

Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council
on Monday 2 December 2024 at Burlescombe

Present: Councillors Downing, Forward (Chair), McDonald, Smith and Walker together with MDDC Councillors Lock and Westcott and Acting Parish Clerk, Mrs McGeever was also present.

Councillor Forward opened the meeting at 7pm and welcomed everyone.

The meeting room had been set out to facilitate the filming of the meeting but no members of the public were present to carry out this activity.

02122024/1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor Box and DCC Councillor Radford.

Following the resignation of Councillor Palmer, ten members of the public had requested that MDDC call an election but no candidates had come forward. This meant that a further Notice of Election would be issued by MDDC. The timescales for such an election were awaited.

The cost for the elections called since the previous Parish Council had resigned had been requested by the Clerk and was awaited. An uncontested election generally cost around £125 but actual elections would cost significantly more.

02122024/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

There were no declarations of interests or dispensations requested with regard to the business on the agenda.

02122024/3 Minutes of Previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting on 4 November 2024 had been circulated to all councillors.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the proposal that the minutes were a true record of meeting. The Chair initialled and signed the minutes of 4 November 2024.

02122024/4 Public Participation

The following items were raised:

- DCC Highways to report on the survey of the road
- White lines at the school to slow down the traffic which can be travelling at 30-40mph. There is a problem with parking at the area which causes a bottleneck and it was felt this area was almost more important than the railway bridge.
- The state of the road from the quarry and the pooling of water on the roads and the sweepers were not clearing the dirt on the roads

The Chair advised that all points had been noted and would be followed up.

02122024/5 Matters arising from the last minutes

Litter pick proposal

Councillor Downing advised that it was too wet to carry out a litter pick and it would be better left to February/March time. It was felt important to work with FVEG to co-ordinate litter picks in the village. Councillor Downing did a weekly litter pick in Burlescombe and would bring forward a proposal to the February meeting.

Action: Councillor Downing/Clerk

Delivery of fast fibre

In the absence of Councillor Box, the Clerk advised that Connecting Devon and Somerset had advised that Airband had withdrawn from the delivery of broadband. A meeting was scheduled to discuss the implications.

Action: Clerk/bring forward to January meeting

Appointment of Parish Councillors to the Amenities Working Group

The Amenities Working Group had been set up with Terms of Reference which gave it no powers to make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council. The remit was to assess the amenities and put forward recommendations on the play park, recreation ground and Old Railway Line from Black Bridge to Burlescombe.

Councillors Forward and Downing were on the working group and it was felt two more Parish Councillors should be appointed.

It was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor McDonald that Councillors Walker and Smith join the working group. This proposal was carried with two abstentions.

The Working Group would organise its next meeting and site visits to the play park and ORL.

Action: Amenities Working Group

Annual Parish Meeting/Community Showcase

Combining a Community Showcase with the Annual Parish Meeting in May would provide local organisations with the opportunity to report to the AGM and let residents know what was on offer in the village.

Action: Bring forward to January

Park Wood

The owner of Park Wood would be invited to the Amenities Working Group to discuss the Parish Council's ongoing use of the wood and its upkeep.

Action: Amenities Working Group/Clerk

Old Railway Line

As detailed above, the Amenities Working Group would look to walk the ORL and identify any maintenance issues prior to the January meeting.

Action: Amenities Working Group

02122024/6 To consider and approve adopting core documents in line with NALC model documents/recommendations to cover an Employment Contract for the Clerk and staff policies.

It was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor Walker that NALC model documents be adopted and this was unanimously approved.

Action: Clerk to prepare documentation to be uploaded to the website.

The Clerk had circulated a co-option procedure policy document and it was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor McDonald that the co-option procedure policy document be adopted and this was unanimously approved.

Action: Clerk to prepare documentation for upload to the website.

Further core documentation will be prepared for the next Parish Council meeting.

02122024/7 To receive a report from the Chair

Update on councillor vacancy

Following the update from the Clerk under apologies, the Chair commented that it would be positive for the Parish Council if an individual were to put themselves forward in the upcoming election who resided outside the main two villages of the parish, namely Burlescombe and Westleigh, so that true representation of the parish could be achieved.

Working relationship between chair, vice and clerk

The Chair felt it was important that there was a close working relationship between the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk to ensure continuity.

Update on the Westleigh Play Park handover

The handover of the Play Park from MDDC to Burlescombe Parish Council would take place in this current financial year.

The cost of replacing the existing equipment would be around the £60,000 mark and the Clerk was awaiting a quote for the refurbishment of the existing equipment.

Action: Clerk

Update on works required at Westleigh Play Park and recreation field

Two quotes had been received for the re-fencing of the play park area and the recreation ground in Westleigh and both were in the region of £5-6,000.

The Chair put standing orders down to hear a proposal from a member of the public to form a working group to erect the fence at cost. This offer would be discussed by the Amenities Working Group and a recommendation brought back to the Parish Council. The Chair re-instated standing orders.

Action: Amenities Working Group

Update on dog bin outside Westleigh recreation ground

The cost of installing a 'any bin will do' outside the recreation ground would be £250.23 with an ongoing yearly cost of £260.00 for a once weekly emptying regime on a Tuesday. There was an additional cost of £150 to install a red dog bin and these bins had ongoing maintenance costs.

Action: Review the bins in the parish and bring forward to the next meeting

Councillor Training

The date had been set for 3 February 2025 and a start time of 6.30pm was agreed. The training would be open to other Parish Councils and the committee room at Sampford Peverell Village Hall had been booked as a central location.

The cost of holding the training with other Parish Councils reduced the cost and provided for an exchange of ideas.

Action: Clerk to confirm numbers attending from Burlescombe and the other Parish Councils to DALC

Appointment of a Clerk

Councillor Walker had undertaken, with the Clerk, to write a job description and a job evaluation to determine the number of hours required and the salary scale level using the NALC/SLCC bench marking data.

It was important to attract and retain a high-quality clerk given the responsibility that was undertaken as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Action: Bring forward to the January meeting

It was noted that the number of hours required would reduce once the Parish Council had all procedures in place.

Website/emails

The Parish Council gov.uk site was now fully operational and all councillors had gov.uk emails. The new provider had taken over the old domain burlescombe.org and emails to clerk@burlescombe.org were automatically being forwarded to the new clerk@burlescombeparishcouncil.gov.uk email address.

The new provider was looking to see if any of the email data that had been deleted by the past provider could be retrieved.

The Clerk had been expecting a USB disc of a full back-up of the previous site including all documentation that was unavailable when the transfer of the old site took place to be handed over at the meeting.

Action: Clerk to follow up with past provider

It was noted that the computer had been wiped clean prior to handover in June to the Acting Parish Clerk and only a limited amount of data had been re-instated. Further comment could not be made at this time due to ongoing investigations.

Emails from residents

The Clerk had written response to an email from a resident and circulated to the Parish Council for approval.

Having considered the response, it was agreed that the response could be sent.

Action: Clerk

Bus stops

No further information on timetables at bus stops had been received from DCC.

Action: Clerk

It was noted that there was one bus a week.

Survey

The Chair wished to comment on the survey which was a later agenda item and look at ways to increase responses.

There had been 64 responses which, if reflective of all residents within a household, represented 160 people.

With an electoral count of 770, a survey response was ideally required from 250 individuals. Online and paper versions of the survey were available and Parish Council members had attended parish events to encourage participation.

The survey had been publicised on the website, social media, noticeboards and at events. However, further outlets were required. It was felt posters could be put up in the Village Halls, churches, at the shop in Holcombe Rogus and the Old Well together with the pub at Waterloo Cross.

Action: Councillor Smith

Telephone box

It was noted that the telephone box was a book swap.

02122024/8 To consider the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:

Planning applications:

24/01277/FULL

Proposal: Change of use of ground floor of existing pub (Use Class Sui Generis) to create 4 dwellings (Use Class C3)

Location: The Ayshford Arms Burlescombe Tiverton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 307274 / 117003

Parish: Burlescombe 06

The Parish Council had received an extension of 4 December 2024 for submitting a response.

The Parish Council considered the documentation on the planning portal together with the concerns of residents and, whilst not having an objection in principle to the provision of residential accommodation, and given the current state of the building RESOLVED to raise the following points:

- There is no comment from Highways and given the location and the potential lack of visual splay for vehicles entering or leaving the premises
- The current provision for parking does not seem adequate for two cars per residential unit and given the large car park at the rear of the building, it could be deemed that this would provide better off road parking than that currently proposed
- It is believed there is a proviso that an area of the building should be able to be brought back into use as public house and, if correct, the planning permission if granted should reflect this
- No deviation of the footpath in front of the building should be undertaken without proper consultation
- Adequate provision should be provided to ensure no disruption to neighbours during any works to ensure that the current on road parking is not affected
- the buildings location near the bridge does raise some road safety issues particularly given the number of lorries using the road - consideration might be given to a 20mph
- adequate drainage should be in place to ensure there is no surface water/flooding issues resulting from the development.
- works should be in keeping with the conservation area and in line with any European protection of species

The Parish Council also noted National Rail's concerns over trespassing onto the rail and that no comment had been received from Public Health.

Action: Clerk to submit comments

24/00635/MFUL

Proposal: Erection of storage and manufacturing unit to include formation of parking area and associated works

Location: Land at NGR 308248 116493 West of Woodlands Business Park Burlescombe Devon Grid Ref: 308248 : 116493

Parish: Burlescombe 06

The Parish Council noted that new information had been added to the portal and RESOLVED to make the following comment:

Burlescombe Parish Council considered the new documentation on the planning portal and would have no objection in principle to the application provided that the applicant satisfies the remaining concerns regarding flood risk and that mitigation measures are taken with regard to light and noise pollution. A degree of protection should be afforded to the retained woodland.

Ongoing noise and light pollution assessments may mitigate some of the concerns.

Action: Clerk to submit comments

Decision notices:

No decision notices have been received.

02122024/9 Highways Matters/Footpaths

Matters pertaining to the parish of Burlescombe:

Appointment of a Parish Council representative for Highways Matters

It was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor Walker that Councillor McDonald become the Parish Council's representative for Highways Matters and this proposal was carried with one abstention.

White lines at the railway bridge and school

The Clerk had been in contact with the Neighbouring Highways Officer and the white lines at the railway bridge were in hand.

The Clerk would contact the Neighbouring Highways Officer regarding white lines at the school.

Action: Clerk

Dip at Whiteball

The Clerk had been in contact with the Neighbouring Highways Officer and the dip on the A38 at Whiteball has been put forward for patching and it has been approved, it is now on a list awaiting completion.

Welcome to Devon sign

The Clerk had been in contact with the Neighbouring Highways Officer and it was unlikely that funding would be available for its replacement as it was not a safety defect. The sign was located in the parish of Holcombe Rogus.

Potholes

All potholes should be reported on DCC's website as this was the quickest method to get results and the more a pothole was reported the higher up the list it would go.

The Neighbourhood Highways Officer was aware of the potholes on the section of the A38 from Burlescombe to the Old Well. An appropriate time for the NHO to stop and measure them was being identified as it would need to be safe to do so. The entire section has been put forward as a scheme to be resurfaced however it is currently proposed for the 26/27 financial year. No doubt, due to the ongoing M5 roadworks which required the A38 to be a diversion route.

Water on the hill road

The Neighbourhood Highways Officer was investigating the drains.

Councillor Downing advised that the National Grid would be conducting works in that location from 9-20 December in preparation for further works in the spring to the transponder.

Road Warden Scheme

The Clerk had circulated information on the Road Warden Scheme and believed this self-help initiative to be a positive one for Parish Councils. Councillor McDonald indicated that he would be prepared to be part of the scheme.

It was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor Downing that the Parish Council through Councillor McDonald become part of the scheme and this was unanimously agreed.

Action: Clerk

Snow Warden Scheme

The Clerk had circulated information on the Snow Warden Scheme and believed this self-help initiative to be a positive one for Parish Councils. Councillor McDonald indicated that he would be prepared to be part of the scheme.

It was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor Walker that the Parish Council through Councillor McDonald become part of the scheme and this was unanimously agreed.

Action: Clerk

P3 Scheme (Footpaths)

The Clerk had circulated information on the P3 (Footpaths) Scheme. Whilst it had been indicated that the Parish Council was a member of the scheme, no confirmation had been received and there was no evidence of monies being paid to the Parish Council since the year 2021/22.

It was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor Smith that the Parish Council look to re-enrol in the scheme and this was unanimously agreed.

Action: Clerk

Speed limits

The Clerk would contact DCC Highways and Councillor Radford with a view to having the speed limits assessed.

Action: Clerk

02122024/10 Financial matters:

The Clerk reported as follows:

Update of obtaining access to the bank account

Due to the lack of handover between the resigning Clerk and the Acting Parish Clerk coupled with the deletion of the email account, accessing the account was proving problematical despite following all of the instructions received from Lloyds Bank.

A formal complaint had been made and this has been escalated and it is hoped that following further phone calls to Lloyds Bank that the matter will be resolved. The Clerk had received notification that she was registered for online banking together with all the documentation to register. However, Lloyds Bank had not added her name to the account.

Action: Clerk

Addition of two signatories to the bank account

In the absence of Councillor Box, it was RESOLVED that paperwork would be completed by Councillors Downing, Forward, McDonald and Walker.

Update on financial situation and invoices for payment

The Clerk had input information from the manual cashbook for the year 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 together with the known and projected information for 2024-25 and this information had been circulated to Parish Councillors. The Clerk would ensure that the insurance policy renewal premium was paid and would work to update the asset register. The insurance policy would need to be updated following the takeover of the Play Park.

Request for grant funding from CHAT

The Clerk had contacted CHAT to understand how many residents in the parish of Burlescombe had made use of their services and a decision would be made at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

Consideration of the budget and precept

Using the back data and noting the apparent lack of expenditure on assets such as the Old Railway Line, it was likely that the Parish Council would need to raise the precept to carry out much needed maintenance works, to cover the costs of elections and the cost of ensuring that the Parish Council was operating to best practice. Best practice indicated that small parishes should hold an earmarked fund commensurate with a year's precept.

The initial results of the survey would also be available and that could have an impact on the budget/precept calculation having identified resident's concerns/actions.

The budget information would be set out in the next agenda and the precept would be set and then forwarded to Mid Devon District Council.

Action: Clerk

It was likely that the precept would need to rise significantly and the reasons would be communicated to residents.

02122024/11 To receive the report from the Communications Officer

Councillor Smith's report is given as an appendix to these minutes with the addition of councillor's attendance at the Christmas market, notice of elections and various information provided by Mid Devon District Council.

Action: Councillor Smith

02122024/ 12 To receive a report on the Councillor Advocate Scheme/local crime

Councillor McDonald advised that he had signed up to the scheme which provided access to seminars, crime figures etc and he would make regular reports to the council.

Action: Councillor McDonald

0212/2024/13 To receive a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee

Appointment of a Parish Councillor(s) as representative(s) on the Joint Advisory Committee

In the absence of Councillor Box who had expressed an interest in taking on the role, this matter was deferred to the January meeting.

MDDC Councillors Lock and Westcott both sat on the Joint Advisory Committee.

In the absence of a representative, the Clerk advised:

- The Public Consultation on Area B of the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension would run from 20th November 2024 to 10th January 2025. The link to the online information about the Consultation is; <https://letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/tiveueareabmasterplan>

There were also face-to-face events being held at Phoenix House on 27th November and 13th December.

- Aggregate Industries had indicated that the Westleigh Water Transfer Scheme would be progressed in 2025.

- The Hartnoll Farm Appeal had taken place the week commencing 25 November 2024.

02122024/14 To receive a report on the Quarries

Appointment of a Parish Councillor as the second representative

This matter would be discussed at the January meeting.

Quarry Report

Councillor Downing's report which had been circulated to Parish Council is given as an appendix to these minutes. It should be noted that this is a brief summary of the meeting with the minutes being written and circulated by the Quarry Liaison Group itself.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to write to Aggregate Industries to request that the repairs to Black Bridge be expedited.

Action: Clerk

02122024/15 To receive a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock

Councillor Westcott advised that MDDC had a new Enforcement Officer and work was ongoing.

Councillor Westcott was in a position to take matters to the Scrutiny Committee on behalf of the Parish Council.

Councillor Lock advised that it was hoped MDDC would have a balanced budget and that the devolution deal may see the discontinuation of district councils and it was unsure if county elections would take place in 2025.

02122024/16 To receive a report from DCC Councillor Ray Radford
Councillor Radford’s report had been circulated to Parish Councillors and he had offered to help with Highways related matters.

02122024/17 Items for next meeting
As given in the minutes of this meeting.

02122024/18 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings

The next Parish Council meeting would take place at Westleigh Village Hall on 6 January 2025 with a start time of 7pm.

The February meeting would be at Burlescombe Village Hall and not on a Monday.

Councillor Forward closed the meeting at 9.03pm.

Signed _____ Date: _____
Chair

Burlescombe Parish Council communications update

2 December 2024

Communications since last meeting

- 1. The residents' survey** – our residents' survey is live. It has been promoted via the parish magazine, our website, noticeboards and Facebook.
At time of writing (24 Nov), we have 54 responses, out of an electorate of 770 people. Ideally, we would like to see that rise to over 200 responses over the next two weeks, to give us a good level of confidence that the results are representative.
- 2. Parish magazine** – In the December issue of the Parish magazine, we shared an update that summarised key messages from the meeting on 4 November, as well as the information about the survey, and the updated details for the council members.

3. Facebook

Topics covered by Facebook posts since the last meeting:

- M5 closure and diversion information.
- Notice of election.
- Promotion of survey.
- Outcome of election (in development at time of writing).
- Agenda for the 2 December meeting (also to be published at time of writing).

4. Noticeboards

In line with our approved comms plan and requirements, notices, agendas and minutes have been posted in the Westleigh, Burlescombe, Appledore and Ayshford noticeboards.

5. In-person engagements

- The drop-in session ahead of the last meeting saw a couple members of the public come along to talk to councillors.
- Councillors attended the Burlescombe Christmas Evening Market Saturday 30 November (planned at time of writing).

Future communications

1. Co-option process for our one vacancy – we'll promote through all our channels how people who want to be considered for the vacancy can put themselves forward.
2. Residents' survey – will keep promoting this as much as possible through our channels – if all Councillors can speak to people and encourage them to complete it, that will assist. Paper copies will still be available at the Pop-Inn (pop-up pub night) in Burlescombe Hall on Friday 6 December 6.30-9.30pm.
3. Parish magazine – The January issue deadline is on 10th of the month, we'll include an update from this meeting, as well as co-option info.
4. Facebook:
 - a. A summary of key messages from this meeting and informal drop-in session.
 - b. Final push for the survey completion.
 - c. Co-option info.
 - d. Any other topics that arise that warrant a standalone post.
5. Noticeboards – agendas, minutes and any election notices.

Quarry Liaison Report

On 18th October I attended the tour of Houndaler Sand & Gravel Quarry followed by a Hillhead Quarry Liaison Meeting at the quarry site.

The site visit was interesting as it is phase 8 (final stage) & will be finished in 2025.

I saw the site in 2018 when it had just started.

The manager explained the phases that the site has been through & the restoration now taking place. This last phase 8 area was investigated by the Devon County Council Archeological department & evidence was found of 2 Iron Age round houses & a previous Roman pottery!

A large area of the quarried site has now been replanted with trees & part of the will be returned to farm land.

The Houndaler site is behind the Old Well Garden Centre & the farm further on the Willand Road. At the quarry meeting following it was reported that 28 thousand tons of sand & gravel have been taken from the Houndaler site & has been used mostly for making concrete.

The new concrete making machine is in situation next to the plant for washing & grading sand & gravel & should be working in January 2025.

The Penslade public exhibition was viewed by 20 people each day on Friday 18th & Saturday 19th October.

The application for this site should be in to Devon County Council in December 24 or January 25, so too will be the solar panel site for the firm 'Valencia Waste'(who now own the previous Viridor Landfill Site).

Date of next meeting- Monday March 10th, 4pm at Hillhead Quarry Offices.