

Burlescombe Parish Council

9 February 2026

To: All members of Burlescombe Parish Council

Dear Councillor

You are duly summoned to attend a meeting of the **Burlescombe Parish Council** to be held in Westleigh URC on **Tuesday, 17 February 2026 at 7.00pm**. The meeting is open to the press and the public.

Yours sincerely
Susan McGeever
Parish Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

To receive any declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted at this meeting and
To consider any dispensation requests and confirm any relevant dispensations.

3. Minutes of Previous meetings: to approve minutes of the meeting on 5 January 2026.

4. Public Participation

Members of the public may speak for a period of 3 minutes on matters they wish to bring to the attention of the Parish Council and these matters may be related to the item on the agenda. Unless the Chair elects to put down standing orders, members of the public may not speak during the remainder of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the last minutes

Updates on matters arising from the last minutes will generally be raised under the appropriate agenda item

6. Emergency Planning

Report on meeting at Holcombe Rogus

Next steps:

- Muster points
- Draft Emergency Plan

7. Community Mapping

- Community mapping exercise
- Review of risk register

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8. Training

The Clerk had completed training on Assertion 10 and would be preparing a report for the March meeting.

A Bring Your Own Device Policy has been circulated to Parish Councillors for review/approval.

MDDC Planning Training will take place on Thursday, 26 March 2026.

9. To receive a report from the Chair

- Delivery of fast fibre
- VE Day Flag
- Neighbourhood Plan / Housing Needs Survey

Documentation on the Neighbourhood Planning meeting has been circulated to Parish Councillors
Housing needs Survey information can be found at

[Mid Devon Local Housing Needs Assessment - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/middevon-local-housing-needs-assessment)

- Business Continuity Plan
- Assertion 10
- Registering assets of community value

The information can be found at [Assets of Community Value - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/assets-of-community-value)

10. To consider the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:

Planning applications:

26/00005/HOUSE

Proposal: Installation of dormer windows and roof lights to facilitate loft conversion; alterations to existing garden room; kitchen extension; infill extension to incorporate and conversion of existing barn to domestic space

Location: Ayshford House Westleigh Tiverton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 304848 / 115133

Parish: Burlescombe 06

Deadline for comments: 26 January 2026 – extension granted to 19 February 2026

26/00045/LBC

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for replacement of 4 windows on front elevation and rear external door

Location: Great Southdown Farm & Cottage Burlescombe Tiverton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 307786 / 115001

Parish: Burlescombe 06

Deadline for comments: 3 February 2026 – extension granted to 19 February 2026

26/00061/PNCOU

Proposal: Prior Approval for the change of use of 2 agricultural buildings to 4 dwellings under Class Q

Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 306361 116702 Moor Farm Westleigh

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 306347 / 116701

Parish: Burlescombe 06

INFORMATION ONLY

The above Prior Approval/Prior Notification has been received, this type of application is not determined in line with Local Plan Policy but through an assessment based on the conditions and limitations of the permitted development rights as set out with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). Given the representations received from members of the public, clarification of the consultation process has been requested.

25/01740/HOUSE

Proposal: Erection of 2 extensions following removal of existing conservatory and erection of outbuilding for storage use

Location: Locks Cottage Westleigh Tiverton

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 304687 / 114710

Parish: Burlescombe 06

Deadline for comments: 20 February 2026

26/00151/PIP

Proposal: Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 3 dwellings
Location: Land at NGR 305520 114082 North of Waterloo Court Uffculme
Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 305419 / 114052
Parish: Burlescombe 06

Deadline for comments: 26 February 2026

PC Consultation Telecoms Site Pound Farm (Ref: CS 12256125)

There would be improvements for Vodafone Three customers within the target coverage area.

This upgrade application to replace the current structure with a 17.5m mast was approved in 2022.

This design is a replication of that previous application, with the exception that a height of 20m is now required to achieve the desired coverage improvements. The increased height allows for a better 'line of sight' towards the targeted areas whilst also ensuring health and safety compliance with ICNIRP regulations. From a coverage improvement perspective, the replacement antennas will better serve the local community in the form of stronger signal and larger capacity to deal with high volumes of data traffic.

National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework")

A revised document has been published. The consultation should be read in conjunction with the draft, which sets out the detailed proposed policy wording indicative of what may be implemented, subject to the outcome of this consultation.

The consultation will begin on 16 December 2025 and close at 11:45pm on 10 March 2026.

For any enquiries about the consultation please

contact: PlanningPolicyConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Caravan site and mobile homes policy consultation

Mid Devon District Council is currently consulting on a draft Caravan site and mobile homes policy. If you would like to view / comment on the draft you may do so on our website here:

<https://letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/caravan-site-policy>.

The closing date for the consultation is 8th April 2026.

Decision Notices:

No decision notices had been received.

11. Highways Matters/Footpaths

11.1 Roads

Scheduling meeting with Councillor Simon Clist

11.2 Speed Limits / Speeding

Whilst Burlescombe would not attract funding to introduce a 20mph, based on existing data and priorities, Officers would be prepared to work with and support the community, should they wish to use local funding to consult on and deliver such a scheme using the community protocol, S4 would appear to be the relevant section.

A request has gone to DCC to identify costs.

11.3 Potholes and other matters

The matters below have all been followed up again with DCC Highways and MDCC.

Brimstone Lane potholes

Parish Council and public to continue reporting potholes online:

[Report a problem - Roads and transport](#)

Water on the hill road, Burlescombe

The drains at the top of the hill have been cleared.

White lines / slow sign - Primary School, Burlescombe

This is with the white line team – no update received.

Water from the garages, Burlescombe

Ongoing investigations - further update awaited from MDDC.

Blocked drain by Poacher's Pocket on A38

Drains cleared and jetted

Overgrown hedges by railway bridge

Reported to DCC – Parish Council to write a letter – landowners is responsible

Storm Chandra Flooding 26th - 27th January

Parish Councillors have been requested to submit information on flooding.

11.4 Footpaths

Report from Councillor Smith

PROW funding – Purchase Order received for £280. Further request submitted to cover path maintenance of £900.00.

Quote for PROW clearance 2026/27 - £950.00

11.5 Road Warden Scheme/Snow Warden Scheme

Update from Councillor McDonald

12. Financial matters:

12.1 VAT

The VAT refund has been received.

12.2 Financial Report 2025-26

The Financial Report is provided up to 31 January 2026 as follows:

Lloyds Bank

Current account balance at 31 December 2025 £ 343.69

Less payments

Receipts

Current account balance at 31 January 2026 £ 343.69

The account is being kept open whilst discussions on the complaint are ongoing.

Unity

Current account balance at 31 December 2025 £3262.32

Payments

02-Jan-26	S/O to: Countrywide	SJB016	-208.80	
12-Jan-26	Community First	BURLESCOMBE PC	-360.21	
12-Jan-26	Westleigh URC	NOV MEETING	-14.00	
12-Jan-26	Clerk	EXPENSES	-58.10	
12-Jan-26	Clerk	WAGES	-509.63	
12-Jan-26	HMRC	475PM01737213	-160.40	
12-Jan-26	Burlescombe Hall	MEETING 4/12/25	-12.00	
31-Jan-26	Service Charge		-6.00	-1329.14

Receipts	
Current account balance at 31 December 2025	£ 1933.18
Deposit account balance at 31 December 2025	£20710.25
Less Payments	
Plus Receipts	
Deposit account balance at 31 January 2026	£20710.25

Payments made prior to the meeting not shown above:

Clerk wages	£509.63
HMRC PAYE	£160.40
Countrywide DD (grass cutting)	£208.80

Payments to be authorised:

URC (Meeting room)	£ 14.00
SJM Tree Services (Ash)	£336.00
SJM Tree Services (Tree Survey)	£714.00
MDDC (Play Area inspection)	£100.80
Clerk expenses	£ 25.00

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

The budget monitoring information for the 10-month period will be provided as a separate document.

12.3 2026/27 Precept

A statement has been forward to MDDC regarding the rise in precept.

12.5 Review of Asset Register

Draft document circulated.

The insurance policy has been updated to reflect current assets.

12.6 Computer

Quotes provided at the last meeting. Purchas in 2025/26 or 2026/27.

Other matters:

Jackalope Grant and Confirmation of Outcomes

Correspondence from recipient of grant

Historic website / emails

No correspondence has been received from the person appointed to carry out the contract.

Correspondence has been received from one of the people responsible for appointing the contractor which included a 'Factual Chronology and Supporting Documents Relating to the Parish Council Website Contract'.

Defibrillators

Discussion on the process to handover the defibrillators to the Parish Council.

Appointment of a Guardian – monthly checks and update to The Circuit.

No response had been received from the Devon Health & Wellbeing Board – Clerk has contacted the SW Ambulance Trust.

Obtaining the back account

With the council and clerk resigning at the same time, there was no handover of the bank account.

A letter was sent to Lloyds Bank requesting the best course of action to take.

No response was received.

Following phone calls, it appeared that Lloyds Bank had attempted, unsuccessfully, to contact the previous signatories.

A new mandate was submitted but during the process one councillor resigned.

Another new mandate was submitted but during the process a date of birth provided appeared to be incorrect then a councillor resigned.

Lloyds Bank eventually advised to submit a Board of Resolution to obtain access with the guidance that a signatory could also sign the Board of Resolution.

They rejected the application.

After further discussion, the Clerk was allowed to sign the Board of Resolution and become the sole signatory on the account.

A new account was then set up with Unity Trust Bank with four signatories and triple authorisation. Transactions set up by Clerk and authorised by two signatories.

Contact with Lloyds Bank/Financial Ombudsman

The case is ongoing – further information awaited from Lloyds Bank.

Bank transactions and review of Councillor Walker's report and actions needed

The information has been recirculated to Parish Councillors

- Noticeboards and their upkeep
- Grants and sponsorship – next steps
- Repairs to Westleigh Telephone Box

13. To receive a report on Parish Council Communications (see supporting documentation)

- Communications report
- Next steps with volunteer groups
- Email newsletters and mail drop

Costings:

Quote 1: Local company 500 £94.8

Quote 2: £37 they do not have an online design tool which will make it difficult to design and supply in the right format etc.

Quote 3: £39.11

Quote 4: £71.64

14. To receive a report on the Councillor Advocate Scheme/local crime

Report from Councillor McDonald

15. To receive a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee

Report from Councillor Box

16. To receive a report on the Quarries

Report from Councillor Downing and Elliss-Brookes

17. To receive a report from the Amenities Working Group

17.1 ORL

- Review of the tree report
- Update of essential works undertaken
- Review of the report from Biodiversity meeting at Westleigh Quarry
- Black bridge steps

Option for volunteers to help maintain ORL

- Update on conifers
- Update on risk assessment

17.2 Westleigh Play Park

- S106 Funding
The Clerk is meeting with MDDC on 9 February 2026.

- Possibility of recording Westleigh Play Park inspections on Burlescombe Parish Council website

Update on actions from the annual ROSPA report:

- Fencing
- Dog signs
- Mossing on matting
- Fixing the goal posts
- Repairs to equipment

18. To receive a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock

19. To receive a report from DCC Councillor Simon Clist

20. Items for next meeting

21. Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings

March	Tuesday 17 th
April	Tuesday 21 st
May	TBC
	TBC

The Annual Parish Meeting could take place in April.

May dates not available:

Tuesday, 4 May
Wednesday, 5 May
Saturday, 9 May
Monday, 11 May
Tuesday, 12 May
Monday, 18 May
Saturday, 16 May
Saturday, 23 May
Wednesday, 27 May
Thursday, 28 May
Friday, 29 MY
Saturday,

NOTE: DUE TO THE LIMITED SPACE ON THE NOTICEBOARDS ALL REPORTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS AGENDA CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE [https:// burlescombeparishcouncil.gov.uk](https://burlescombeparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Burlescombe Parish Council communications update

February 2026

Communications since last meeting

1. Parish magazine

For the February issue of the Parish magazine, we shared an update that summarised key messages from January's precept meeting.

2. Website and Facebook

Our standard approach for significant updates is to add a news item to our website, share that story on our Facebook page and share into the local Facebook Group. This month we have shared:

- Key messages from the January precept meeting.
- Local Government Reorganisation plans and consultation survey.
- Devon Libraries consultation (Facebook only, shared DCC post into local group).
- Agenda for the February meeting.

3. Noticeboards

Notices, agendas and minutes continue to be posted in the Westleigh, Burlescombe, Appledore and Ayshford noticeboards, where space allows.

Topics for future communications

Volunteering, email newsletter, highways updates, broadband provision, emergency planning, and any other matters arising.

Next steps for introducing an email newsletter

Mail drop

Quotes obtained (incl VAT) for following specifications:

- Double sided postcard size (A6) in colour.
- Decent weight of paper (250gsm).
- 400 copies (384 households in Parish as per recent research).

Quote 1: Local company 500 £94.8

Quote 2: £37

These two options do not have a design tool included, which will make it more challenging to design and supply in the right format, ensuring professional result.

Quote 3: £39.11

Quote 4: £71.64

Step 1 (now): Council to discuss and decide on best printing option.

Side 1



Side 2



Draft design

Step 2 (now or via email shortly after meeting): Council to give feedback on draft design and content.

Newsletter creation

Need to establish whether free version of Zoho Campaigns is sufficient, or whether we need to subscribe to paid version at cost of £28.80 per year.

Step 3: Cllr Smith to undertake free training in the Zoho Campaigns platform to establish needs, and liaise with Clerk if subscription is required.

Distribution

Step 4: Aim to have postcard printed in time to enable delivery to households in March. Support the maildrop with communication through our usual channels as well.

Burlescombe Parish Council volunteers – February 2026

The agreed process to manage one-off volunteering opportunities will be in place from this meeting onwards. It is as follows:

1. A potential volunteer task is identified and agreed at a BPC meeting.
2. Most relevant councillor to send a brief description of the task, and any other relevant details, to Cllr Smith.
3. Cllr Smith to send a communication out to the volunteer group via the email newsletter platform to see if anyone is able to support the completion of the task, giving a deadline for responses.
4. If someone volunteers, Cllr Smith will connect the relevant councillor (and therefore the volunteer supervisor for this task) with the volunteer(s) to arrange completion of the volunteer form and to manage the rest of the process.
5. If no one volunteers, Cllr Smith will notify the relevant councillor and the Clerk so that alternative arrangements can be made.

A log will be kept each year to record volunteer tasks completed, hours given and estimated costs saved. As agreed at the January meeting, an email was sent to all volunteers to:

1. Share the Burlescombe Parish Council volunteer policy and form.
2. Provide a simple explanation of the proposed principles/process for managing one-off volunteering opportunities.
3. Check that they would still like to be involved in light of information provided.
4. Offer a session to get the volunteers together and gather availability for those who would be interested.

Two volunteers responded positively to the offer of an in-person session, so I would suggest this is not a viable number for an in-depth session.

I propose I contact the two individuals to offer an informal discussion with them each individually, so they can share any ideas they have or ask any questions.

Once the email platform is in place for the newsletter, this can also be used for volunteer emails.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The draft NPPF 2026 proposes significant changes aimed at enhancing sustainable growth and streamlining planning processes in England. The NPPF was released in December 2025 and is currently open for consultation until March 2026. The draft aims to strengthen national policy's role in driving sustainable growth and ensuring consistent decision making across England.

Mid Devon District Council is holding a Town and Parish Planning event for parish and town councillors **26 March 2026 18:00-20:30** to cover this and other issues.

Businesses:

There has been a lot happening regarding Business Rates but there is help and guidance around. If you need further information please visit the website [Important changes to Business Rates 2026 - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/important-changes-to-business-rates-2026) The site has also been updated to reflect the Government issued guidance giving extra relief to Pubs and Music venues. Those that qualify will get 15% off their net 2026/27 business rates bill, assuming our software supplier is able to make the changes bills will be issued with the extra relief applied.

Current estimates

c53 businesses may qualify

Estimated Value c£50k

MDDC will be compensated via s31 for the loss of income

Drop-in Day for Businesses

Business' are welcome to come in and or contact us to discuss their bills

Website link: [Business - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/business)

The event will be held on **Tuesday, 17 February 2026** at Mid Devon District Council Offices, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6PP.

There is no need to book, and you can visit anytime **between 10:30am and 5pm**.

Anyone who is unable to attend and has questions about the changes to Business Rates Relief can email the Revenues Team at: revenues@middevon.gov.uk and arrange to have a call back.

You can also find out a lot of [information about the changes to Business Rates on our website](#).

As we move into a new year, Mid Devon District Council is encouraging businesses to sign up to their business e-newsletter

The e-newsletter keeps businesses informed about initiatives including grant schemes, training, and events, as well as a roundup of information and useful resources to support them.

[Mid Devon businesses encouraged to sign up to e-Newsletter](#)

Budget

After being summoned into a Govt webinar back in late September, warning around circa 60 Councils to expect funding cuts of around 7% and with no guidance on whether the threatened removal of business rates growth accrued since 2013/14 was going to materialise, the Council had planned for a very challenging 2026/27 budget.

Clarity on both of these positions was finally provided in late December. The Government, in providing a 3 year Funding Settlement (FS), only delivered funding cuts of 2.1% (although you could easily argue this is really 5% if you take account of inflation) and is providing 100% protection of all the extra business rates accrued since the beginning of this system (a huge relief). This had the effect of improving our earlier estimated budget gap reported to the January Cabinet meeting by around £1m.

This late news has significantly eased the Council's budget position for 2026/27 and it is now looking likely that we will be able to set a balanced budget, without the use of reserves, keep Council Tax increases within the Referendum Limit and continued to maintain our existing level and quality of service provision. A position we are very pleased to disclose.

The advantage of a 3 year FS is it gives more medium term financial certainty moving into the future – which enables more proactive strategic planning than rolling 1 year ones. Although the irony here is, that many Councils will not exist in the third year of FS! However, there are some other challenges included in the detail of the FS. At the end of 2028/29 we are £814k above our “fair funding” assessment (so what happens if this protection is removed?) and it also assumes that the Council's

property base grows at the average level of the past 4 years (this is baked into the FS – so passes the financial risk of slow build out rates in the District to the Council). Both of these changes generate further uncertainty into any future financial planning.

Leisure Pricing Strategy

A decision was made to freeze membership prices for the forthcoming year to support affordability and encourage sustained participation, while increasing pay as you go tariffs in line with inflation and market rates.

Decision to cease using 'X' (formerly 'Twitter') as a social media platform.

While the use of communication and social media channels should not ever be solely down to any alignment on 'brand values', the platform now permits the creation and distribution of content widely perceived as abusive. Online abuse creates real-life victims and real-life vulnerabilities, and as such the Council does not feel it should continue to utilise such a platform.

Waste and Recycling

To find out your waste and recycling day and download your 2025/26 calendar visit [Check collection dates - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

Household Batteries

Batteries, especially lithium-ion batteries commonly found in everyday devices, can pose a severe fire hazard when disposed of incorrectly. Fires caused by batteries can spread rapidly, resulting in extensive damage to waste vehicles and facilities, and creating danger for residents and waste operatives. Recycling batteries correctly is not only a matter of safety but also a vital environmental responsibility. Batteries contain hazardous materials that can leach into the soil and water if not recycled properly. By ensuring batteries are placed in designated recycling boxes, we contribute to the protection of our environment and reduce the risk of fires.

To help prevent battery-related fires, residents are encouraged to follow these essential guidelines:

1. **Use designated recycling boxes:** General household batteries can be recycled as part of your fortnightly recycling collection - batteries must be placed in a clear plastic bag or tub, and left on top of the black box clearly visible for our collection crews. We do not collect Lithium-Ion batteries at this time.
2. **Wrap or tape batteries:** Used batteries are not always completely discharged so take caution when disposing of multiple used batteries that could come into contact with one another. To dispose of the batteries safely, cover the positive terminal of each battery with tape.
3. **Drop off at [recycling centres](#):** When in doubt, consider dropping off batteries at designated recycling centres or collection points.
4. **Educate others:** Spread the word about the importance of proper battery disposal to friends, family, and neighbours.

Green Enterprise Grants This scheme will run again, this time for 2 years up to March 2028 with a budget of £20k/year. Look for news of it from March. The purpose of the grants is to help Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) based in Mid Devon to invest in improved efficiency, for resource and energy savings and cost savings, to achieve reduced environmental impact and particularly climate impacts (carbon footprint). Note for Town & Parishes: there is an intention to make it easier in this round for community halls to apply (village halls, parish halls, church halls).

WHATS ON

26 February Grand Western Canal - Illustrated Talk

[Grand Western Canal - Illustrated Talk - Visit Mid Devon](#)

Westexe Rec junior parkrun

A free, fun, and friendly weekly 2k event for juniors (4 to 14 year olds) is now held every Sunday at 9:00am. The event takes place at Westexe Recreation Ground, Wellbrook Street, Tiverton, EX16 5BP.

[home](#) | [Westexe Rec junior parkrun](#) | [Westexe Rec junior parkrun](#)

The Source Trade Show

Food, drink and hospitality businesses - join the Growth Hub team at The Source Trade Show on Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th February at Westpoint Arena, Exeter. The show brings together suppliers, ideas and insights designed to help businesses stay competitive in a fast moving sector.

With hundreds of food and drink brands under one roof, visitors can explore quality ingredients, equipment and services essential for the year ahead. It is an opportunity to discover new products, refine existing offers and spot emerging trends across hospitality, catering and food retail.

Visit our stand G8 to speak to the Growth Hub team about available business support for food, drink and hospitality businesses.

Registration is free for trade buyers, register here: <https://enrolment.engage-powered.com/sr/go/register.aspx> Find out about the show: thesourcetradeshow.co.uk.

Gwen DuChesne

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