

Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council
on Wednesday 9 September 2026 at Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Downing, McDonald, Smith and Walker together with DCC Councillor Clist and the Clerk.

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

015/2627/1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors Box and Elliss-Brookes. Their absences were duly authorised. MDDC District Councillors Lock and Westcott had given their apologies.

015/2627/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations requested.

015/2627/3 Minutes of Previous meetings

The draft minutes of the meeting on 3 August 2026 had been circulated to all councillors and published on the website and noticeboards. These minutes together with the minutes of 22 June 2026 approved at the meeting on 3 August 2026 were duly initialled and signed by the Chair.

015/2627/4 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:

Trees behind the garages at Bray Close

It was reported that a branch had come down onto the garage roof.

Quarry residents survey listed on the agenda

Had the survey been circulated?

Potholes and sunken covers

Concern was expressed over potholes and the noise caused when quarry lorries went over sunken covers on the route through Burlescombe village

Asphalt Plant

It was reported that a query was raised with Holcim regarding if works were still taking place as nothing was coming out of the stacks. It appeared work had taken place on the filters so there was less pollution.

The Chair noted that all these matters could be discussed by the Parish Council under the specific agenda items.

Emergency hubs

Lewis Dyson, Emergency Planner for Mid Devon District Council provided information on Community Emergency Hubs to the Parish Council and members of the public. A resume of the information provided is given in the reports for this meeting. A flood guide for individuals would also be posted on the website.

015/2627/6 Emergency Planning

The Chair advised that the information received on Emergency Hubs would be incorporated into the Emergency Plan by way of providing meeting places in the event of an emergency. Given that writing the Emergency Plan was a long and complex exercise, the Chair asked Parish Councillors to consider if the immediate emphasis should be on completing the plan for winter.

The Clerk advised that the draft plan contained information on events that could occur in winter, summer or both and would now include emergencies relating to excess heat. The key to moving it forward lay with identifying members of the Parish Council and residents who could a) be part of the Community Response Team and b) offer assistance by way of available generators, specific skills etc. that might be needed in an emergency.

Halberton Parish Council were looking to send out a leaflet to all residents detailing the Government Household Emergency Plan and include an invite to their Parish Emergency Plan meeting. Funding could be available through Devon Communities Together.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to investigate the possibility of carrying out a similar exercise in Burlescombe with a view to holding an Emergency Plan meeting in November. It was noted that Devon Communities Together had advised they could attend the meeting.

Action: Clerk

The Chair felt it was important that all Parish Councillors had prepared a Household Emergency Plan and that details should also be shared again with the community. This is particularly in light of the government minister's earlier recommendation, along with the weather forecast for this winter for more frequent and severe storms.

015/2627/7 Community Mapping

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

015/2627/8 Training

It was noted that the Clerk would attend the DALC Annual General Meeting and was also looking to attend a free online session relating to the move to digital filing of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

015/2627/9 To receive a report from the Chair

Delivery of fast fibre

The Parish Council understood that fast fibre was now available in Burlescombe and would be available in Westleigh in the near future. Unfortunately, it is not known when other parts of the parish will be connected.

Neighbourhood Plan/Housing Needs Survey

The final Housing Needs Survey report has been received, circulated to members of the Parish Council and made available on the website.

Neighbourhood Priority Statement

Councillor Smith had shared documents relating to the process and the draft survey to gather residents' views. Councillor Smith would finalise and publish the survey to residents through all the usual channels. Results and a first draft NPS will be brought to the October meeting before being circulated to the community for consultation.

Business Continuity Plan

The Clerk had advised that there appeared to be something new to add to the plan every month but it would be circulated shortly.

Registering assets of community value

Discussions were ongoing.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Councillor Forward advised that she was working through the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy and two actions the Parish Council could take would be to provide information on hedgehog friendly gardens and place bat boxes in the ORL.

Action: Parish Council to research applying for a Wild About Devon grant

Given the funding had now been received, the Clerk was asked to obtain three quotations to carry out the ORL Wildlife Enhancement survey.

Action: Clerk

Local Government Reorganisation

The Secretary of State's decision to pause Local Government Reorganisation in light of new legal advice was noted by Parish Councillors.

Councillor Clist advised that several counties had already submitted applications for a Judicial Review and Devon County Council would be submitting their application based on procedural matters. It was estimated that some £1-3 million had been spent on preparations for the change as well as a significant amount of 'lost opportunity' officer time given that everything had to work on day one of the changeover.

It now appeared that it was likely May 2027 elections would take place for parish, district and county councils with Local Government Reorganisation not being undertaken during this parliament. Existing boundaries would be used and not the new interim warding arrangements that had been circulated by Mid Devon District Council.

MDDC were still looking at the option to pass non-statutory assets to town and parish councils e.g. Burlescombe Open Space and Playground.

NALC

The Clerk had completed the survey on council services, staffing, budgets and governance.

Civility and Respect Pledge

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

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the proposal that the Parish Council RESOLVE to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge and this was unanimously agreed.

Bike ramps at Burlescombe Open Space

MDDC have advised they were not aware of any ramps or the works to then remove them. Further information was awaited but unauthorised bike ramps would be considered a risk.

Local Green Spaces

The Clerk had advised that as part of the evidence gathering for Plan Mid Devon, MDDC is undertaking a review of Local Green Space designations across the district and inviting parish councils to nominate additional sites for consideration. It would take the form of a 6-week consultation in September and October and was likely to be a topic at the MDDC meeting on 29 September 2026.

015/2627/10 To consider the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:

Planning applications:

New:

26/01162/PNAG

Proposal: Prior Approval for the erection of an agricultural storage building

Location: Land at NGR 307428 115815 Velhay Burlescombe

Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 318270 / 117089

Parish: Burlescombe

The Parish Council noted that this application had been provided for information purposes only and there were limited reasons for commenting on such an application.

The Parish Council noted that the proposed building was close to Footpath 19 but it appeared to be in keeping with other buildings in the area.

Councillor Clist advised that DEFRA were looking to see farming equipment stored indoors in the winter and the Environment Agency covered the need to keep clean water from roofs away from dirty water.

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 had not gone to the Planning Committee meeting on 9 September 2026 with the next meeting being on 7 October 2026. The tree report requested by the Planning Officer had not yet been submitted to the planning portal.

Given the resident feedback, the Parish Council would look to hold its own Planning Committee meeting to review the report and residents' concerns. The potential date of 21 and 23 September were put forward but these were dependent on information being on the planning portal.

The Parish Council would be able to attend the MDDC Planning Committee meeting.

Decision notices:

No decision notices had been received.

Consultations:

The Parish Council noted that the MDDC meeting of parishes in Mid Devon that are located along the link road and/or Junction 27 would take place on 29 September 2026.

015/2627/11 Highways Matters/Footpaths**11.1 Roads**

Councillor Forward and Councillor Clist would exchange available dates for a meeting.

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. The Parish Council would also seek to lobby the Member of Parliament for Burlescombe.

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.

Water from the garages, Burlescombe

There were ongoing investigations and the matter had now been handed to MDDC Housing Service. Given the winter weather forecast, agreed the Clerk should follow up again on this.

Drains at Cracker Corner

An update was awaited from DCC Highways and Holcim. Given the winter weather forecast, agreed this should be raised again at the next Quarry Liaison meeting and also with Devon Highways.

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

The wall has been made safe and the buddleia cut back.

Road surface on approach to A38 after Burlescombe

Response awaited

Signpost at Westleigh

Reported to DCC Highways – awaiting response

11.4 Footpaths

Councillor Smith advised that there was nothing to report.

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

Councillor McDonald advised there was nothing to report and he was looking at dates for completing the Chapter 8 training.

South West Water

Councillor McDonald advised that there had been no releases at Burlescombe and no releases from any of the three Holcombe Rogus overflows this year, mainly because they have not been sending any data. SWW have just started reporting in the last month. The last release from Burlescombe/Fenacre was in February. Councillor McDonald would be undertaking water quality testing during September as a part of the WaterBlitz citizen science freshwater survey.

A meeting of parishes affected by sewage overflows in the Mid Devon region may be beneficial.

Action: Clerk to investigate

Vote of no confidence in South West Water. Councillor Forward advised that she was working on a proposal.

Grey water tanks

The Clerk advised that new builds were often designed with attenuation ponds to take clean water run-off.

015/2627/12 Financial matters:

The Parish Council noted the following:

12.1 Financial Report 2026-27

Lloyds Bank

Current account balance at 31 July 2026 £313.94

Less payments

Receipts

Current account balance at 30 August 2026 £313.94

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

Unity

Current account balance at 31 July 2026 £8682.47

Payments

S/O to:

03-Aug-26	Countrywide	SJB016	-216.84	
11-Aug-26	B/P to: Clerk	EXPENSES	-40.30	
	B/P to: Westleigh	DEFIB		
11-Aug-26	URC	INSURANCE	-12.71	
	B/P to: Westleigh	MEETING		
11-Aug-26	URC	JUNE26	-14.00	
11-Aug-26	B/P to: HMRC	475PM01737213	-112.42	
11-Aug-26	B/P to: Clerk	JUL 26 WAGES	-399.80	
11-Aug-26	B/P to: Clerk	COMPUTER	-11.00	
11-Aug-26	B/P to: Nico Page	11.7.26	-500.00	
31-Aug-26	Service Charge		-7.00	-1314.07

10-Aug-26 Transfer -5000.00 -6314.07

Receipts

VAT 2583.83

Current account balance at 30 August 2026 £4952.23

Deposit account balance at 31 July 2026 £31940.24

Payments

Receipts

Transfer £ 5000.00

Deposit account balance at 30 August 2026 £36940.24

The cumulative bank reconciliations for July and August 26 had been circulated to Parish Councillors and were signed by the Chair.

The budget monitoring information for Months 4 and 5 had been circulated to Parish Councillors and the content was duly noted. The Parish Council was operating within budget.

Payments to be authorised:

URC (Meeting room)	£ 14.00
Clerk expenses/mileage (August)	£ 25.00 (expenses)
Clerk wages (August 26)	£399.80
HMRC PAYE (August 26)	£112.42
Burlescombe Village Hall	£ 27.00
External Auditor	£252.00

The Parish Council RESOLVED to make the above payments.

Proposer: Councillor Forward

Seconder: Councillor Walker

All in favour

12.2 Review of Asset Register

This item would be taken off the agenda until further changes were required.

12.3 NJC pay increase

The Parish Council noted the Information on the proposed pay increases which had been circulated to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to adopt the new pay scheme and noted the Clerk's new rate of pay would be £18.44 backdated to 1 April 2026.

Proposer: Councillor Forward

Seconder: Councillor Smith

All in favour

Other matters:

Jackalope Grant and Confirmation of Outcomes and Historic website / emails

Documentation had been prepared and was ready to be submitted to the relevant authorities. This item would be taken off the agenda.

Defibrillators

The Clerk advised that the handover should now take place.

Contact with Lloyds Bank/Financial Ombudsman

Nothing to report no information had been provided by Lloyds Bank.

Other matters:

Noticeboards and their upkeep

In the absence of Councillor Box, it was noted that the Burlescombe noticeboard was not fully shutting and the Westleigh noticeboard appeared to have been damaged, possibly by strimming.

015/2627/13 To receive a report a report on Parish Council Communications

Councillor Smith's report is given as an addendum to these minutes. Key points were that residents had responded favourably to the communication regarding the summer clean-up and the summary of the August meeting. Fifty residents were now signed up to the newsletter.

015/2627/14 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 but that he had completed the police survey.

015/2627/15 To receive a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee

In the absence of Councillor Box, it was noted that the next meeting would take place on 5 October 2026. A further email had been sent about the repairs required to Ebear Bridge.

015/2627/16 To receive a report on the Quarries

Councillor Elliss-Brookes report would form part of these minutes.

Councillor Downing provided a verbal report whilst Councillor Elliss-Brookes report is given as an addendum to these minutes.

Councillor Downing advised that she was awaiting the minutes of the of the Hillhead meeting and her report would be brought forward to the next meeting. However, it seemed likely that the Asphalt Plant would remain in Burlescombe until at least 2027.

In 2025, the average number of lorries travelling out the village on any given day was 158 and there had been the highest number of night work days.

The key areas of concern were:

- Pollution from the Asphalt Plant
- Litter on the route taken by the lorries to and from the quarry. This could be Holcim itself or contractors

Action: A letter would be sent to Holcim

A Quarry Residents Survey would be prepared for circulation in the New Year to ascertain residents' concerns.

015/2627/17 To receive a report from the Amenities Working Group

The Working Group had met on 17 August 2026 and the report forms part of these minutes.

The key actions were:

- To review the bank at the side of Black Bridge
- Agree a specification for the fence at the Westleigh Play Park and
- Agree on tree works at the ORL
- Agree on fence works at the ORL

The Parish Council did not believe the bank at Black Bridge was unstable at this time but it would be monitored.

Following discussion, the Parish Council RESOLVED to replace the internal fence with post, rails and wire and install a new gate. This option was a cost-effective option and would continue to make it a secure area for younger children.

Proposer: Councillor Forward

Seconder: Councillor Downing

All in favour

Following discussion, the Parish Council RESOLVED to obtain quotes for removing and/or pollarding the Leylandii trees (G7 of the tree report) and carry out the works to G8 and G9 of the same report. Given the comments made in Public Participation any necessary work would be carried out to the trees overhanging the garages at the same time for cost effectiveness.

Action: Clerk to obtain three quotations for the work

Following discussion, the Parish Council RESOLVED to remove the fence on the left hand side adjacent to trees G8 and G9 and replace the damaged feather-edge fencing with post and rail.

The Parish Council noted that the funds allocated to the ORL in the budget should be sufficient to cover the cost of the required works and the Parish Council RESOLVED to set a budget of £3500 to cover the work.

Proposer: Councillor Forward

Seconder: Councillor Downing

All in favour

The brambles on the bank would be cleared during the next Community Clean-Up Day.

Discussion on Charitable Trusts would take place at the October meeting.

The setting up of a reserve to replace the equipment at Westleigh Play Park would form part of the budget discussions in November. The last figure received had been £60,000. This also informs the discussions on setting up a Charitable Trust.

It was noted that MDDC had advised they would be replacing the matting at Burlescombe Play Park using the existing S106 monies this financial year.

015/2627/18 To receive a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock

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

The Town and Parish Report prepared by MDDC Councillor DuChesne forms part of these minutes.

015/2627/19 To receive a report from DCC Councillor Simon Clist

Councillor Clist had already given an update on Local Government Reorganisation. Other points were:

- Recruitment of foster parents
- Budget overspend of £8.8 million predominantly caused by underfunding by the Government for adult social care
- Additional funding for roads with a particular emphasis on rural roads
- Meeting with DEFRA on safeguarding county farms

015/2627/20 Items for next meeting

As listed in the minutes.

015/2627/21 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings:

Monday 5th October at Westleigh URC Hall

Wednesday 18th November at Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall

Monday 4th January at Westleigh URC Hall

Councillor Ellis-Brookes had given her apologies for the meetings on 5 October 2026 and it was noted that Councillor Box would be attending the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee meeting.

Other meetings/events:

Emergency Planning Public Meeting venue TBA

TBA - Autumn Clean Up Day

Wednesday 9th December at Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall - Precept Open session

Councillor Forward closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed _____ **Date:** _____
Chair

Community Hubs

Community Hubs focussed on whole society resilience given the cuts emergency service and the view that everyone was responsible for their own resilience.

It was particularly relevant in rural communities when there could be long wait times. The Emergency Hub was a place where volunteers could congregate and assist others

The Community Emergency Plan was a larger task to undertake and took time to write and fill the volunteer roles. It could also become quickly outdated whereas the emergency hub was fluid on who turned up on the day and in most instances the first 48 hours of an emergency were crucial.

The concept came from New Zealand when the infrastructure failed following an earthquake and communities had to help themselves.

The concept relied first on households being prepared and thus able to check on their immediate neighbours and then their street – helping those most in need.

The Emergency Hub box contained everything that was needed and once the supervisor role had been taken there were A4 sheets detailing each persons' role.

The frequently asked questions that arose related to:

- Insurance – this was normally covered by the public liability of the building or the Parish Council
- Aim of preserving life – individuals were not open to being penalised in this had been their primary aim in the emergency
- Actions to be undertaken - No-one should ever undertake a task they were not qualified to do. Thus, if a volunteer was a tree surgeon they would be able to undertake tree work but a layman should not.

Much of the focus was on well-being and sharing resources within the community to help everyone deal with the emergency – this could food, baby goods, pet food etc.

Lewis Dyson also provided a copy of the MDDC booklet that provided a 'Flood Guide for Individuals'.

The Westleigh URC would become an Emergency Hub location and it was hoped that the Burlescombe and Westleigh Community Hall would provide a second venue.

Links to more information could be found at:

[Community Emergency Hubs - Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum](#)

[Devon Community Resilience Forum | Devon Communities Together](#)

[Prepare - Prepare](#)

Burlescombe Parish Council communications update

Sept 2026

Communications since last meeting

1. Parish magazine

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

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 August meeting.
- Summer clean-up day success story.
- Housing Needs Survey results.
- Neighbourhood Health Survey.
- MDDC funding for arts, culture, heritage and tourism projects.
- MDDC post Information about MDDC's Crisis & Resilience Fund and Oil Support Scheme

Facebook

Followers: 94

Most popular content:

1. The thank you post with a video of before-and-after photos from the Summer Clean Up day – 587 views, 36 clicks, 8 reactions and 4 comments.
2. Summary from August meeting – 109 views, 95 clicks, 17 reactions.

3. Noticeboards

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

4. Email newsletter

An email newsletter went out on 6 September with links news articles since the previous issue and sharing the agenda for the Sept meeting.

50 people are now subscribed to the newsletter.

Newsletter stats

- 81% per cent of recipients opened the July newsletter
- 12% clicked on a link in the newsletter

Quarry Report September 2026

There have been no quarry liaison meetings since the last Burlescombe Parish Council BPC meeting.

Blasting at Fenacre, Westleigh Quarry, took place on 26th August and 1st September:

- Wednesday 26th August at 12:30pm: The readings at The Gate House were recorded as 1.225 PPV and 103 dB AOP.
- Tuesday 1st September: results yet to be received.

Holcim provided refreshments for the BPC Spring Clean-Up Day held on Saturday 8th August in Burlescombe and Westleigh villages, this was very much appreciated by the volunteers who took part.

On 18th August I sent an email to Holcim following up on actions from Quarry Liaison Group meeting on 20th July:

- Whether Burlescombe Parish Council could use information like the HGV Movements on our website - we want to create an 'about the quarry' page
- Whether Holcim could share information about night movements and blasting directly to an online page to inform the community of activity
- Whether Holcim could hold an open event for the community to ask questions about quarry operations (suggested by Luc at a previous meeting)

I have yet to receive a response and sent a follow-up email on 4th September.

Lucy Elliss-Brookes, Vice Chair, Burlescombe Parish Council

Amenities Working Group (AWG) Report

Monday 17th August 2026 – 7pm to 8pm

Councillors present

Lucy Elliss Brookes

Judy Downing

Emma Forward

Helen Walker

1. Discussion on registering Westleigh URC Hall as a community asset.

Agreed vital to explore this fully as the URC Hall is the only 3rd space in Westleigh and will also feature in our Emergency Plan e.g. warm/cool space, community muster point

Correspondence has been received from URC Synod Solicitor.

Actions

Verify the usage of the hall in the context of church and non church affiliated events (LEB/EF)

Confirm role of Westleigh URC Hall in Parish Emergency Plan and revisit Community Asset

Registration discussion after this is decided.

2. Discussion on schedule of works for the Old Railway Line, Burlescombe (ORL)

In preparation for budget discussions later in the year the AWG discussed the next works that will require expenditure. The following were identified:

- a. Leylandii trees – budgeted for 26/27 financial year. Waiting for electricity board trimming to take place in September before re-quoting process for revised works. Point made that more cost effective to have multiple tree works completed at the same time.

Recommendation: tree report to be revisited to identify which other tree works should be included in the revised quoting process for leylandii removal.

- b. Banks – discussion amongst councillors leading to a **recommendation that no works on banks need to be budgeted for in 27/28 financial year**

- c. Fences – concern that fencing on left hand side of ORL when walking away from Black Bridge is leaning over quite considerably in places. Discussion on whether this fencing needs to be replaced or just removed. Noted that of the £6500 allocated in this financial year for ORL maintenance only £340 has been spent so we should have funds to cover but also noted that they leylandii removal costs are still unknown. Also discussion about what might happen with the fence on the right hand side by the water tower as this will most likely need to be removed to enable the works on the leylandii. Provision for this to be added to leylandii quote

Recommendation: Quotes to be obtained to remove the left hand side fence.

Recommendation: Replacement fencing specification to be added to leylandii quote

- d. Signage – discussion about putting up signs at Tar Plant and Water Tower that inform on their industrial heritage. Warning signs might also be required if we remove the fence on left hand side.

Action – LEB to raise with Holcim possibility of them providing signs for the community on the ORL

3. Charitable Trust Report

Helen Walker put together a very informative paper that was circulated to councillors to educate us on what a charitable trust is and how the various options might work. This paper will also form part of this report.

Our motivation for exploring this avenue is that a Parish Council has limited options and has to abide by strict rules around fundraising. Significant future expenditure is expected for maintaining amenities e.g. Westleigh Play Park equipment reaching end of life, plus future expenditure might be

required for improving amenities e.g. if the Parish Council does take on Burlescombe Play Park and Open Space from MDDC as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

With the current arrangement of the Parish Council having sole responsibility for these costs a large proportion will have to be raised via the precept (the part of the Council Tax that provides Parish Council funds).

A key point in setting up a charitable trust is that it would be completely independent of the Parish Council therefore providing many more options for fundraising through for example sponsorship by local businesses and access to a wider range of community grants.

A charitable trust would require appointing trustees to run it so will need significant community involvement to be viable, however the Parish Council could be able to offer support if required.

The other unknown of setting up a Charitable Trust is the costs involved and this would need to be thoroughly investigated beforehand.

The AWG agreed that our next step in evaluating this process would be to reach out to other Parish Councils who have done something similar to learn about their experiences.

There will be a further discussion on this at the next Full Council meeting on 9th September.

The other point raised was \$106 money that has currently been earmarked by MDDC for replacing the safety matting at Burlescombe Play Park.

Action – to ask Clerk to follow up on when these works will be carried out.

MDDC PARISH REPORT

It's been a much busier month than expected given its summer holidays. At time of writing the weather is finally beginning to break and we are receiving a little of the much-needed rain.

1. Resignation 24/8/26 Cllr Luke Taylor former leader of Mid Devon District Council submitted his resignation.

2.Changes to Cabinet Cllr Matt Fletcher will be replaced by Cllr Lloyd Knight with effect from the 15/8/26. He will take over the same Cabinet responsibility (i.e. the People Development portfolio).

3. Local Government Reorganisation The government has allocated £900,000 in transition support for each new unitary announced and areas will receive a further £150,000 per unitary authority to support the recruitment of directors of statutory upper-tier services such as adult social care, children's services and public health.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon continues to move forward, with key leadership and electoral roles now assigned across the four future unitary councils. For Devon Council, Andy Bates and Stephen Walford have been named Deputy Senior Responsible Officers, while Ken Miles will serve as Returning Officer.

A pan-Devon Programme Management Office is expected to be established by **1 September 2026** to coordinate work across all 11 councils and support delivery of the reorganisation programme.

Council leaders have stressed that maintaining services for residents remains the priority during the transition. Detailed work is still ongoing, and some decisions, including future staffing locations, are not expected until after the election of shadow authorities in **May 2027**, with further clarity anticipated from **autumn 2027**. Staff and communities will continue to receive updates through ongoing engagement and the Future Devon website.

4. Warding - as a result of Local Government Reorganisation On **20 July 2026**, the Government told Devon, Plymouth and Torbay councils how many councillors each new unitary authority would have and required interim warding proposals to be submitted by **1 August 2026**. This gave councils about **20 working days** to prepare proposals using existing boundaries and fixed councillor numbers.

The interim arrangements have been designed to ensure lawful elections and effective governance when the new authorities are created. Because of the tight timescale, there was limited opportunity for councillor involvement, public consultation or formal decision-making.

Mid Devon has now shared its proposed arrangements with members, and a Devon-wide submission will be made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Further boundary reviews, public consultation and any necessary Community Governance Reviews, including changes to town and parish councils, will take place after the new authorities are established.

5. Community Asset Transfers The asset transfer work continues to progress following the close of the Expressions of Interest stage, with around 80 submissions received under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy. These are now being reviewed by officers to assess compliance with the policy and to gather supporting information on the assets concerned.

The Corporate Strategic Asset Advisory Group (CSAAG) is being convened to consider the Expressions of Interest and make recommendations on the next steps. A report to Scrutiny will set out the submissions received and whether they meet the policy requirements.

The intention is for CSAAG's recommendations to be considered by Cabinet in September before a final decision is made by Full Council. Where approved, work will then begin on progressing any agreed sales, leases or transfers, with completion targeted before the end of the financial year.

6. The recent Community Network meeting brought together local voluntary, community and public sector organisations to strengthen relationships, share information and explore opportunities for joint working.

Discussions highlighted common challenges, particularly around accessing funding, and the importance of maintaining strong links between organisations supporting local residents.

A key focus was the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with participants keen to understand how future changes could affect the organisations they represent and the communities they serve. There was also discussion about promoting Tiverton more effectively and improving awareness of the services, facilities and attractions available locally.

7. Local Green Spaces Mid Devon District Council is preparing Plan Mid Devon, a new local plan covering the period 2026–2046. The plan will guide future development and the use of land across the district, while identifying those places and environmental assets that warrant protection.

As part of the evidence gathering for Plan Mid Devon, the Council is undertaking a review of Local Green Space designations across the district and inviting parish councils to nominate additional sites for consideration. This will take the form of a 6-week consultation in September and October, with details circulated through Parish Clerks.

Local Green Space is a specific planning designation established through national planning policy. It provides particular protection for green areas that are demonstrably special to the communities they serve. It is not a general designation for every valued open space, recreation ground, playing field or area of countryside. To qualify, land must satisfy all the relevant tests in the National Planning Policy Framework, be supported by proportionate evidence and have a clearly defined boundary capable of being shown on the policies map. The purpose of this consultation is to identify any additional green areas that parish councils consider may meet the national requirements for designation as Local Green Space. For each new site proposed, the Council will require a clearly defined boundary map, information about the site and its ownership, and sufficient evidence to demonstrate why the particular space is close to the community it serves, demonstrably special and of particular local significance, local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

The submission of a site does not mean that it will automatically be designated. The Council will assess all nominations and will consult further when preparing Plan Mid Devon, the new Local Plan.

8. Local residents and councillors were invited to step inside Mid Devon District Council's latest affordable housing development at School Close, Bampton. Delivered in partnership with ZED PODS, the completed development has transformed 10 outdated council properties into 18 high-quality affordable homes.

Read the full press release at:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/new-zero-carbon-council-homes-showcased-during-bampton-preview/>

9. Rent Error Update A rent calculation error, identified during an audit in 2024, affected around 1,200 Mid Devon social housing tenants who were overcharged rent and a further 1,600 tenants who were undercharged. The issue dates back to 2002 and was found to be similar to problems experienced by a number of other local authorities. Following legal advice, the council has agreed to refund up to six years of overpayments, despite the error extending over a longer period.

An update to Cabinet on **4 August 2026** reported that **402** tenants had received refunds totalling £330,210, including £13,775 in compensation. The process has been particularly complex where rent payments were linked to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. To date, the council has prioritised cases involving tenants who do not receive benefits, while also carrying out extensive engagement through letters, telephone calls, home visits, website updates and drop-in sessions.

The council has confirmed that it will not seek repayment from tenants who were undercharged rent as a result of the error. However, cases involving Universal Credit remain dependent on decisions by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding how any overpayments should be handled. The Housing Regulator continues to be kept informed, with the latest meeting taking place on 21 July 2026.

10. Meadow Lane Transport Changes As part of the **Cullompton Relief Road project**, a new pedestrian crossing has been installed on Meadow Lane near the leisure centre, and a shared cycle and pedestrian path is being created between Station Road and Exeter Road via Meadow Lane and CCA land.

Before the relief road opens at the end of next year, double yellow lines will be introduced along the full length of Meadow Lane. These measures will improve visibility, maintain traffic flow, and help ensure Meadow Lane operates safely and efficiently. While this will reduce parking for some residents and leisure centre users, alternative and additional parking options are being explored. Parking demand in the area continues to be monitored, and further updates will be provided in due course.

11. New Shared-use of bridge marks transfer of land to Cullompton Community Association. A key milestone has been reached on the Cullompton Relief Road scheme, with the successful installation of a new shared-use bridge on Cullompton Community Association next phase of the project.

Read the full press release at:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/new-shared-use-bridge-marks-transfer-of-land-to-cullompton-community-association/>

12. Grants relaunched to support town centre shopfront improvements. Businesses and organisations in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton town centres can now apply for funding to improve and enhance their shopfronts, following the relaunch of Mid Devon District Council's shopfront grant scheme. Grants are available up to £2,500 covering up to 70% of eligible project costs.

Read the full press release at:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/shopfront-refresh-grants-now-open/>

13. Here are the some of the events we supported via the Creative Communities Scheme!

As the Creative Communities Grant Scheme continues to grow, so does its impact. Below is a snapshot of the inspiring work made possible through the programme - projects that enrich public spaces, strengthen community connections, and highlight the unique character of Mid Devon. These stories illustrate the real difference our investment is making on the ground.

To read the full press release: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/creative-communities-good-news-stories/>

14. Thousands of new public EV charger to be installed across Devon Almost 3,000 publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging sockets are set to be installed across Devon as part of a major £30 million investment aimed at expanding the region's charging network. Devon County Council and Torbay Council have appointed three specialist companies: Believ, char.gy and Wenea, to deliver, operate and maintain the new infrastructure over the coming years.

The scheme will see charging points installed in a range of locations, including residential streets, public car parks, parish and community car parks, and on existing lamp columns. The first installations are expected to begin within the next few months.

15. Mid Devon District Council's residents' app is proving popular, with nearly 3,000 downloads since it launched in June this year. The free app is designed to make accessing council services quicker and easier. Residents can use it to report issues, read council news and receive waste and recycling collection reminders.

Residents can also search and comment on planning applications, contact local councillors, access postcode-specific information and find useful local services, all from their smartphone or mobile device.

Read the full press release: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents-making-the-most-of-mid-devons-new-app/>

16. Fly-tipping The best way to report Fly-tipping any fly-tipping is to use the online form below, so that there is a formal record of the report and the relevant details and location can be provided to the team:

[Fly tipping - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/fly-tipping/)

Once submitted, the report will come through to Street Scene for review.

17. A regular trader at Tiverton Pannier Market is celebrating after her business, Devon & Somerset Craft Collective, was selected as a winner of Theo Paphitis' prestigious Small Business Sunday (SBS) initiative. Deanna Cranmer, who runs Devon & Somerset Craft Collective from Tiverton Pannier Market, was announced as one of last week's winners after showcasing her business through social media.

Read the full press release at:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/tiverton-pannier-market-trader-celebrates-theo-paphitis-small-business-sunday-win/>

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