

Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council
on Monday, 3 August 2026 at Westleigh URC Hall

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Box, Downing, Elliss-Brookes, McDonald and Smith together with MDDC District Councillor Lock.

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

014/2627/1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor Walker and the Clerk. Their absences were duly authorised. MDDC District Councillor Westcott together with DCC County Councillor Clist had given their apologies.

014/2627/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations requested.

014/2627/3 Minutes of Previous meetings

The draft minutes of the meeting on 22 June 2026 had been circulated to all councillors and published on the website and noticeboards. These minutes were approved at this meeting and would be duly initialled and signed by the Chair at the next meeting when printed off by the Clerk.

014/2627/4 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

Members of the public made the following comments:

Who is responsible for the roads and potholes?

What is the maximum speed somebody is allowed to drive on an unmarked road?

Should parishes be working together?

Should the road past the chicken farm from Westleigh to Durleymoor Cross be closed because of the potholes or signs be erected to say it is an unsurfaced road?

It was noted that Devon County Council are responsible for roads.

Whilst the maximum speed on an unmarked road was 60mph, drivers were required to drive at a speed that reflected the road i.e. to drive in a sensible and not a 'careless' way.

Burlescombe Parish Council was part of a Joint Traffic Working Group comprising of Burlescombe, Halberton, Sampford Peverell, Uffculme and Willand parish councils and the next meeting was scheduled for September.

All comments relating to roads would be passed to DCC Councillor Clist and the Neighbourhood Highways Officer.

All potholes should be reported online.

Missing road sign in Westleigh

Village entry signs were available from Devon County Council but payment generally rested with the Parish Council.

Signposts were the responsibility of Devon County Council Highways.

014/2627/6 Emergency Planning

The Clerk had advised that Devon Communities could attend on either the 19 or 26 September 2026. Due to the lack of availability of Councillor Forward and McDonald on these dates, a date in October would be circulated.

It was noted that Councillor Elliss-Brookes was working on a comparison of the Emergency Plan alongside the Community Mapping project.

Given the increased number of heat waves, fire risks would be added to the Emergency Plan.

It was hoped that the majority of councillors would be available to attend the Emergency Plan meeting.

Action: Clerk to look at available dates and contact Devon Communities Together

014/2627/7 Community Mapping

There was no update on community mapping brought to the meeting.

014/2627/8 Training

The training policy document with amendments requested as approved at the June meeting has been circulated to Parish Councillors and published on the website.

DALC Annual General Meeting - Wednesday 7 October 2026

The Parish Council RESOLVED that the Clerk should attend the conference and purchase an advance ticket at a cost of £50 +VAT. It was proposed that the cost be shared by the parishes represented by the Clerk.

Action: Clerk

014/2627/9 To receive a report from the Chair

Delivery of fast fibre

The Parish Council understood that BT would be providing fast fibre and that some poles had already been put in place.

Neighbourhood Plan/Housing Needs Survey

The draft Housing Needs Survey report has been received and circulated to members of the Parish Council. The report specifically reports on the need for affordable housing. The final report would be made public.

Neighbourhood Priority Statement

Councillors Elliss-Brookes and Smith had reviewed examples of Neighbourhood Priority Statements and looked at the results of previous Parish Council surveys to understand what was important to people in terms of housing, traffic and open spaces.

Councillors Elliss-Brookes and Smith would draft a proposal in September for the Parish Council to review. A draft would be presented in October and resident consultation would take place in November. This consultation would be separate to those proposed on the precept and emergency plan.

It was noted that new planning regulations were introduced by the Government. These would need to be incorporated into Mid Devon District Council's Local Plan and any potential formal Neighbourhood Plan that the Parish Council may adopt once MDDC's Local Plan was in place.

Material Planning Considerations did not include sewerage capacity and this was a growing concern of many parish councils given the current capacity and sewage spills.

Business Continuity Plan

The Clerk had advised by email that the plan was nearing completion.

Registering assets of community value

Discussions were ongoing.

Potential use of Artificial Intelligence

The Clerk had circulated information on the use of Artificial Intelligence by Parish Councils and a policy document for consideration.

Councillor Smith had reviewed the documentation and proposed that the AI policy be adopted. This was seconded by Councillor Forward and unanimously agreed.

Action: Information and AI Policy to be uploaded to the website.

Document Retention

The Clerk had circulated a policy document for consideration on document retention.

Councillor McDonald proposed that the Document Retention policy be adopted. This was seconded by Councillor Forward and unanimously agreed.

Action: Document Retention policy to be uploaded to the website.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain and the Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan would be brought forward to the next meeting.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Secretary of State's decision has been widely published. Burlescombe Parish would fall into the large Devon Coast and Countryside Unitary.

MDDC had requested feedback from Parish and Town Councils to understand their concerns and a meeting was being organised in September which Burlescombe Parish Council would attend.

Devon County Council were looking to implement a legal challenge given the scope of the Coast and Countryside unitary and that it did not appear to meet the Government's own criteria regarding the need for each unitary to have an economic hub.

The decision raised numerous questions about how funding would be allocated and services provided and the number of councillors allocated to each area. The councillors for each unitary would be elected in May 2027 and form shadow councils before taking over on 1 April 2028.

The Devon Association of Local Councils were recommending that Parish Councils looked to form clusters to provide services.

County and District Officers throughout the county were gathering information on how the four new unitary councils would work. The change would not be without considerable cost.

Correspondence from FVEG

Following on from correspondence with FVEG, both organisations are looking forward to working with each other, Clerk to ensure all Parish Councillors have seen the response.

NALC

NALC is encouraging parish and town councils to [complete a new national survey](#) on council services, staffing, budgets and governance. The survey, developed by the Improvement and Development Board's Data Task Force, will help build a comprehensive picture of the sector.

Action: Clerk to provide more information

Civility and Respect Pledge

The Clerk had circulated information on the NALC Civility and Respect Pledge.

This would be brought forward to the next meeting to allow input from the Clerk.

014/2627/10 To consider the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:

Planning applications:

New:

No new planning applications have been received.

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

The Parish Council noted that this application was awaiting further information and will either go to the Planning Committee meeting on 19 August or 9 September 2026 because the applicant was MDDC. The date would be determined by when the further information requested by the Planning Officer was submitted to the planning portal.

Confirmation had been requested that all those who lease the garages had received notification of the application and it was noted that such leases could be terminated at any time.

It was noted that the upcoming changes to planning legislation in October would mean that anything less than 10 houses would be by delegated decision.

Councillor Lock advised that she would take any questions from the Parish Council to the Planning Officer once the Planning Committee date had been confirmed.

Decision notices:

25/01516/MFUL – APPROVED – 24 June 2026

Proposal: Creation of small ponds, wetland, swales and other nature based drainage features and associated works to enhance water quality of motorway runoff

Location: Land at NGR 304030 113398 and 304310 113504 Mountstephen and Little

Turberfield Sampford Peverell Devon

Consultations:

MDDC is arranging a meeting of parishes in Mid Devon that are located along the link road and/or Junction 27. The meeting will take place in September and discuss the Local Plan and the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. Burlescombe Parish Council would attend the meeting.

Whilst funding for the next stage of implementing improvements to Junction 28 had been received, it was unlikely this would affect the upcoming 10 year plan meaning that all parishes would be expected to absorb housing to accommodate housing requirements.

This could have an impact on businesses as well as residents.

014/2627/11 Highways Matters/Footpaths

11.1 Roads

Councillor Forward advised that all the dates suggested to Councillor Clist had passed.

11.2 Speed Limits / Speeding

The Clerk had circulated information on 20s Plenty but the exact procedure and costs for a Parish Council funded 20mph area were awaited from DCC.

11.3 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 and advise Councillor Clist and the Neighbourhood Highways Officer of concerns raised by residents.

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

White lines / slow sign - Primary School, Burlescombe

This is with the white line team.

No update had been by either the Clerk or NHO. It had also be raised at the quarry liaison group.

The Parish Council RESOLVED that further representation should be submitted. This could be from the school and Holcim as well as the Parish Council.

Water from the garages, Burlescombe

There were ongoing investigations and the matter had now been handed to MDDC Housing Service.

Electronic signs on the A38

Both signs were working and the item could be taken off the agenda.

Drains at Cracker Corner

An update was awaited from DCC Highways. The issue was not mentioned at the Quarry meeting.

Reduced Visibility at Cracker Corner

The NHO had attended this junction on the 7th of July and cut back many branches to improve the visibility. The removal of trees would require the consent of the owners and this could only be requested if the trees were dangerous such as being unstable or dead branches etc.

Information had also been received regarding the current guidance for new junctions being built which does not apply to historic junctions.

Road Repairs - Appledore Hamlet to the Somerset Border

The latest information was that works will take place from Monday 21st September until Friday 6th November from 1900hrs.

Action: Clerk to check if the dates were still correct

Damage to wall at Westleigh

Forwarded to Holcim. The wall has been made safe and will be mended.

Action: Clerk to contact Holim regarding removing the buddleia at the same time.

Road surface on approach to A38

Action: Clerk to ascertain if Holcim contribute to road maintenance.

11.4 Footpaths

P3 2026/27

Purchase order received and actioned.

P3 2025/26

Purchase order received and actioned.

Total funds received: £1180

11.5 Road Warden Scheme/Snow Warden Scheme/Flood Warden Scheme

The Clerk has completed the Road Warden Survey with the response to be shared with Councillor McDonald

Councillor McDonald advised that he was still to complete the Chapter 8 training.

Action: Councillor McDonald to advise Clerk of potential dates so that this could be arranged.

Holcombe Rogus Parish Council had enquired about joint participation in Road Warden Scheme. The Parish Council RESOLVED to work with Holcombe Rogus

Action: Clerk to advise Holcombe Rogus Clerk

South West Water

Councillor McDonald advised that there had been releases on 18 days totalling 238 hours. The last release was on 18 February. The situation was being monitored.

Councillor McDonald had signed up for Fresh Water Watch, citizen science, which asked people to sample water quality and this would most probably be done at Fenacre Brook. The school and FVEG could also be involved.

Action: Councillor Walker and Clerk to advise school and FVEG accordingly

Vote of no confidence in South West Water

It was noted that a number of councils have passed a vote of no confidence in SWW.

Action: Councillor Forward to bring a proposal to the next meeting.

It was noted that when the quarry ceases in 2040, the area could be turned into reservoirs but this would come at a cost. Alternatively, it could become a nature reserve.

Action: Clerk to check original planning application

Given climate change, could new builds have grey water tanks as in France and could this be built into planning legislation? Could people be encouraged to have water butts and is there any funding available for such initiatives?

Action: Clerk to investigate

014/2627/12 Financial matters:

The Parish Council noted the following:

12.1 Financial Report 2026-27

Lloyds Bank

Current account balance at 31 May 2026	£326.69
Less payments	
Service charge 01.06.26	£ 4.25
Service charge 30.06.26	£ 4.25
Receipts	
Current account balance at 30 June 2026	£318.19

Lloyds Bank

Current account balance at 30 June 2026	£318.19
Less payments	
Service charge 31.07.26	£ 4.25
Receipts	
Current account balance at 31 July 2026	£313.94

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

Unity

Current account balance at 31 May 2026	£7215.34
Payments	
01-Jun-26 S/O to: Countrywide SJB016	-216.84
15-Jun-26 B/P to: Clerk MAY 26 WAGES	-399.80
15-Jun-26 B/P to: HMRC 475PM01737213	-112.42
24-Jun-26 B/P to: DALC INV 7285	-387.65
24-Jun-26 B/P to: Internal Auditor IA/0320/26	-175.00
24-Jun-26 B/P to: Clerk MAY 26 EXPENSES	-31.10
30-Jun-26 Service Charge	-7.00
Receipts	-1329.81
Current account balance at 30 June 2026	£5885.53

Current account balance at 30 June 2026	£5885.53
Payments	
01-Jul-26 S/O to: Countrywide SJB016	216.84
08-Jul-26 B/P to: HMRC 475PM01737213	112.42
08-Jul-26 B/P to: Clerk JUNE 26 WAGES	399.80
10-Jul-26 INFORMATION COMMIS ZA194261	47.00
31-Jul-26 Service Charge	7.00
Receipts	783.06
17-Jul-26 HOLCIM UK LIMITED	2400.00
21-Jul-26 DEVON CC 2607172-27	1180.00
Current account balance at 31 July 2026	£8682.47

Deposit account balance at 31 May 2026	£31807.29
Less Payments	
Plus Receipts	
Interest	£ 132.95
Deposit account balance at 30 June 2026	£31940.24

Deposit account balance at 30 June 2026	£31940.24
Deposit account balance at 31 July 2026	£31940.24

The cumulative bank reconciliations for June and July 26 had been completed by the Clerk and forwarded to the Parish Council. The bank reconciliations would be signed by the Chair at the next meeting.

The budget monitoring information for Month 3 and Month 4 had been produced and circulated to Parish Councillor. No questions were raised.

Payments to be authorised:

URC (Meeting room)	£ 14.00
URC (Defib insurance)	£ 12.71
Clerk expenses/mileage (July)	£ 25.00 (expenses)
	£ 9.90 (mileage at 55p per mile)
	£ 5.40 (mileage adjustment Apr/May/Jun)
Clerk (computer)	£ 11.00
Nico Page (P3 work)	£500.00
Clerk wages (July 26)	£399.80
HMRC PAYE (July 26)	£112.42

Councillor Forward proposed that the above payments be authorised for payment and this was seconded by Councillor Box and unanimously agreed.

12.2 Data protection fee: Your payment is due

The fee of £52.00 was taken on 10/7/2026 by direct debit resulting in the lower payment of £47.00.

12.3 Review of Asset Register

A further update has been undertaken and circulated.

It was noted that there were no benches in Parkwood.

Action: Clerk to update asset register.

12.4 Computer

The Clerk had advised that a new computer has been purchased at a cost of £360.00 slightly more than the previous cost £349.00. The difference of £11.00 was included in the payments listed above.

Action: Clerk to update asset register.

12.5 Holcim Grant

The Holcim Wildlife Grant of £2400.00 has been received.

Action: Clerk to obtain quotations for the surveys to be carried out.

Other matters:

Jackalope Grant and Confirmation of Outcomes

and

Historic website / emails

Update at next meeting.

Defibrillators

The Clerk advised the invoice for the spare defibrillator pads had not been received despite chasing the company.

The handover was being undertaken and it was hoped it would be completed in September.

The Parish Council noted that the insurance for the defibrillator at the URC fell under that organisation's insurance and this was also true of the defibrillator at the Village Hall which was on the Village Hall Trust.

Action: Clerk to discuss the Parish Council taking over ownership so that both defibrillators would be covered on the Parish Council's insurance.

Contact with Lloyds Bank/Financial Ombudsman

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

Other matters:

- Noticeboards and their upkeep

Action: Councillor Box would identify the work that needed doing and the potential cost. Councillor Box would then look to see if this could be carried out via the volunteer network

014/2627/13 To receive a report a report on Parish Council Communications
Councillor Smith's report is given as an addendum to these minutes.

014/2627/14 To receive a report on the Councillor Advocate Scheme/local crime
Councillor McDonald advised that there was nothing to report that was specific to the Burlescombe area.

The Parish Council noted the proposal to merge police forces taking them down from 41 to 7 forces. The majority of those surveyed were not in favour citing the loss of local knowledge.

014/2627/15 To receive a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee
Councillor Box advised that the next meeting would take place on 5 October 2026.

The Parish Council noted that the damage to Ebear Bridge had still not been repaired.

Action: Councillor Box would contact the GWC

014/2627/16 To receive a report on the Quarries
Councillor Downing provided a verbal report whilst Councillor Elliss-Brookes report is given as an addendum to these minutes.

Councillor Downing advised that there was still no firm plan for the Hillhead landfill site as answers had not been received to all the questions asked. Valencia was seeking planning permission for a solar panel farm but this was dependent on all questions being answered. The question was asked if Valencia was purchasing other landfill sites for potential solar or wind farms.

Asphalt Plant, landowner NatWest, had advised Holcim's solicitor that consent to the move would not be given until 2037.

Councillor Forward advised that she had made a complaint, as a resident to MDDC Public Health regarding the smell from Asphalt Plant and would be following this up on behalf of the Parish Council. Wind direction did make a difference and the question arose as to what residents are breathing in.

This had been raised at the quarry meeting and Holcim had said they had investigated and found no apparent odour, blaming the smell on muck spreading.

Action: Councillor Forward to ask if a monitoring programme could be introduced

014/2627/17 To receive a report from the Amenities Working Group
The Working Group had not met since the last meeting.

The Parish Clean-Up Day would take place on 8 August 2026 and Councillor Elliss-Brookes would arrange for refreshments.

Councillors Box, Elliss-Brookes and Smith would oversee work in Westleigh which included cutting back ivy, trimming bramble on lanes and in the play park and cleaning up post office lane.
Councillors Downing and Forward would oversee tasks in Burlescombe.

Risk assessments would be undertaken and volunteer forms would be completed prior to any work being carried out.

It was noted that Holcombe Rogus Parish Council had litter picking equipment which Burlescombe could borrow.

A resident had complained about the state of the weeds on pavements and whilst DCC had overall responsibility, they considered it was increasingly a task for Road Wardens.

Concern was also expressed for litter left in the play park being a hazard for wildlife.

Report from Councillor Walker

The report on Charitable Trusts would be carried over to the next meeting.

Other matters

- Replacing Westleigh Play Park fence: The Clerk had spoken to the contractor who has confirmed he is available for a meeting
- Leylandi trees on ORL: The Clerk understood that National Grid would be cutting the trees in September.
- Expression of Interest for Burlescombe Play Park and Open Space: the Clerk advised feedback was awaited from MDDC.
- Westleigh URC Hall: Councillor Forward advised that discussions were ongoing regarding registering it as an Asset of Community Value

A schedule of works for ORL to include the inspection of banks would need to be factored into the precept.

014/2627/18 To receive a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock

Councillor Lock advised that Frome quarry was now owned by Holcim. The previous owner, Foster Yeoman had been strict on environmental targets. They also owned the Torr Works and Glensanda quarry.

MDDC were looking to make food caddies and recycling containers available for collection at different locations in Mid Devon to improve accessibility for the community e.g. churches, town and village halls, schools, medical centres. Site locations could be put forward to MDDC.

014/2627/19 To receive a report from DCC Councillor Simon Clist

In the absence of Councillor Clist no report was given.

014/2627/20 Items for next meeting

As listed in the minutes.

Consideration of a youth council.

014/2627/21 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings:

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

Councillor Elliss-Brookes gave her apologies for the meetings on 9 September and 5 October 2026.

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

August 2026

Communications since the last meeting

1. Parish magazine

A summary of June's meeting is in the August issue of the magazine.

2. Website, Facebook and Email newsletter

Our website is our primary channel for key updates.

Facebook is used to share major updates (our page and then into local groups for better visibility), as well as for sharing other useful information posted by organisations including MDDC/DCC about key services or updates.

Our email newsletter is usually sent out only once or twice a month to highlight the key updates.

This month we have shared:

- Updates from the June meeting.
- Tips for looking after yourself and others in a heatwave.
- Burlescombe PTFA summer BBQ
- Upcoming road closures
- Local Government Reorganisation decision.
- Summer Clean Up Dau.
- Update on South View planning application.
- Agenda for this meeting.
- MDDC active summer family offer.



3. Noticeboards

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

4. Email newsletter stats

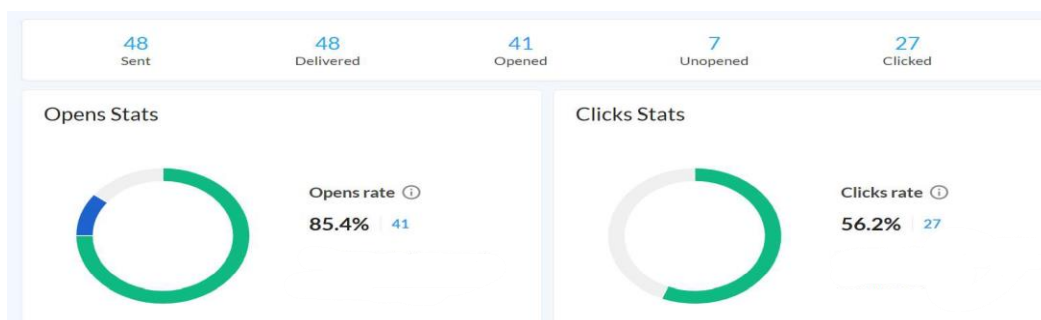
Two emails newsletters have been sent since our last meeting, one on 30 June and one on 30 July.

Subscriptions

- 49 residents are subscribed to the newsletter as pf 30 July.
- 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

30 June newsletter



Quarry Report August 2026

There have been two quarry liaison meetings since the last Burlescombe Parish Council BPC meeting:

- Westleigh Quarry Liaison Group on Monday 20th July 2026 – attended by Cllr Elliss-Brookes on behalf of BPC
- Hillhead Quarry & Broadpath Landfill Liaison Meeting on Monday 27th July - attended by Cllr Downing on behalf of BPC

Items raised at the Westleigh meeting included:

- Wheel wash being extended and speed humps added to improve effectiveness
- Bolt issues investigated at Black Bridge
- Cars parked by Burlescombe bridge causing lorries to pull out around them
- Visibility at the junction to the A38
- Impact of potential developments at J27
- Damage to the historic bridge by Cracker Corner
- Complaints about lorry cab lights and vehicle noise during nightworks
- Lorries leaving the quarry un-sheeted and inappropriately loaded
- How Holcim could better notify the community about night works, blasting and road issues
- Traffic movements during Q2 (nightworks reduced from 40 in Q1 to 27 in Q2)
- Notification from the Environment Agency about odour complaint
- State of the roads through Burlescombe
- Planning relating to Fenacre stream and the new weir installation
- Request for Holcim to advise on managing Buddleia on the ORL
- Agreement of Holcim support to fund refreshments for the BPC summer clean-up
- EE serving a break notice on their use of the telecoms mast on-site
- Request from Burlescombe school for support from Holcim for their forest school
- Request for Holcim to hold an open community session for residents
- Appointment of new quarry manager (Ash Hove)
- Next meeting to be held on 19th October 2026
-

Blasting at Fenacre, Westleigh Quarry, took place on 24th June and 8th July:

- Wednesday 24th June at 10:30am: The reading at The Gate House was recorded as 0.9 PPV and 116 dB AOP. The reading at Cannon's Barton was recorded as 1.375 PPV and 100 db AOP.
- Wednesday 8th July at 11:10am: The reading at The Gate House was recorded as 1.875 PPV and 108 dB AOP. An additional reading was taken at Cannon's Barton which recorded as 2.1 PPV and 110 dB AOP.
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On 17th July I sent a summary of quarry-related items raised and discussed at the June BPC meeting to members of the Westleigh Quarry Liaison Group.

Lucy Elliss-Brookes, Vice Chair, Burlescombe Parish Council

2026 July Parish Report (1-31 July)

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has now confirmed its decision on Local Government Reorganisation in Devon. Mid Devon has published information for residents, including a postcode checker which allows people to see which future authority area they will fall within. This remains a significant area of work for the Council and I continue to support efforts to keep town and parish councils informed throughout the transition process.

The Government has also now confirmed the official names of the four new unitary authorities. These will be Exeter Council, Torbay and South Devon Council, Greater Plymouth Council and Devon Council (incorporating most of Mid Devon). While the names differ from those used in earlier announcements, the areas covered remain unchanged. As more information becomes available, I will continue to share updates and support parish councils through the transition.

Residents can find further information about the changes and use the postcode checker on the Mid Devon Local Government Reorganisation webpage. [Devon Local Government Reorganisation \(LGR\) - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk) & [Local Government Reorganisation in Devon - Future Devon](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

LGR Consultation Findings

The Government has published its analysis of consultation responses relating to Devon's reorganisation proposals. The report shows mixed views across the county, with significant concern expressed about some of the proposed four-unitary models, particularly regarding financial sustainability, rural representation and service delivery. The consultation highlighted the importance of maintaining strong local engagement and ensuring rural communities continue to be effectively represented during and after reorganisation. [Devon, Plymouth and Torbay: Summary and analysis of consultation responses](https://www.middevon.gov.uk)

Progress on a Second M5 Junction for Cullompton

Plans for a second M5 junction at Cullompton have taken an important step forward following confirmation that the Government has awarded £1.3 million to fund the next stage of development work.

The proposed junction would help reduce congestion around the existing Junction 28, improve local journeys and support future growth in Cullompton, including the Culm Garden Village development. The funding will be used to produce a detailed business case, refine the design and assess how the new junction would connect to the local road network.

The project is part of a wider package of transport improvements for the area, alongside the Cullompton Relief Road and the planned railway station. While construction funding has not yet been approved, the latest Government support is a significant milestone and keeps the project moving towards the next stage of development.

Waste and Recycling Service Improvements

Mid Devon District Council has recently completed significant improvements at its waste depot at Carlu Close, helping to modernise the service and prepare for future recycling developments. The upgrades include improved storage facilities, enhanced staff facilities and new in-cab technology that allows collection crews to record information and respond more effectively to customer enquiries.

These changes will support a number of new initiatives planned for later this year, including additional recycling containers for residents, new food caddies, and pilot schemes for soft plastic and disposable nappy collections.

Councillors and community representatives are being invited to visit the depot and see the improvements first-hand. The tours will also provide an opportunity to view the new recycling containers and food caddies that will be available this autumn to help residents increase their recycling capacity.

The Council is also exploring opportunities for recycling containers and food caddies to be made available from community locations such as village halls, churches, schools and health centres, making them easier for residents to access. If you know of a suitable local venue, the waste team would be pleased to hear from you.

Passport to Summer Fun and Fitness

Active Mid Devon is helping families stay active and entertained this summer with its new **Passport to Summer Fun and Fitness** scheme. Running throughout the school holidays, the offer gives families of up to four people access to a wide range of activities for just £15 per week.

The pass includes swimming, racquet sports, fitness classes, Aqua Run sessions and SEND activities across Active Mid Devon's leisure centres. There is also the option to add gym access for an additional £5 per week.

With the long summer break ahead, it's an affordable way for families to keep active, try new activities and make the most of the facilities available locally. For more information, visit the Active Mid Devon website or speak to staff at your nearest leisure centre.

[Passport to Summer Fitness - Active Mid Devon](#)

Supporting Parish Councils

As Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement I have recently contacted parish councils regarding the retirement of Mid Devon District Council's parish website hosting arrangements. Many councils have already made alternative arrangements, but some are still in the process of migrating their sites. Guidance and support information has been circulated, including signposting to assistance available through DALC.

Community Emergency Hubs: Building Local Resilience

Recent workshops organised by Devon Communities Together and the Devon Community Resilience Forum have highlighted the benefits of establishing Community Emergency Hubs within local communities.

A Community Emergency Hub is a designated local venue where residents can come together during emergencies such as severe weather, flooding, extended power cuts, major transport disruption or other incidents. The hubs are designed to provide a central point for sharing information, checking on vulnerable neighbours and coordinating local support while emergency services focus on the most urgent situations.

Importantly, these hubs are intended to be run by the community, for the community. They can be based in existing facilities such as village halls, community centres or other suitable buildings, and do not require a formal team of volunteers to be identified in advance. Simple guidance and role cards enable those available at the time to organise and operate the hub safely and effectively.

Devon Communities Together is supporting communities across the county by providing free Community Emergency Hub kits to eligible locations. The initiative aims to strengthen community resilience and ensure that local people are better prepared to help one another when unexpected events occur.

This is an opportunity that parish councils and community groups may wish to explore further as part of wider emergency planning and preparedness arrangements. A well-supported local hub could play an important role in helping residents stay informed, connected and supported during times of disruption.

For further information, contact Devon Communities Together via rod.birtles@devoncommunities.org.uk

Affordable Housing

Mid Devon's award-winning affordable housing development at Crofts House, Sandford, has now received its fourth industry award of 2026. The development demonstrates innovative construction methods and provides an example of how affordable housing can be delivered sustainably in rural communities.

[Residents - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#)

Sustainability and Climate Action

Community groups may be interested in the Strategic Sustainability Grants programme launched by Mid Devon District Council. The scheme is designed to support local organisations undertaking work relating to sustainability, climate action and nature recovery, helping groups become more resilient and develop partnerships to deliver projects locally.

[New Strategic Sustainability Grants to support community climate and nature action](#)

Council Communications and Information

Members may have seen increasing promotion of the Mid Devon residents' app. The app allows residents to access council services, receive waste collection reminders, report issues, read council news and stay informed about local matters. I would encourage residents to download it if they have not already done so.

The residents' app has been designed to give you quicker access, clearer information and more control over how you stay connected with your council.

[Mid Devon App - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://middevon.gov.uk)

Your council services, news and reminders – now pocket-sized.

Community Safety

Recent information from Devon and Cornwall Police highlights the continued importance of using the correct reporting channels. Residents should continue to use 999 only in emergencies and use 101 or online reporting for non-emergency matters. Police have also circulated useful advice on cyber security, mobile phone theft prevention and protection against online fraud.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has also been promoting new work around reducing violence against women and girls and encouraging participation in the Devon and Cornwall Male Ally Network.

Ward Work

Alongside district-wide issues, I continue to work with residents, parish councils, community organisations and fellow councillors on local matters across the ward. Recent activity has included parish engagement, discussions around community resilience, local government reorganisation, sustainability initiatives, and support for community projects and organisations in the Tiverton and Halberton area.

Cllr Gwen DuChesne

Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement

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