

# Burlescombe Parish Council

## DRAFT MINUTES

Annual Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council  
on Monday, 22 June 2026 at Westleigh URC Hall

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Downing, Elliss-Brookes, McDonald, Smith and Walker together with the Clerk, Mrs S McGeever.

Councillor Forward opened the meeting at 7.00pm and welcomed the councillors present and members of the public.

### **013/2627/1 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Box and her absence was duly authorised. MDDC District Councillors Lock and Westcott together with DCC County Councillor Clist had given their apologies.

### **013/2627/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations requested.

### **013/2627/3 Minutes of Previous meetings**

The draft minutes of the meeting on 20 May 2026 had been circulated to all councillors and published on the website and noticeboards. These minutes were approved then duly initialled and signed by the Chair.

### **013/2627/4 Matters arising from the last minutes**

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

### **013/2627/5 Public Participation**

Councillor Gill Westcott had visited the parish and attended a coffee morning and looked at the planning application in South View, the visit was welcomed by the organiser and residents.

### **013/2627/6 Internal Audit 2025-26**

The Clerk had circulated the Internal Auditor's report for 2025-26. It was comprehensive in nature and confirmed that the Parish Council had the correct policies and procedures in place. The Risk Management Register had been uploaded to the website.

- A note that both the Budget and the Precept should be specific agenda items was noted.
- The period for the exercise of public rights would be recorded in the minutes going forward.
- New policies were uploaded to the website when approved.

Councillor Forward proposed that the internal audit be approved and this was seconded by Councillor Downing and unanimously agreed.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to appoint the same Internal Auditor for 2026/27.

### **013/2627/7 Annual Governance Statement 2025-26**

Having considered the Internal Auditor's report, the Parish Council ran through the requirements and considered, as advised, that it had met all the objectives and completed the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26.

Councillor Forward proposed that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk and this was seconded by Councillor Downing and unanimously agreed.

The Chair and Clerk duly signed the document.

### **013/2627/8 Accounting Statement 2025-26**

In accordance with legislative requirement, the Clerk had completed the Accounting Statement 2025-26 prior to the meeting as part of the Internal Audit and duly signed the document.

Councillor Elliss-Brookes proposed that the Accounting Statement be approved and signed by the Chair and this was seconded by Councillor Downing and unanimously agreed.

The period for the exercising of public rights would run from Wednesday, 24 June to Tuesday, 4 August 2026.

Councillor Forward thanked the Clerk for the work undertaken and Councillor Smith for ensuring the website was up-to-date.

### **013/2627/9 Emergency Planning**

The Emergency Plan meeting would take place on either Saturday, 19 or 26 September 2026. Venue to be decided depending on availability, with a timescale of two hours. A presentation would be given together with a call for volunteers. If possible, a guest speaker would be invited to attend. The key task now was to confirm the response team which should include those responsible for Emergency Hubs.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Devon Communities Together about a guest speaker.

As part of Emergency Planning, the Parish Council received and published weather warnings.

Parish Councillors undertook to provide any Burlescombe Parish specific concerns for inclusion in the plan, including the Town Farm Sand Quarry, and the Community Mapping project could also be used to identify concerns.

### **013/2627/10 Community Mapping**

Discussions on Community Mapping were ongoing.

**Action:** Bring forward to the August meeting.

### **013/2627/11 Training**

The Clerk had circulated the NALC template for a Training Policy. One sentence under 'Guidance for Support' would be clarified to read:

Any financial support will always be conditional upon the employee's agreement to either a full or partial repayment of the financial support provided.

Councillor Forward proposed that the Training Policy be approved and signed by the Chair and this was seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed.

### **013/2627/12 To receive a report from the Chair**

Delivery of fast fibre

No further information had been received; a new telegraph pole had been erected in Westleigh.

Neighbourhood Plan / Housing Needs Survey

The Housing Needs Survey had closed on 19 May and results were awaited.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Devon Communities Together.

Neighbourhood Priority Statement

A meeting of the working group was required once Councillors Elliss-Brookes and Smith had undertaken a gap analysis of the Housing Needs Survey and engaged with residents through a survey. The document would form part of the Parish Council's response to planning applications.

Business Continuity Plan

The Clerk advised that the Business Continuity Plan was almost completed but it would be an ongoing project as the work of the Parish Council evolved.

Registering assets of community value

The Chair advised that discussions were ongoing and this would fall under the Amenities Working Group to bring recommendations to the Parish Council.

Report on the Joint Traffic Working Group

Councillors Forward and McDonald had attended the meeting held on 2 June 2026 and found it extremely useful and it was reassuring to find that other parishes were concerned also about speed limits and the impact on planning applications on the road infrastructure. The sharing of ideas and pooling of knowledge would be beneficial going forward.

Given DALC's indication that they were in favour of Parish Council's forming cluster groups, Councillor Forward asked if it would be beneficial to have a similar group in respect of planning. The Clerk advised that she did work with other clerks on providing responses relating to infrastructure requirements and S106 monies but it would be difficult to discuss actual planning applications.

**Action:** Clerk to email other clerks and ask the question if Parish Councils would like to come together to discuss infrastructure.

Burlescombe Primary School

Councillor Walker advised that she had met with the new Head who would be staying in post and asked if the Parish Council could support the Forest School project and promotion of PTFA events such as the summer BBQ.

The Parish Council would discuss the Forest School at a meeting when further information was available, and is able to help promote events.

**Action:** Clerk to bring forward Forest School to the appropriate meeting.

Potential use of AI

The Clerk advised that it was likely that NALC will issue a Topic Note on its use.

Chair's Announcements

The Chair noted the passing of Willand Parish Council's Chair, Barry Warren and that Nikki Orchard had taken over as Chair of Holcombe Rogus Parish Council.

A resident of Westleigh was turning 100 and it was felt a card should be sent from the Parish Council to mark this milestone.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Councillor Forward advised she had read the Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan and believed it was important for the Parish Council increase to its own Biodiversity Net Gain and assist in the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

[Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) | Devon County Council](#)

A report would be circulated for the August meeting.

**Action:** Councillor Forward

**013/2627/13 To consider** the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:

**Planning applications:**

New:

**24/01847/MFUL**

Proposal: Continued operation of existing anaerobic digester plant without previous limitations on power output, feedstocks and tonnages, provision of new covers to AD silage clamps and digestate storage tank and extension to CHP unit building to provide improved office and facilities space and improved parking

Location: Land at NGR 299621 112764 (Red Linhay) Crown Hill Halberton Devon

Grid Ref: 299621 : 112764

Parish: Halberton 25

The Parish Council RESOLVED to continue its objection to this application. The documents relating to the Change of Description and Revised Drawings did nothing to alter the view that the limitations had been put in place to protect residents.

This was in line with the majority of comments on MDDC's planning portal.

The Parish Council noted that the access road had one of the highest KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) rates (46%) in Devon – double the county average of around 23%.

Existing

**26/00604/FULL**

Proposal: Erection of one dwelling and associated works

Location: Former Garages and Forecourt South View Westleigh

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 306041 / 116837

Parish: Burlescombe 06

As requested, the Clerk had written to the planning officer to the raise concerns made at the last meeting. The Planning Officer was confirming ownership of the land and that all interested parties were contacted to pass comment. This included those renting the garages.

The application was being called in to be reviewed by MDDC's Planning Committee and a representative from the Parish Council would be able to attend the meeting.

The Parish Council noted the comments from the Tree Officer.

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Smith would attend the MDDC meeting.

**Decision notices:**

No decision notices had been received for this meeting.

**Consultations:****MDDC LOCAL PLAN**

Councillor Smith had reviewed the scoping consultation and concluded that the Parish Council should respond with an emphasis on infrastructure and special development. The consultation closed on 10 July 2026.

[Plan Mid Devon | Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)

**Action:** Councillor Smith

Councillor Smith had also reviewed the publication of the [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \('HELAA'\)](#) for Burlescombe. Both proposed sites were considered to be sites that would be unachievable and, therefore, no housing allocation had been given.

**013/2627/14 Highways Matters/Footpaths****14.1 Roads**

Councillor Forward advised that a date for a meeting with Councillor Clist and the Neighbourhood Highways Officer was still awaited.

#### 14.2 Speed Limits / Speeding

The Clerk had chased DCC for a response again.

20 is plenty signs

Councillor Downing was the only resident to come forward and request a 20 is plenty sign.

Councillor Forward proposed that the other boards be donated to Uffculme School for their art projects.

This item would be taken off the agenda.

#### 14.3 Potholes and other matters

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

Brimstone Lane potholes

Parish Council and public to continue reporting potholes online:

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

White lines / slow sign - Primary School, Burlescombe

This is with the white line team – and the NHO is chasing for a date.

Water from the garages, Burlescombe

Investigations are ongoing with potential trial excavations needed. Councillor Walker advised that works had been taking place.

Electronic signs on the A38

The NHO was checking on dates for installation. Councillor Walker advised that the signs were now in place but not operational.

Drains at Cracker Corner

It was understood that the drains had been cleared.

Reduced Visibility at Cracker Corner

The NHO was visiting the site and would report back. Councillor Forward advised that the area had been cut and visibility was improved.

Road Repairs - Appledore Hamlet to the Somerset Border

It was noted that the works would be taking place from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September until Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November from 1900hrs, weather permitting.

Councillor Downing advised that the area below the last three affordable houses at Oak View required trimming back as it was intruding into the road and, therefore, dangerous to traffic going up the hill.

The area is MDDC's responsibility and forms part of the grass cutting contract with the Parish Council.

Councillor Downing also advised that the sign post for 'Spicelands' (Quaker Meeting Place), is still pointing into the field.

#### 14.4 Footpaths

P3 2026/27

Confirmation had been received that a purchase order would be issued for the 2026/27 annual grant.

PROW funding

The Clerk was also awaiting the paperwork to cover 2025/26 path maintenance of £900.00.

#### 14.5 Road Warden Scheme/Snow Warden Scheme/Flood Warden Scheme

Councillor McDonald advised that there was no update on the three schemes listed above.

However, on the question of sewage spills, district, town and parish councils in Cornwall were giving a vote of 'no confidence' in South West Water and Devon may follow suit regarding the lack of investment – Exmouth had already done so.

MDDC were trying to hold SWW to account over the lack of investment and the extent of the overspills.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Holcombe Rogus Parish Council to see if they were aware that the SWW sewage monitoring equipment in their parish was not working.

**013/2627/15 Financial matters:**

The Parish Council noted the following:

**15.1 Financial Report 2026-27**

**Lloyds Bank**

Current account balance at 30 April 2026 £ 330.94

Less payments

Service charge (1/5) £ 4.25

Receipts

**Current account balance at 31 May 2026 £ 326.69**

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

**Unity**

Current account balance at 30 April 2026 £8907.70

Payments

|           |                            |                 |         |          |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------|----------|
| 01-May-26 | B/P to: Countrywide        | INV 673664      | -8.04   |          |
| 01-May-26 | B/P to: Clerk              | MARCH 26 EXP    | -31.10  |          |
| 01-May-26 | B/P to: Westleigh URC      | Mar-26          | -14.00  |          |
| 01-May-26 | S/O to: Countrywide        | SJB016          | -216.84 |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: HMRC               | 475PM01737213   | -112.22 |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Clerk              | WAGE - APRIL 26 | -400.00 |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Four Seasons       | BPC 9061        | -408.00 |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Amazon (via Clerk) | COMPUTER        | -349.00 |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Amazon (via Clerk) | COMPUTER CASE   | -12.94  |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Burlescombe Hall   | MEETING 20.5.26 | -36.00  |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Westleigh URC      | APRIL MEETING   | -14.00  |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Clerk              | EXPENSES APR 26 | -31.10  |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: Clerk              | TELEPHONE SIGN  | -29.40  |          |
| 22-May-26 | B/P to: SafetySigns        | 4815162         | -34.64  |          |
| 31-May-26 | Service Charge             |                 | -7.00   | -1704.28 |

Receipts

12-May-26 Credit Wayleave 11.92

**Current account balance at 31 May 2026 £7215.34**

Deposit account balance at 30 April 2026 £31807.29

Less Payments

Plus Receipts

**Deposit account balance at 31 May 2026 £31807.29**

The cumulative bank reconciliation for May 26 had been completed and circulated to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. It was duly signed by the Chair.

The budget monitoring information for Month 2 has been produced and circulated to Parish Councillors. It was noted that expenditure was in line with budget.

Receipts and payments made in June

Payments:

|                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Clerk wages*                | £399.80 |
| HMRC PAYE                   | £112.42 |
| *new rate                   |         |
| Countrywide (grass cutting) | £216.84 |

Payments to be authorised:

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Clerk expenses/mileage       | £ 31.10* |
| DALC (membership)            | £387.65  |
| P Russell (Internal Auditor) | £175.00  |

The Parish Council noted the \* change in the mileage rate from 45p per mile to 55p per mile with effect from 1 April 2026.

**Action:** Clerk to recalculate mileage and present change to the August meeting.

### **ICO Data protection fee**

The Clerk had received confirmation that the Direct Debit was in effect and would be used to collect this year's payment. Paying by Direct Debit would reduce the fee from £52.00 to £47.00.

Councillor Elliss-Brookes proposed that the payments be approved and this was seconded by Councillor McDonald and unanimously agreed.

### **15.3 Review of Asset Register**

The Asset Register has been updated and circulated and would be updated again for 2026-27 given information received that the Jubilee tree had died and a new computer would need to be added.

### **15.4 Computer**

A full refund for the computer that did not arrive has been received and a new purchase being made. Any differential in cost will be advised at the August Meeting

Other matters:

### **Jackalope Grant and Confirmation of Outcomes**

and

### **Historic website / emails**

Work by volunteers continued to fully understand the timelines and contracts agreed.

### **Defibrillators**

The Clerk advised the invoice was awaited for the spare defibrillator pads received.

It was noted that the handover was yet to be undertaken.

**Action:** Clerk to chase

It was noted Councillor Box was on holiday and maintenance of the defibrillator should be assigned to another person in these circumstances. Once the transfer had taken place, it would make sense for the two guardians to cover each other.

### **Contact with Lloyds Bank/Financial Ombudsman**

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

Other matters:

- Noticeboards and their upkeep – ongoing
- Grants and sponsorship – see Amenities Working Group

**013/2627/16 To receive** a report a report on Parish Council Communications  
Councillor Smith had provided a report which forms part of these minutes.

Further to the report, information had been shared about the MDDC new app and weather warning.

Forty-six residents had signed up to the newsletter and a further 14 had registered but not clicked the confirmation link.

**013/2627/17 To receive** a report on the Councillor Advocate Scheme/local crime  
Councillor McDonald advised there was nothing specific to report but the focus was on rural crime which did occur far more frequently in summer with the lighter nights. In particular, thefts and poaching.

**013/2627/18 To receive** a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee  
In the absence of Councillor Box no report was given.

The Clerk would follow up on the damage to Ebear Bridge.

**Action:** Clerk

The Joint Advisory Committee had raised the planning application:

**25/00292/FULL**

Proposal: Change of use of B2/B8 to Sui Generis to include the erection of office and store, detached double cart lodge for domestic use, replacement bat roosting building and associated works

Location: Crown Hill Timber Crown Hill Halberton Tiverton

Grid Ref: 299684 : 112870

Parish: Halberton 25

The Parish Council noted the concerns raised by the Tree Officer and the Conservation and RESOLVED it was important that the canal was protected from planning applications that could impact it as a heritage asset and its amenity value.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to support the objections and concerns given on the MDDC Planning Portal.

**Action:** Clerk

**013/2627/19 To receive** a report on the Quarries  
Councillors Downing and Elliss-Brookes advised that there had been no meetings in May. The next meetings would take place in July with the Westleigh meeting being on 20 July 2026.

Councillor Elliss-Brookes had recently sent a report to Holcim on the concerns raised at the Burlescombe Parish Council May meetings and was yet to receive a response.

Holcim had also replied to the Parish Council's letter regarding the asphalt plant advising that they had no plans to relocate the plant. The response also stated that the quarry was compliant with environmental targets for dust and had increased the frequency of the road sweeper. They would also support a 20mph zone. The Parish Council RESOLVED to publish the letter on the website.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to make contact with Rachel Gilmour, MP and attend the next available surgery.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to contact the Public Health Officer on behalf of residents to see if the dust and smell issues could be addressed.

**013/2627/20 To receive** a report from the Amenities Working Group

Councillor Forward advised that the group had met in June and the report formed part of the minutes of this meeting.

The following proposals were put forward:

1. Investigate the setting up of an independent charitable trust to manage parish council amenities.

Councillor Walker would report to the next meeting but advised that DALC did not have any information that would be of assistance.

2. To strengthen the working relationship between Burlescombe & Westleigh Village Hall and the Parish Council.

The Parish Council felt good relationships with other community organisations was important. Councillor Forward would report to the next meeting.

3. Clerk to contact Holcim regarding removal of buddleia growing in the Tar Plant walls on ORL.

**Other matters**

Replacing Westleigh Play Park fence

Councillor Forward would meet with the contractor.

Erecting the 'no dogs' sign at Westleigh Play Park

The sign had been erected.

Leylandii trees on the ORL

The Clerk reported that the National Grid had carried out a site visit and would be carrying out work to lower height of the trees. The date would be circulated when known as access was required to the ORL.

MDDC Expression of Interest for Burlescombe Play Park and Open Space

The expression of interest has been lodged.

Westleigh URC Hall

Councillor Forward advised registering Westleigh URC Hall as an Asset of Community Value would be discussed at the next AWG meeting.

**013/2627/21 To receive** a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock

In the absence of Councillors Lock and Westcott, no report was given.

**013/2627/22 To receive** a report from DCC Councillor Simon Clist

In the absence of Councillor Clist, no report was given.

**013/2627/23 Items for next meeting**

As listed in the minutes of this meeting.

FVEG letter

**013/2627/24 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings**

The dates for future meetings were:

Parish Council meetings:

Monday 3rd August at Westleigh URC Hall

Wednesday 9th September at Burlescombe & Westleigh Village Hall

Monday 5th October at Westleigh URC Hall

Wednesday 18th November at Burlescombe & Westleigh Village Hall

Monday 4th January at Westleigh URC Hall

Other meetings/events:

Saturday 8th August - Summer Clean Up Day

September - Emergency Planning Public Meeting venue TBA

TBA - Autumn Clean Up Day

Wednesday 9th December at Burlescombe Hall - Precept Open session

Councillor Forward closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

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

## **Burlescombe Parish Council communications update**

**June 2026**

### **Communications since last meeting**

#### **1. Parish magazine**

A summary of May's meetings will be in the July issue of the magazine, which will be out soon.

#### **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:

- Updates from the May meetings.
- A post highlighting our latest newsletter and how to sign up.
- A post about Volunteers Week.
- Information about a screening of the People's Emergency Briefing film.
- Agenda for this meeting.
- MDDC app information.

#### **3. Noticeboards**

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

#### **4. Email newsletter**

Two email newsletters have been sent since our last meeting:

On 27 May, including articles on:

- The reports from the Annual Parish Meeting
- The other key updates from the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
- Devon Nature Recovery Strategy
- A Police & Crime Commissioner survey about proposals to merge Devon & Cornwall Police with other forces

On 18 June including articles on:

- Free technical support for older people and disabled people in Devon through AbilityNet
- A call for volunteers to deliver the parish magazine
- MDDC app
- June's meeting and agenda.

#### **Subscriptions**

- 46 residents are subscribed to the newsletter.
- A further 14 have filled in the form but not yet confirmed their subscription, we'll continue to emphasise the importance of clicking the link in the confirmation email.

#### **Newsletter stats**

- 66% per cent of recipients opened the May newsletter and 34% clicked on a link in it.

## **BPC Amenities Working Group, Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Councillors Forward, Walker, Downing and Elliss-Brookes

### **Funding for amenities**

Discussion about the issue of how the Parish Council is not eligible to apply for funding in many cases. Talked about how a group separate from the Council would have access to a greater number of funding options e.g. how Holcombe secured funding for their playpark renovation.

An option is to set up an independent charitable trust to manage the parish amenities which would have a separate board of trustees. South Zeal recreation ground charitable trust was given as an example.

There are a number of considerations - Need to check the process for the transfer assets to a charitable trust along with legal implications. How would costs be handled, could only be viable if volunteers came forward, what would the involvement of the Parish Council look like?

Other examples given of similar arrangements are CHAT (church housing), the climbing wall in the old community centre in Tiverton and the Ayshford trust.

The proposal from the Amenities Working Group to take to the next Parish council meeting is a recommendation to do some discovery work on how this might work in our community. Look to groups that have done this before for examples of best practice and check if DALC has any guidance.

Also noted that the planning application to Mid Devon for the BMX track on the ORL is still on the portal and that the facility did get permission with some conditions.

### **Burlescombe & Westleigh Village Hall**

Discussion about how important an asset this is for our community with regards to emergency planning and being a “front door” to information sharing with residents. Talked about how we would welcome the opportunity to strengthen the working relationship between the hall committee and the parish council and mentioned how it worked in other Parishes, e.g. Uffculme where nominated parish councillors form part of the Village Hall committee.

The proposal from the Amenities Working Group is to reach out to the Village Hall committee to discuss further.

### **Fence in Westleigh play park**

Fence down the middle of the play park was identified in the ROSPA safety report as needing repair. It wasn't replaced during the last works due to funding restraints.

The proposal from the Amenities Working Group is to ask the Clerk to instigate the procurement process. Query raised if procedurally we could use the same contractor? Clerk to advise, and if not obtain three quotes for a like for like replacement.

### **Buddleia growing in the Tar Plant walls, ORL - next steps**

Issues to be managed – roots of the plant undermining the industrial heritage asset, and any remedial action needs to comply with our health and safety obligations.

The proposal from the Amenities Working Group is to ask the Clerk to ask Holcim if they will remove it for us. If not, look to obtain a quote for stump grinding as part of the leylandii removal works.

### **AOB**

Filling the hole in the bank on the ORL – Cllr Downing mentioned she had some logs that could be suitable following the recommendation from Holcim Biodiversity expert. To be considered as an activity for the Summer Clean Up Day.