Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council
on Wednesday, 21 May 2025 at Burlescombe and Westleigh Village Hall

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Box, Downing, Elliss-Brookes, Smith and Walker together MDDC District Councillors Lock and Westcott and the Parish Clerk, Mrs McGeever.

Councillor Forward opened the meeting at 7.05pm and welcomed the members of the public present.

002/2526/1 To elect the Chair and receive declaration of acceptance of office for 2025/26
Councillor Walker proposed and Councillor Box seconded the proposal that Councillor Forward continue as the Chair and this was unanimously agreed.

Councillor Forward thanked members of the Parish Council and declared her acceptance of the office for 2025/26.

002/2025/2 To elect the Vice-Chair and receive declaration of acceptance of office for 2025/26
Following discussion, Councillor Walker proposed and Councillor Forward seconded the proposal that Councillor Elliss-Brookes take on the role of Vice-Chair and this was unanimously agreed.

Councillor Elliss-Brookes thanked members of the Parish Council and declared her acceptance of the office for 2025/26.

002/2526/3 Apologies
Apologies had been received from Councillor McDonald together with DCC Councillor Clist, who was now the parish's councillor following the elections on 1 May 2025.
Councillor McDonald's absence was approved.

002/2526/4 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations
There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations.

002/2526/5 Minutes of Previous meetings
The minutes of the meeting on 15 April 2025 had been circulated to all councillors and published on the website.

Councillor Elliss-Brookes proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the proposal that the minutes were a true record of meeting. All present at that meeting were in favour of the proposal. The Chair initialled and signed the minutes of 15 April 2025.

002/2526/6 Public Participation
The following items were raised:
- notification of nightworks at the quarry
- Lorry movement
- Article in the Wellington Weekly News
- Monies owed to the council
- Crime, in particular, theft of heating oil

The Chair noted the matters raised and that they would be discussed under the appropriate agenda item or at the next meeting.

002/2526/7 Matters arising from the last minutes
Updates on matters arising from the last minutes will be raised under the appropriate agenda item.

002/2526/8 Annual Return
The annual return will be prepared for the June 2025 meeting following the completion of the internal audit and submitted to the External Auditor in accordance with the timescales provided. Based on the year-end figures the Parish Council would be in a position to sign a Certificate of Exemption for 2024-25.

002/2526/9 General Power of Competence
The Parish Council is not eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence as the current Clerk is not CILCA qualified.
The Clerk is undertaking the qualification.

002/2526/10 Policies and Procedures
The Parish reviewed the list of policies and procedures:

- Code of Conduct (no change from the approved document in November 24)
- Financial Regulations (no change from the new regulations approved in November 2024)
- Risk Management Scheme (no change from the updated document brought to the April 25 meeting)
- Publication Scheme (no change to that already approved)
- Privacy Notice (no change to that already approved)
- Equality and Diversity Policy (no change to that already approved)
- Website Accessibility Statement (no change to that already approved)
- Protocol for Filming (no change to that already approved)
- Co-option policy (no change to that already approved)
- Complaints Policy and Procedure (no change to that already approved)
- Vexatious Policy (no change to that already approved)

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the proposal that the above documents be marked as reviewed and adopted at the May 2025 meeting and this was unanimously agreed.

The Clerk advised that the NALC staff policies were included in the Contract of Employment. A new version of the Contract of Employment was now available.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the proposal that the Clerk used the new Contract of Employment for her own contract and this would be brought to the next meeting for signature and this was unanimously agreed.

- Standing Orders (updated standing orders have been circulated to councillors)
- Health & Safety Policy (new)
- Asset Register (updated)
- Grant policy (new)
- Westleigh Play Park Risk Assessment (to be approved)

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the proposal that the above documents be brought to the next meeting to be reviewed and adopted at the June 2025 meeting and this was unanimously agreed.

002/2526/011 Review of Committees, Working Group and Individual Roles of Parish Councillors
The Clerk had advised that a review of the current committees, working groups and individual roles, including arrangements for reporting back, should take place at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. For ease, the Clerk had listed the names of those currently on the committees or holding individual roles.

Planning Committee
Councillor Forward
Terms of Reference in place

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the proposal that:
Councillor Box
Councillor Elliss-Brookes and
Councillor Walker
should join the Planning Committee and this was unanimously agreed.

Asset and Responsibilities Working Group
All parish councillors
Terms of Reference in place

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the proposal that there should be no change to the Working Group and this was unanimously agreed.

Amenities Working Group
Councillor Downing
Councillor Forward
Councillor Smith
Councillor Walker
Terms of Reference in place

Councillor Smith asked to come off the Working Group due to the time taken up as Communications Officer.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that Councillor Elliss-Brookes join the Amenities Working Group and this was unanimously agreed.

The Parish Council reviewed the individual roles noting that Councillor McDonald was willing to continue in his current roles.

Highways	Councillor McDonald
Road Warden	Councillor McDonald
Snow Warden	Councillor McDonald
Police Matters	Councillor McDonald
Community Speedwatch	Councillor McDonald
Emergency Plan Lead	Councillor McDonald
Footpaths	Councillor Smith
Communications Communications Plan in place	Councillor Smith
Broadband delivery	Councillor Box
Planning	Vacant – not required

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Box seconded the proposal that these appointments remain as is and that no individual was required for planning and this was unanimously agreed.

002/25/26/012 Review of Parish Councillor roles on External Committees and Individual Roles of Parish Councillors
The Parish Council reviewed the current positions:

Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee	Councillor Box
Quarry Liaison Group	Councillor Downing
Councillor Advocate Scheme	Councillor McDonald

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that the word 'Westligh' be removed and it read 'Quarry Liaison Group' and that other than the proposed change these appointments remain as is and this was unanimously agreed.

School Liaison	Vacant

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that the word Councillor Walker be appointed School Liaison and this this was unanimously agreed.

St Mary's Church/Westleigh URC	Vacant

The Clerk liaises with Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council.

Councillor Walker proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the proposal that the word Councillor Forward be appointed St Mary's Church/Westleigh URC and this this was unanimously agreed.

002/2525/013 To receive a report from the Chair
Appointment of a Clerk
The new NALC version of the contract would be signed at the next meeting.

Training
Councillor Forward proposed and Councill Smith seconded the proposal that Councillor Forward run through the Good Councillor Training received from the Devon Association of Local Councillors (DALC) with Councillor Elliss-Brookes and that notes were made of any areas that required clarification. These notes would then be circulated to the Clerk and Parish Councillors and clarification sought and/or provided.
The Parish Council was in favour of this proposal.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that Councillor Elliss-Brookes undertake DALC Finance Training and this expenditure was unanimously agreed.
Action: Clerk to book the course.

The following items would be discussed at the next meeting:
- Emergency Plan
  Report on Devon Community Resilience Forum on Tuesday 20th May.
- Meeting with Rachel Gilmour
- Bus stop
- Website / emails
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Devolution
- Community mapping
- Business Continuity Planning

002/2526/014 To consider the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:

Planning applications:
No planning consultation requests have been received since the last meeting.

Decision notices:
25/00343/CAT – APPROVED – 17 April 2025
Proposal: Notification of intention to reduce height of 1 Field Maple by 5m in a Conservation Area
Location: 10 Bray Close Burlescombe Tiverton Devon

002/2526/15 Highways Matters/Footpaths
The Clerk reported as follows:

Brimstone Lane
The potholes had been reported to the Neighbourhood Highways Officer and online and a meeting requested.

Community Speedwatch
Councillor McDonald had sent in a report that advised that despite all best efforts from February to May, only 3 residents had come forward to be part of the scheme and 4 residents were required.

The Parish Council were unable to move this initiative forward without the support of residents. It was noted that the Community Speedwatch Team set their own programme of events and it could be as little as once a month and that not all members had to attend each event.

Information from a Community Speedwatch Team was considered when requests were made for reduced speed limits.

An alternative would be use of movable Visually Activated Signs that could be moved from one position to another across the parish. There was a cost to these units which could be solar powered and, therefore, not reliant on an electricity supply. They gave important information on numbers of vehicles and speeds. The cost for two units was around the £8000 mark and the sites for the poles for the units had to be agreed with Devon County Council Highways.

The possibility of purchasing units with a neighbouring parish may be possible which would reduce the cost.
Action: Councillor Lock/Clerk

The following items would be discussed at the next meeting:

- Road Warden Scheme
  Broken drain covers on route that quarry lorries take through the parish to and from A38
- P3 Scheme (Footpaths) and funding and PROW map
- Water on the hill road, Burlescombe
- Water from the Garages
- Snow Warden Scheme
- Review of existing 30mph zone
- Parking at Burlescombe School

002/2526/16 Financial matters:
The Clerk ran through the information provided in the agenda:

Financial Report 2024/25
The closing balances at 31 March 2025 were:

Current account	£1997.48
Deposit account	£2330.90

The accounts were with the internal auditor.
The AGAR paperwork will be presented to the June meeting for signature.

Financial Report 2025/26

Current account bank balance at 31 March 2025			£1997.48	
Less payments				
	30/04/2025	COUNTRYSIDE GROUND	154.4	
	29/04/2025	SERVICE CHARGES	4.25	
	28/04/2025	ROYAL BRITISH LEGI	23.98	
	23/04/2025	TRANSFER	16000.00	
	23/04/2025	DEVON ASSOCIATION Training	173.22	
	23/04/2025	DEVON ASSOCIATION Membership	384.08	
				£16739.93
Plus receipts				
Precept				£17125.00
Current account balance at 30 April 2025			**£2382.55**	
Deposit account balance at 31 March 2025				£ 2330.90
Receipts (interest)				£ 1.92
Transfer in				£16000.00
Deposit account balance at 30 April 2025			**£18332.82**	

The cumulative bank reconciliation will be brought to the meeting for signature by the Chair.

The PROW payment of £2024.00 was received on 1 May 2025.

The following payments have been made to meet statutory obligations:

S McGeever (wages Apr 25)	£269.37
HMRC PAYE (Apr 25)	£ 67.20

Note:
Following discussion with HMRC this will be paid in the May PAYE period

S McGeever (March wages/PAYE)	£433.07
S McGeever (expenses)	£ 33.10

Invoices to pay:

Westleigh URC (April 25 meeting)	£ 15.25
Burlescombe VH (May meetings)	£ 42.00
S McGeever (Apr expenses)	£ 33.10

The Clerk advised that the current direct debit did not meet the Countryside invoice and this would require changing to £174.00 per month and the shortfall paid.

Prior to the next meeting to meet statutory obligations):

S McGeever (wages May 25)	£ TBA
HMRC PAYE (May 25)	£ TBA

The sums would be very similar to April wages and HMRC PAYE but the exact amount would not be known until input into the PAYE system.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Elliss-Brookes seconded the proposal that the above payments be made and this was unanimously agreed.

The Clerk advised that the Unity Trust Bank account was now operational and the funds from Lloyds Bank would be transferred.

The VAT reimbursements would be submitted before the next meeting.

The following actions will be discussed at the next meeting:

- Acting Parish Clerk to prepare a report into why it took so long to get access to the bank account for review at a Parish Council meeting
- Contact Lloyds Bank/Financial Ombudsman
- Bank transactions and review of Councillor Walker's report and actions needed
- S106 (Burlescombe Play Area)

002/2526/017 To receive a report on the review of Defibrillators in the Parish
Councillors Elliss-Brookes and Smith had prepared a report on defibrillators in the village following a request for a defibrillator at Canonsleigh. The report is given as an attachment to these minutes.

The Parish Council was required to have and maintain defibrillators and promote awareness. The decision on where defibrillators should be located should be reviewed by the Devon Health and Well-Being Board.

Besides the defibrillators at the URC and Burlescombe VH, defibrillators were located at Swallow Court and Tiverton Parkway as well as locations in Sampford Peverell, Holcombe Rogus and Uffculme. There were defibrillators at the quarry and school but these were not accessible by the public.

The cost per defibrillator was £1000 plus the case at £600 rising to over £2000 if solar powered. Funding or part funding was available. The British Heart Foundation funding opened in the summer.

Key points were footfall, age profile and sport fields and locations to be considered could be The Old Well, Woodlands Business Park, Morgans, canal car parks and Appledore.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to approach the Devon Health and Well-being Board in the first instance.

002/2526/18 To receive the Communications Report
The Parish Council noted the report prepared by Councillor Smith and thanked her for her work (see attachment).

The Facebook page had been viewed 4850 times with 483 reactions. The website was receiving a similar number of hits.

There had been interaction with the Wellington Weekly News who had published an article without verifying its facts with the Parish Council. The article contained a number of errors and the Parish Council had responded but did not feel prolonged dialogue would be beneficial or a good use of public money. Given the article had been defamatory, the Parish Council could consider a formal complaint.

Notification of Nightworks at the Quarry
Notifications of nightworks which had been sent to individuals were being sent to the Clerk who was forwarding them to parish councillors, FVEG and the Clerk at Holcombe Rogus.
The Clerk's role was part-time and it was RESOLVED that a request be made to include the Communications Officer in the emails which were time sensitive.
Action: Clerk

002/2526/19 To receive a report on the Councillor Advocate Scheme/local crime
In the absence of Councillor McDonald, no report was given.

002/2526/20 To receive a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee
Councillor Box advised that the next meeting was in October and the Tidcombe Hall appeal was being heard.

There had been an update on works which could be included in the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting.

002/2526/21 To receive a report on the Quarries
Councillor Downing advised that she would present her report to the next meeting but noted that information on movements in 2024 had shown that there were 167 lorries a day coming through Burlescombe.

The quarry had not been aware of the closing of Junction 26 of the M5 for 14 weeks in the summer and this could affect the number of lorries coming through the village even though a one-way system was supposed to be in place.
Action: Clerk to write to DCC Highways for additional signage

The works to Black Bridge would be undertaken in the near future and the key code had been provided.

The Asphalt Plant was supposed to move in 2026.

002/2526/22 To receive a report from the Amenities Working Group
The Amenities Working Group had not met since the last meeting.

There were two items for discussion:

Fencing Quotes
The Clerk has circulated the fencing quotes and following detailed discussion the Parish Council RESOLVED to accept Quote 3. Quote 3 had provided for some flexibility in the work being carried out.
Action: Clerk

Football posts
A notice would be put up on the broken football post and the Clerk would seek a cost for repair.
Action: Clerk

002/2526/23 To receive a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock
Councillor Westcott had provided a report to the Annual Parish Meeting.

002/2526/24 To receive a report from DCC Councillor Clist
In the absence of Councillor Clist, no report was given.

002/2526/25 Items for next meeting
As itemised in the minutes.

001/2526/19 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings

24 June 2025	Parish Council Meeting	URC	7pm

The remaining dates for the year would be set at the June meeting.

Councillor Forward closed the meeting at 9.01pm.

Signed _____ Date: _____
Chair