts out the bleaching process!) In the first week of September we had our first big full council meeting which a huge amount on the agenda (the meeting went on all day!). We agreed our strategic plan [Strategic Plan sets out vision for a Devon where "everyone thrives" - News](#), and heard cabinet reports from 3 of our cabinet members. It was a daunting day for me as it was my first time addressing full council on my rural affairs portfolio and taking questions from them. I used this opportunity to speak out for Devon's farming

community and will be sending a letter highlighting a number of concerns to central government ministers on behalf of the council.

*The full detail of the motion I referred to can be found here:

This Council recognises the vital role that farming plays in Devon, both as a cornerstone of our rural economy and as a guarantor of our national food security. Our farmers provide high-quality, high-welfare produce, while also managing and protecting the environment for future generations.

Council expresses particular concern at the damaging impact of the proposed changes to family farm taxation, which threaten the future of family-run farms across Devon and beyond and has created emotional turmoil across the country. We urge Government to reverse these changes and safeguard the future of the family farm model. We further note with alarm the sudden closure of the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) applications earlier this year, and call for their reintroduction, with sufficient funding and long-term support to ensure that farm businesses can plan with confidence, while continuing the good work that farmers do and have done for the environment, driving towards our aspirations for carbon reduction and biodiversity alongside quality food production. This Council also recognises the importance of fair trade deals that do not undermine British farmers. Trade agreements must ensure a level playing field, protecting our high food, welfare and environmental standards and ensuring they are not undercut by cheaper imports produced to lower standards overseas. We also support calls for agriculture and food production to be embedded within the school curriculum so that young people understand where food comes from and the importance of farming to our country. We endorse the work of the Farmwise initiative led by Devon County Council, which provides an interactive learning day every year for Devon's children focused on food and farming. We reaffirm our support and commitment to the Devon County Farm Estate, recognising its contribution to developing the next generation of farmers, supporting local communities, and delivering wider benefits to the county. Finally, this Council recognises the severe challenges faced by farmers around mental health and wellbeing. We condemn the closure of the Farming Resilience Fund earlier this year and call for increased support and promotion of vital mental health and wellbeing services to ensure it reaches those who need it most. Council resolves the cabinet member for Rural Affairs and the Chair of Farms Estate write to Government Ministers and Devon's MPs setting out these concerns. Council will continue working with the farming community and in collaboration with partner organisations such as the NFU, to be an advocate for the farming community, and ensure a thriving and sustainable future for agriculture in Devon.

As well as this, we voted to support the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign and agreed a countywide ban on smartphones in schools from 2026. This is a bold step to put children's wellbeing, safety, and learning first. [Councillors endorse principle of smartphone ban in schools](#) We also passed Cllr Yusef's motion on hate crime, sending a clear message that Devon is a county that stands for tolerance, equality, and respect. Hate has no place in our communities.

As you know, my cabinet role has a very broad remit, and as well as everything else it also includes refugees and resettlement. Following the protests which had been taking place outside of the

Asylum hotel near Exeter, a visit was arranged for me and the Leader of the council to go inside, meet with the staff and also the local organisations helping the asylum seekers. We wanted to show

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solidarity and compassion to these people who have experienced so much trauma to get here. We saw mothers and babies and families and were told there are people from more than 20 different nationalities there, and all are either women or families. My own children had made some cards and friendship bracelets for the children there and we are arranging for others to send in cards of support and kindness. It's something very small but these things can make a real difference.

Southwest Ambulance Service came back to DCC's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee meeting 22nd September and the committee remained extremely concerned. I also spoke against SWAST's decision to phase out the fire co-responder service across Devon and the rest of the Southwest. The County Council are requesting they abandon this decision as we believe it puts lives at risk in rural communities. [Devon fires back: Ambulance trust urged to reconsider fire co-responder phase-out | Mid Devon Advertiser](#) We are also organising a response to the Post Office green paper, the deadline is 6th Oct and we are encouraging people to send in their thoughts to central government on the importance of our post offices both for the economy and as a social hub, often the last service left in a rural community. [Could your Post Office change? Devon residents invited to respond](#)

Finally, I am so proud to announce this new grant fund we have set up at Devon County Council. Designed by young people, for young people 😊 Please share with your local youth groups! <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/new-grant-fund-laims-to-enrich-the-lives-of-devons-young-people/>

If there are any safety defects or other highways type issues please do report them here: [Report a problem - Roads and transport](#), Grit bins can be requested via [Grit bins and salt bags - Roads and transport](#), Speed concerns can be raised from the "report a concern" link at [Speeding, Speed Limits and SCARF - Roads and transport](#)

Councillors queried whether visiting asylum hotels could be interpreted as supporting illegal immigrants, Cllr. Cottle-Hunkin stressed that there is a clear line between legal and illegal immigration and support is given to legal routes into the UK. She also explained that the above mentioned grant could be potentially used for a paid youth leader in Yarnscombe, depending on interest.

Actions taken: Clerk to include potential grant for youth club in next “Eagle”

District – None

2) Village Hall/Social Club – Fire Safety check result as yet not obtained.

3) Youth Club - None

4) PCSO/Police Report – None

5) Playing Field - Strimming of playing field and footpath carried out (invoice from May up to October 25), Cllr. Brice proposed to pay invoice of £160, Cllr. Cooke seconded. All agreed.

Actions taken: Cheque written out and countersigned, Cllr. Cooke will pass on.

25.101 Minutes from Meeting of 27th August 2025

Minutes of last meeting were approved and signed off as a true record.

25.102 Matters arising from last Meeting

Cleaning of bus shelter quote £40-00

Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr. Pengilley seconded. All agreed.

Actions taken: Clerk to inform Terry Jeffery that he can go ahead.

25.103 New Matters

NALC Pay scale agreement 2025/26

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Clerk shared NALC pay scale agreement 25/26 with councillors. From 1/4/25, hourly rate for clerk will increase from £13.26 to £13.69. All agreed to pay new hourly rate.

Actions taken: Cllr. Brice will send email to Torridge Payroll to inform them that new salary has been agreed.

North Devon Record Office donation request – Clerk had circulated letter for support from North Devon Record Office. Cllr. Newberry proposed donation of £50, Cllr. Ellison seconded.

Actions taken: Clerk to arrange for payment of £50.

Krystal Hosting Renewal £70 +VAT(Hosting) and Domain £8+VAT

Website administrator had presented invoice of £84(Hosting). Cllr. Brice proposed, Cllr.Pengilley seconded. All agreed.

Actions taken: Electronic payment schedule written out and signed by Cllrs. Brice and Pengilley. Clerk to make electronic payment.

22.104 PROW Monthly Report – update re. Footbridge and stile repair footpath Ward Lane

Landowner had reported that repairs had been carried out to their satisfaction.

Actions taken: None at present.

22.105 Planning

1/0607/2025/FUL | Demolition of existing storage sheds and erection of commercial building (B8) | Agricultural Building At Grid Reference 255977 123750 Yarnscombe Devon

- Comments passed by assigned planning officer

Actions taken: None at present.

1/0708/2025/FUL | Demolition of barn and erection of one new dwelling and associated works in lieu of Class Q approval 1/1026/2022/AGMB - self build | Barn At Grid Reference 256449 121983 Yarnscombe Devon

Actions taken: No comments.

22.106 Additional Planning

Change of use and conversion of former agricultural building to provide additional living space to existing dwelling

Little Greylake West Greylake Yarnscombe Barnstaple Devon EX31 3NF

Actions taken: No comments

22.107 Accounts

£40-00 Bus shelter

£84Krystal Hosting annual charge

£160-00 Strimming of footpaths May to October 25

Meeting ended 8.20pm

NOTE: Council meeting in December was cancelled. Last meeting of 2025 on 26th November.

