

# Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council  
on Wednesday 28 August 2024 at Westleigh URC Hall

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Downing, Eaves, Farley, Palmer and Smith.  
The Acting Parish Clerk, Mrs McGeever was also present.

Councillor Forward opened the meeting at 7pm and welcomed all those present.

## **28082024/1 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Scott together with MDDC Councillors Lock and Westcott and DCC Councillor Radford.

## **28082024/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **28082024/3 Minutes of Previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 5 August 2024 had been circulated to all councillors. It was RESOLVED that the minutes were a true record of the meeting. The Chair initialled and signed the minutes.

## **28082024/4 Public Participation**

The matter of the parish council meetings being filmed was raised during the public forum. The Chair advised this matter was on the agenda of the meeting and would be addressed at that point.

**28082024/5 To appoint** councillors to committees and working groups following recommendations from the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group and to approve Terms of Reference:

Councillor Farley proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that the Terms of Reference for the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group as circulated by the Acting Parish Clerk should be approved. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Terms of Reference for the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group. The Terms of Reference would be published as an addendum to the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Forward advised that having run through the various areas of responsibility and councillors' key skills at the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group meeting on 5 August, it was recommended that the following committees/working groups be set up:

Planning Committee – Councillors Eaves, Forward and Palmer

Councillor Farley proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the proposal that the composition of the Planning Committee as recommended by the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group be adopted. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to appoint Councillors Eaves, Forward and Palmer to the Planning Committee.

Amenities Working Group – Councillors Downing, Farley, Forward and Palmer

Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Eaves seconded the proposal that the composition of the Amenities Working Group as recommended by the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group be adopted. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to appoint Councillors Downing, Farley, Forward and Palmer to the Amenities Working Group.

The Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee and Amenities Working Group had been circulated and would form part of the agenda of the next meeting.

**28082024/6 To appoint** councillors as representatives following recommendations from the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group:

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that the councillors appointed to cover the following areas:

Planning - Councillor Eaves  
Highways - Councillor Eaves  
Footpaths- Councillor Smith  
Police Matters - Councillor Scott

as recommended by the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group be adopted. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to appoint Councillors Eaves, Smith and Scott as detailed above.

It was noted that Councillor Scott had been present at the Working Group meeting and had agreed to take on Police Matters if approved by the Parish Council.

**28082024/7 To review** representation with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back following recommendations from the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group:

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Eaves seconded the proposal that the councillors appointed to cover the following areas:

Devon County Council – Parish Clerk to disseminate information/liaise with MDDC Officers  
Mid Devon District Council – Parish Clerk to disseminate information/liaise with MDDC Officers  
School Liaison/Play Areas – Councillor Farley to report to Full Council  
St Mary’s Church - Councillor Palmer to report to Full Council

as recommended by the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group be adopted. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to appoint Councillors Farley and Palmer as detailed above.

**28082024/8 To approve a communications plan prepared by the communication’s officer (Councillor Smith)**

The plan has been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting and the following changes were put forward prior to it being proposed for approval.

All communications should be sent to the Acting Parish Clerk to ensure that they complied with the Parish Council’s responsibilities.

A deputy communications officer would be appointed to cover holidays/illness and Councillor Farley was put forward for the position.

All communications would include input from the councillor responsible for the subject matter.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Farley seconded the proposal that the Communications Plan with the amendments listed above should be approved. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Communications Plan. The Communications Plan would be published as an addendum to the minutes of the meeting.

**28082024/9 To consider the following planning applications:**

**DCC/4402/2024**

County Matter Planning Application

Variation of Condition No. 3 of planning permission reference DCC/4189/2020

(Construction of asphalt plant and associated development including; importation and recycling of reclaimed asphalt product (RAP) for use in plant; and part-demolition of former In-vessel Composting Facility) to allow for amendments to the approved asphalt plant layout and elevations at Broad Path Landfill Site, Composting Facility, Road From Down Farm Cross To Hillhead Quarry, Burlescombe, EX15 3EP

**DCC/4403/2024**

Regrading of land profile and construction of 2 metre high gabion retaining wall at Broadpath, Uffculme, Devon, EX15 3EP

The Parish Council noted the two applications detailed above and that one was a variation to a condition and the second would be an improvement. No objections had been raised by Uffculme Parish Council.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Farley seconded the proposal that the Parish Council had no objections to the two planning applications. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to put forward a comment of no objection.

**Action:** Clerk to convey to Devon County Council

**Other matters:**

Devon County Council have requested the Parish Council's approval to allow bus stop poles at 2 locations:

Burlescombe Rail Bridge (NE-bound) / Ayshford Arms

Burlescombe Village Hall Approach

for holding timetables.

The Parish Council discussed the above request and considered that the provision of information to residents was a positive move. It was noted that no reference had been made to Westleigh and this was possibly because there was a noticeboard at the bus stop.

**Action:** Clerk to raise the question of timetables for Westleigh.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Farley seconded the proposal that the Parish Council had no objection to the placement of bus stop poles by Devon County Council. The Parish Council RESOLVED unanimously to approve the request.

**28082024/10 To approve an advert for the position of Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**

The Chair had circulated the proposed advertisement for a Parish Clerk that was based on Holcombe Rogus's clerk's advertisement to all Councillors.

Given the comparative size and responsibilities of the two parishes, it was felt the hours and expertise required were aligned. It was noted that the email to respond to would be [clerk@burlescombe.org](mailto:clerk@burlescombe.org).

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Farley seconded the proposal that the Parish Council utilise the proposed advertisement to recruit a parish clerk. The Parish Council RESOLVED to use the advertisement which is shown as an addendum to the minutes of this meeting.

A discussion on the recruitment process would take place during the Assets and Responsibilities Working Group meeting.

## **28082024/11 To receive a report from the Chair on:**

### **Update on report of Giant Hogweed**

The Chair advised that the plant at the Old Railway Line had been from the same family but was not Giant Hogweed which could cause an allergic reaction. It was noted that the ORL was a nature area and plants should not be picked.

### **Development of a protocol for the filming of Parish Council meetings**

The Chair advised that it was a statutory requirement and therefore required by law that Parish Council meetings should be allowed to be filmed. Given concerns expressed by residents, it was considered that the Parish Council should develop a protocol to cover best practice. It was noted that the Parish Council could provide an area where the filming could take place and an area where those not wishing to be filmed could sit.

The adoption of a protocol for the filming of Parish Council meetings would be discussed by the Asset and Responsibilities Working Group and a report would be given at the next Parish Council meeting.

### **Maps of the Parish**

Mid Devon District Council were providing maps of the parish.

### **Update on the Play Park**

Mid Devon District Council had completed the work on the Play Park and Burlescombe Parish Council would be taking over responsibility for the area. This would require a risk assessment to be carried out, a plan developed for ongoing maintenance, inspections and a longer-term view of the amenities required.

The Amenities Working Group would carry out the work and the co-option of members of the public to the Working Group under consideration.

## **28082024/12 Financial matters**

### **Bank accounts**

The Clerk reported that a letter has been sent to Lloyds Bank in Wellington to gain access to the bank account.

**Action:** Clerk

### **Invoices received for payment:**

The Clerk advised the following invoices had been received for payments and those issuing the invoices were aware that there would be a delay in payment.

The invoices were for meeting venues:

Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall (refund to Councillor Downing)	£ 10.00
Westleigh United Reformed Church	£ 14.00

The Clerk advised that a grant request had been received together with covering the insurance for the defibrillator:

Westleigh United Reformed Church (grant request)	£300.00
Westleigh United Reformed Church (defibrillator insurance)	£ 11.31

The grant was for the maintenance of the churchyard. There had been restrictions of grants for open churchyards as opposed to closed churchyards but there had been a recent legislation change.

The Chair put standing orders down to receive a comment from the public with respect to Burlescombe church yard. It was noted that the maintenance of the churchyard did not fall under the responsibility of the Parish Council but a grant request would be considered. The Chair re-instated standing orders.

Councillor Palmer advised that he bring a request from St Mary’s to the next meeting.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Farley seconded the proposal that the Parish Council pay the invoices due for meeting venues. The Parish Council RESOLVED to make the payments as soon as it was able.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Farley seconded the proposal that the Parish Council pay the invoice for the defibrillator insurance. The Parish Council RESOLVED to make the payment as soon as it was able.

Requests for grants would be considered following the Parish Council gaining access to the bank account.

**28082024/13 Items for next meeting:**

The following item was noted for the next meeting together with those listed in the minutes of the meeting on 5 August 2024:

- consultation on proposal to change conservation area of Grand Western Canal

**28082024/14 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings**

The next meeting would take place on 11 September 2024 at Burlescombe Village Hall.

Councillor Forward thanked the Acting Parish Clerk and closed the meeting at 7.35pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

# **Burlescombe Parish Council**

## **Asset and Responsibilities Working Group**

### **Terms of Reference**

The Parish Council as the parent body has formed a Working Group to carry out specific detailed tasks on these matters that fall within its powers.

The Working Group will comply with the Parish Council's Standing Orders on the governance and membership.

#### **Purpose:**

The Asset and Responsibilities Working Group has been tasked with reviewing the historical and current documentation handed over by the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to ascertain the assets and responsibilities of the Burlescombe Parish Council.

The Working Group is further tasked with preparing a job description and advertisement for the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

#### **Membership:**

The membership of the Working Group will be agreed by Burlescombe Parish Council and, in the first instance, will consist of all Parish Council members.

Going forward, no less than two Parish Council members will sit on the Working Group and the Working Group may also co-opt members of the public who have specific knowledge/expertise on the subject to assist the Working Group.

#### **Term of Membership**

The Term of Membership for a working group will be for a period of one year or to the next Annual meeting of the Full Council. The Annual Meeting of the Council can re-confirm the working group's membership and terms of reference or appoint other elected members to serve for the forthcoming civic year.

#### **Leader**

A leader will be appointed for the working party by the Parish Council. The leader will be the main point of contact for the Clerk to Council, Council members and members of the public, and must be a member of the Council unless otherwise agreed by the Full Council.

#### **Powers Working Group**

The Working Group cannot make decisions or spend any money on behalf of the Parish Council, and any recommendations made by working parties will be subject to approval by the Full Council.

#### **Responsibilities and Areas of Operation**

The Full Council has established the role of the working group as detailed as detailed in 'Purpose' above.

#### **Meetings**

The working group will arrange its own meetings and schedule of work at its inaugural meeting.

The Clerk to the Council will be notified of any meeting with at least 4 working days' notice and will advertise the meeting with at least 3 working days' notice. The quorum of the group shall be one Parish Councillor member of the group plus two other members.

Meetings of the working group will be held in a publicly advertised location which may be a private residence or a local hall.

The working group shall report formally to each meeting of the Council with informal updates to Council members following each meeting. The working group will report formally to the Full Council at its Annual Meeting if required.

For the purposes of transparency, the Working Group reports will be published in the minutes of the Parish Council.

*Note: The leader of the working group, if unable to attend a meeting of the Full Council, will nominate another member of the working party to attend.*

Approved by Burlescombe Parish Council on 5 August 2024.

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

### Burlescombe Parish Council communications

#### 1. Background

Following the appointment of the new Councillors, we have an ambition to improve communication and engagement between the Council and the community. A clear and consistent approach should make it easier for the Council to operate effectively, and for local residents to keep up to date with the things that matter to them.

#### 2. Communication objectives

At a high level, our communication plan should support us in:

- Informing residents of how the Council operates
- Ensuring residents know how to keep up to date with the latest news
- Enabling residents to contribute their views on relevant matters
- Improving community engagement with the Council
- Minimising rumours and misinformation
- Building confidence in the Council

#### 3. Audiences

The Council's audiences are varied and can be understood through various lenses: Geography – the Council covers a broad area, including: Appledore, Ayshford, Burlescombe, Canonsleigh, Fenacre, Holbrook, Junction 27 of the M5, Leonard Moor Cross, Maidendown, Southdown, Tiverton Parkway, Waterloo Cross, Westcott, Westleigh.

Access to and use of technology – the Council needs to engage with people who: are digital natives comfortable using the internet and social media; are relatively comfortable using technology, with a bit of direction and support; have little to no access to or comfort with technology. Other considerations – the area includes people of all ages, interests and socioeconomic backgrounds that will impact their ability or interest level in relation to engaging with the Council.

#### 4. Principles

Official Council documentation can be difficult for residents to understand or engage with. Lengthy updates can be hard for people to digest or to find the time to read. Therefore, the following principles should be used to keep people up to date, linking to official documentation for the full picture.

Communications should be:

- Regular, ensuring information is available in a timely manner
- In plain English
- Short, with brief summaries of key information
- Clear, open and honest • Friendly and approachable
- With an option for how to find out more, make contact or give feedback, wherever possible

#### 5. Key channels

- Council meetings
  - Noticeboards in Burlescombe, Westleigh, Ayshford, Appledore
  - Council website (or MDDC in the interim)
  - Facebook (particularly the Burlescombe, Westleigh and Holcombe Rogus Community Facebook Group)
  - Parish magazine
6. Regular rhythm of communications
- Before every meeting we will:
- Share the time, place and agenda online and in noticeboards, as required
  - Share the time, place and a simple summary of what's on the agenda on Facebook, and in the Parish magazine where timing allows

After every meeting, we will:

- Post minutes on online and in noticeboards



- Share a brief summary of key information on Facebook, and in the Parish magazine where timing allows

Where something arises in between meetings, we will:

- Share a post on Facebook
- Consider other steps needed to reach residents, depending on the nature of the situation

## 7. Management and approval of communications

- a. Any Councillor who requires a communication to be shared should contact the Communications Officer for support.
- b. The Communications Officer will draft all communications, in liaison with subject-matter leads as appropriate.
- c. Significant communications will be signed off by the Chair, and shared with the Clerk and all Councillors.
- d. The Communications Officer, the Chair and an additional councillor will have administrative access to the Council Facebook page.
- e. The Communications Officer will bring a Communications Report to each Council meeting, to share an overview of the communications shared, responses received and the planned communications ahead.

## 8. Research and future developments

This document outlines our initial approach to communications, however further insight into residents' preferences would be beneficial, so that this approach can be evolved and improved.

A survey to gather parishioners' views on local issues, as well as communications, would be helpful, to ensure we can best meet our ambitions. Other communications channels for exploration could include:

- How we optimise the use of our website, considering the functionality available
- Creating an emailing list to which people subscribe for updates
- Informal events, such as drop-ins, outside of the regular meetings
- Door drops of printed materials

## 9. Actions

- a. Adopt the objectives, principles, channels, rhythm and process outlined above
- b. Create a simple Facebook page for the Council, so posts come from a Council source rather than an individual
- c. Update residents about the new communication approach, via all channels
- d. Develop a proposal for a survey to understand residents' preferences and interests, to be brought to a future meeting for consideration

## JOB VACANCY FOR PARISH CLERK IN BURLESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Burlescombe Parish Council are looking to recruit a new Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer, to start September 2024.

This is a paid position, with pay being in accordance with the NALC scale LC1 ranging from £12.63 to £13.73 per hour, working 25 hours per month. Hours are flexible and the work is home based primarily, however attendance is required at the Parish Council and Planning meetings held in the village halls of Burlescombe and Westleigh.

Previous clerking experience required along with some IT skills on Word, Outlook and Excel.

If you are interested and wish to know more about this role please email the Clerk at [clerk@burlescombe.org](mailto:clerk@burlescombe.org) with some details about yourself.