Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council
On Monday, 5 October 2026 at Westleigh URC Hall

Present: Councillors Forward (Chair), Downing, McDonald (until 8.30pm), Smith and Walker together with MDDC Councillor Westcott and the Clerk.

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

016/2627/1 Apologies
Apologies had been received from Councillors Box and Elliss-Brookes. Their absences were duly authorised. MDDC District Councillor Lock and DCC Councillor Clist had given their apologies.

016/2627/2 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations
There were no declarations of interest or dispensations requested.

016/2627/3 Minutes of Previous meetings
The draft minutes of the meeting on 9 September 2026 had been circulated to all councillors and published on the website and noticeboards. These minutes were duly approved with the following amendment shown in bold:

016/2627/16 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 ***2037****.*

The Chair duly initialled and signed by the meetings.

016/2627/4 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:

The Quarry
Concern was expressed regarding damage to homes from the quarry blasts with cracks appearing in walls and the apparent lack of assistance from planning departments and the Government. Quarries appear to only be considered as commercial entities not relating to housing stock.

A tree within the boundary of the quarry appeared to be in a dangerous condition.

Note: The Parish Council would raise these issues at the next Quarry Liaison Meeting.

Bike ramps/ORL
Residents asked for permission to build bike ramps on the ORL.

The Chair moved agenda 016/2627/8 "To receive a report from the Chair and the discussion on the bike ramps" forward so that the item could be discussed in full. For ease of reporting the discussion is covered in agenda item 016/2627/8 in these minutes.

016/2627/6 Emergency Planning
Review of updated Emergency Plan including feedback from Parish Councillors.
The Clerk had circulated the updated Emergency Plan to include items raised by Councillor Elliss-Brookes and MDDC's resilience officer. It was noted that the canal, quarry and farms had procedures in place. Parish Councillors were asked to provide any further input to the Clerk.

Review of Household Emergency Plan leaflet.
The Clerk had circulated a draft of the Household Emergency Plan leaflet. Parish Councillors were asked to ensure their details were correct.
Funding for the leaflet would be requested from Devon Communities Together. The leaflets would be distributed by hand in the village areas and by post to outlying areas.
It was noted that the Quarry had a siren that it would use in an emergency.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor McDonald seconded the proposal that a spend of £200 be agreed to produce 750 copies with funds being applied for from Devon Communities Together and this was unanimously agreed.

Update on Community Emergency Hubs.
Westleigh URC had agreed in writing to be a Community Emergency Hub and Burlescombe and Westleigh Community Hall had confirmed they would open in an emergency. Further discussions would take place.

The date for meeting the public meeting would be Saturday, 28 November 2026 from 1.30 to4pm at Burlescombe and Westleigh Community Hall.

016/2627/7 Training
Information on the Security and Safety Awareness presentation had been circulated to Parish Councillors. 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.

016/2627/8 To receive a report from the Chair
Delivery of fast fibre
No update.

Neighbourhood Plan/Housing Needs Survey
The final Housing Needs Survey report had been made available on the website.

Neighbourhood Priority Statement
Councillor Smith had analysed the survey and produced a report which forms part of these minutes. The key takeaways were infrastructure before development and the need for parking and green space. Smaller schemes would be preferred over larger developments.
It was noted that a recent appeal had been dismissed on the grounds of sustainability and that residents should not have to rely on their cars to access services.

It was felt that a fresh set of eyes should now look at the Neighbourhood Priority Statement and bring forward comments to the November meeting. The use of current policy numbers would add weight to the document. Further consultation would be required to ensure that residents were content with the proposed wording.

Business Continuity Plan
The Clerk had advised this was a work in progress. It would require input from councillors.

Registering assets of community value
Discussions were ongoing.

Biodiversity Net Gain
The Parish Council's statutory duties for considering biodiversity are covered for this month under item **016/2627/16 "To receive** a report from the Amenities Working Group"

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

Civility and Respect Pledge
The Civility and Respect Pledge Certificate had been received and needed to be signed by the Chair and posted on the website.

Bike ramps at Burlescombe Open Space
MDDC have previously advised that improvised bike ramps on their land would pose a significant insurance risk.

The Parish Council recognised the need for the provision of facilities for older children and the positive effects of cycling in general.. Children should be encouraged to play and exercise in a safe environment and this requires off road facilities due to the number of lorries on the local roads.

The Parish Council advised that permission to use the ORL could not be given until such times as a full risk assessment and advice on the requirements and cost of insurance had been carried out/received.

The Parish Council has to consider the safety of all users of the ORL and its purpose as a wildlife area.

There could be possible options for a bike ramp area in the parish and residents were asked to come to the next Parish Council meeting on 18 November 2026 with ideas. The Parish Council would also beexploring what might be available and would consult on options including with British Cycling. The Parish Council would look to start the meeting in November 30 minutes earlier to allow time for a full discussion.

It was also noted that the Parish Council had expressed an interest to MDDC in taking on the Burlescombe recreation field and play area and further information was awaited.

The Parish Council wished to work with residents to find a permanent solution for the provision of facilities for older children.

It was also noted that there was a 'no cycling' sign on the gate going into the ORL. The need for this sign would be reviewed by the Parish Council at the next meeting.

Creative Community Grants
The possibility of a grant being used to create a new ORL group would be considered.

Review Parish Meeting / event dates
Given the Emergency Plan and precept meeting, no autumn clear-up would take place. A date in the spring would be put in the diary.
Dates for future Parish Council meetings would be circulated.

016/2627/9 To consider the Parish Council's response to the following planning applications and receive decision notices:
Planning applications:
New:

No new 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

It was noted that this application was not on agenda for the MDDC October Planning Meeting as the tree report has only just been completed.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to call a meeting of the Parish Council Planning Committee to discuss a further response once the tree report was online.

Decision notices:

Appeal Decision 6011431 26/00151/PIP Land at NGR 305520 114082 North of Waterloo Court Uffculme
The appeal notice was dismissed.
The Planning Inspectors decision has been forwarded to Parish Councillors and could be useful when responding to future planning applications.

Other matters:
Plan Mid Devon Parish Councillor & Clerk Meeting
Councillor Forward advised that the meeting had been extremely useful and a report had been circulated to Parish Councillors and would form part of these minutes.

The key take aways were:
a) Be aware of neighbourhood parishes and their planning applications
b) Join forces with neighbourhood parishes and create a planning cluster
c) Look at where housing could be built – further development will take place to meet Government targets and what infrastructure was required to make that housing work for all residents.

The next consultation on the Mid Devon Plan was likely to be 19 October 2026.

Local Green Spaces
Given the extension to the consultation until January, Parish Councillors would consider the questionnaire and a response formulated at the next meeting.

East Cullompton and the Garden Village
Consultation is live.
East Cullompton & Culm Garden Village | Let's Talk Mid Devon
The Parish Council would consider its response at the next meeting having studied the questionnaire.

Rural and Community Housing Seminar 2026
The Parish Council did not attend this event on Friday, 2 October 2026.

Questionnaire – Mid-Devon District Council – Housing and Economic Needs Assessment
Councillor Forward undertook to respond to the questionnaire.

Mid Devon District Council – Local Plan Viability Assessment - Stakeholder Providers Survey (DSP26970)
The Clerk advised that a response submitted and circulated to Parish Councillors

016/2627/10 Highways Matters/Footpaths
10.1 Roads
Councillor McDonald and Councillor Clist would exchange available dates for a meeting.

10.2 Speed Limits / Speeding
The Clerk advised that no update had been received from DCC Highways.

10.3 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 – no update received both Clerk and NHO has chased

Water from the garages, Burlescombe
Ongoing investigations – trial excavations needed – handed to MDDC Housing Service

Drains at Cracker Corner
Update awaited

Road Repairs - Appledore Hamlet to the Somerset Border
The works will take place from Monday 21st September until Friday 6th November from 1900hrs, weather permitting.

Road surface on approach to A38 after Burlescombe
Response awaited

Signpost at Westleigh
Reported to DCC Highways – awaiting response

Holbrook Lane Bridge which carries Holbrook Lane over the A361 below.
To enable the inspection of the bridge, we are planning to implement temporary road closure of the A361 eastbound on slip from Holbrook Lane, Sampford Peverell, EX16 7EQ for 1 night from the Thursday 15th October 2026 to Friday 16th October 2026 between the hours of 20.00 and 06.00. There will be an alternative route in place via, *Holbrook Lane Bridge, Lower Town, Turnpike, High Street, Post Hill, Bundells Road, Heathcoat Way, A361*.

Councillor McDonald had circulated a report on the Traffic Joint Working Group meeting in September and the Parish Council RESOLVED to support the petition for the reduction of the speed limit on the Uffculme Strait. There would be a meeting with Rachel Gilmour, MP to discuss speed limits and other associated traffic problems on 8 October 2026.

10.4 Footpaths
Councillor Smith advised that:

a) The broken finger post at Fenacre had been reported
b) The hole in the ground at Canonsleigh had been reported and it was thought to be as a result of an old leat under the Abbey. It was likely a temporary closure order would be issued whilst the matter was investigated by the county archaeologist and Historic England.

11.5 Road Warden Scheme/Snow Warden Scheme/Flood Warden Scheme
Councillor McDonald advised there was nothing to report.

South West Water
Councillor McDonald had provided a report on water testing that forms part of these minutes.

A pungent smell at Pugham had been reported and this now appears to have been dealt with. The nitrate levels at Fenacre were high and could affect the amount of oxygen in the water.

The Parish Council RESOLVED that it was happy to attend a meeting of local parishes to discuss the issue of pollution and the health of the waterways and put forward a vote of no confidence in South West Water.

16/2627/11 Financial matters:
The Parish Council noted the following:

11.1 Financial Report 2026-27
These figures were produced on 28 September 2026. Revised figures will be brought to the meeting.

Lloyds Bank

Current account balance at 31 August 2026			£313.94	
Less payments				
1/9/26 Charges			£ 4.25	
Receipts				
Current account balance at 28 September 2026			**£309.69**	

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

Unity

Current account balance at 31 August 2026			£4952.23	
Payments				
01-Sep-26	S/O to: Countrywide	SJB016	-216.84	
15-Sep-26	B/P to: PKF	SB20261550	-252.00	
15-Sep-26	B/P to: HMRC	475PM01737213	-112.42	
15-Sep-26	B/P to: Clerk	EXP AUG26	-25.00	
15-Sep-26	B/P to: Clerk	Aug-26	-399.80	
15-Sep-26	B/P to: Westleigh URC	AUG MEETING	-14.00	
15-Sep-26	B/P to: Burlescombe Hall	MEETING 9/9/26	-27.00	-1047.06
Receipts				
Current account balance at 28 September 2026			**£3905.17**	

Deposit account balance at 31 August 2026			£36940.24	
Payments				
Receipts				
Deposit account balance at 28 September 2026			**£36940.24**	

The cumulative bank reconciliation for the period 1 April to 30 September 26 had been circulated to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting and was duly signed by the Chair.

The budget monitoring information for Months 6 had been produced and circulated to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. An adjustment had been made to show the payment of funds into the agreed reserves which reduced the general fund and increased the percentage of the expenditure in line with budget decisions.

Payments to be authorised:

Clerk expenses/mileage (September)	£ 34.90	
Clerk wages (September 26)	£479.32*	
HMRC PAYE (September 26)	£146.89	
Chair expenses (printing)	£119.96	
Countrywide (ground maintenance)	£216.84	DD

*includes pay increase

Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that the above payments be made and this was unanimously agreed.

11.2 External Auditor's Report
The External Auditor asked for a revised calculation for Box 3 and this produced and accepted and has been posted on the website.

The response to Section 2, Box 11 was incorrect and should be 'yes'. The wording had been changed for 2025/26.
This is noted on the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26.

This certificate together with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been posted on the website.

Defibrillators
The Clerk advised the invoice was awaited for the spare defibrillator pads.
The handover is being undertaken.

Contact with Lloyds Bank/Financial Ombudsman
The case is ongoing – further information awaited from Lloyds Bank.

Other matters:
- Noticeboards and their upkeep
In the absence of Councillor Box, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

The Clerk asked that all Parish Councillors consider possible expenditure in the Parish for 2027/28 to feed into the budget and precept calculation which would be discussed at the November meeting.

016/2627/12 To receive a report a report on Parish Council Communications
Councillor Smith's report is given as an addendum to these minutes.

016/2627/13 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 .

016/2627/14 To receive a report on the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee
In the absence of Councillor Box who was attending the GWC JAC meeting, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

016/2627/15 To receive a report on the Quarries
Councillor Downing advised that the next quarry liaison meeting would take place on 19 October 2026. Councillor Elliss-Brookes report is given as an addendum to these minutes.

It was noted that the smell from the Asphalt Plant had reduced and this was possibly due to a new filter.
Action: Clerk to write to the quarry and ask

Concern was again expressed over litter on the route taken by the lorries and this would be followed up. Holcombe Rogus were also experiencing more litter on their section of the lorry route.
Action: Draft letter and circulate

016/2627/16 To receive a report from the Amenities Working Group
Councillor Forward referred to the quote(s) listed in the agenda for the reduction in height or removal of the leylandii trees at the ORL.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the proposal that the quote of £1,620.00 including VAT for the removal of the leylandii be accepted and that the work be carried out as soon as possible. All Parish Councillors were in favour of this proposal and it was duly agreed.
Action: Clerk to advise contractor

Councillor Forward referred to the quote(s) listed in the agenda for the replacement of fencing at the ORL. Given the imminent Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the Parish Council RESOLVED to await the survey report before considering areas to be fenced. The fence being down could facilitate any habitat improvement works.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the proposal that the second quote of £1,230.00 excluding VAT for the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal be accepted and that the work be carried out as soon as possible. All Parish Councillors were in favour of this proposal and it was duly agreed. The cost of this survey would be covered by the grant already received from Holcim's Wildlife Fund
Action: Clerk to advise contractor

During a recent meeting at the ORL, the question of fire risk had been posed. It was noted that fire was covered by household insurance and the Parish Council would only be liable if its actions resulted in a fire being started.

Report from Councillor Walker
The report on Charitable Trusts would be considered at the November meeting.

Matting at Burlescombe Play Area
It was noted MDDC are scheduled to replace the matting in this financial year using all of the S106 monies.

Other matters
Councillor Forward advised that the replacing Westleigh Play Park fence had been completed.

016/2627/17 To receive a report from MDDC Councillors Westcott and Lock
Councillors Westcott raised the following points: and Lock no report was given.
The Town and Parish Report prepared by MDDC Councillor DuChesne forms part of these minutes.

016/2627/18 To receive a report from DCC Councillor Simon Clist
In the absence of Councillor Clist, no report was given.

016/2627/19 Items for next meeting
As listed in the minutes.

016/2627/20 Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings
Parish Council meetings:
Wednesday 18th November at Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall – **6.30pm start**
Monday 4th January at Westleigh URC Hall

Other meetings/events:
Emergency Planning Public Meeting – 28 November 2026 at Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall

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

Councillor Forward closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed _____ Date: _____
Chair

Reports from Councill McDonald

Joint Traffic Working Group Meeting.

15/09/26

I attended the meeting on behalf of Burlescombe Parish Council. The main topic of conversation was the raising of a petition to reduce the speed limit on Uffculme Straight from 60mph to 40mph. The wording of the petition was agreed, and this will be circulated to all neighbouring parish councils by their clerks for discussion and adoption if agreed. The aim is to then publish the petition on the various council's websites / social media in order to garner signatures.

The second major discussion was around the impact of development in and around junctions 27 and 28 of the M5, and the impact these developments will have on the road network and associated infrastructure. The details of the planned meeting of parishes to discuss these developments was circulated to members. The date of the next meeting was agreed – 19/01/27

Water testing 18/09/26

As part of a campaign by FreshWaterWatchUK, Councillor Smith and I took some water quality readings from a couple of locations within the parish.

We tested for the presence of nitrates and phosphates. Information on nitrates and phosphates, and their effects on freshwater, have been attached to this report.

The two locations tested were the small stream near to Pugham Farm, accessed via the public highway, and Fenacre Water, just south of the wastewater treatment works, accessible from the public footpath. The concentrations of nitrates and phosphates at Pugham were low, although there is currently a very pungent smell coming from this stream, which will be reported to the Environment Agency. Although the levels of phosphates were low at Fenacre, nitrates showed as very high, indicting reduced oxygen levels in the water and a potential risk to the ecology of the waterway.

The results were uploaded to the FreshWaterWatch website, where countrywide measurements and trends will be available to study.

Great UK WaterBlitz Results | FreshWater Watch

Burlescombe Parish Council
Communications update
Oct 2026

Communications since last meeting

1. Parish magazine

A summary of September's meeting is in the October 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 Sept meeting.
- Fence down on ORL and replacement of middle Wesleigh playpark fence.
- Survey to feed into our Neighbourhood Priority Statement.
- A38 night closures.
- Local Government Reorganisation paused.
- Preparing for emergencies- household plans, hubs, etc.
- Agenda for this meeting

Facebook
Followers: 94

Most popular content:

1. Let us know your views on future development - 589 views, 48 clicks.
2. Works update (ORL fence and Westleigh fence - 59 views, 5 clicks.

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 18 September with updates and links news articles. 50 people are subscribed to the newsletter.

Newsletter stats

- 84% per cent of recipients opened the September newsletter
- 39% clicked on a link in the newsletter

Welcome to my September update. There has been a great deal going on across the district over the past few weeks and I have tried to highlight the items most likely to be of interest to parish councils, together with opportunities to get involved and have your say on future plans for Mid Devon.

This report isn't just about what's happening in our own parish. Increasingly, we're being encouraged to work together across Mid Devon, share ideas and learn from what's happening elsewhere. Some of the items included may not affect us directly today, but they could well do in the future, and there is often value in seeing how other communities are tackling similar challenges and making the most of new opportunities.

Local Government Reorganisation

Mid Devon District Council has welcomed the Government's decision to pause and review proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Devon. The review follows updated legal advice and will consider how local government reform fits with the Government's wider plans for devolution.

The District Council had previously raised concerns with the Secretary of State about the speed of the process and the limited opportunity for meaningful local involvement in decisions that could significantly affect community representation. Particular concern was expressed about protecting community identity and ensuring that rural areas continue to have a strong voice in local decision-making.

Council Leader David Wulff welcomed the pause, describing it as an opportunity to reassess the best way forward for Devon. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that any future arrangements preserve local democracy, provide sustainable funding for councils, and allow all communities, including rural areas, to benefit from future investment and economic growth.

The Council has indicated that it will continue to work with Government and local partners as discussions on devolution and local government reform develop.

National Planning Policy Framework Update

The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 17 August 2026, which will have a significant influence on how councils prepare Local Plans and determine planning applications. The changes place a stronger emphasis on plan-making, strategic planning across wider areas, housing delivery, economic growth, and action on both the climate and ecological emergencies

One important change is the introduction of national development management policies, which are expected to carry considerable weight in planning decisions. The new framework also reinforces the need for councils to adopt up-to-date Local Plans more quickly and sets out a greater role for Strategic Development Strategies to help coordinate growth, infrastructure and long-term planning across larger areas.

Of particular interest to Mid Devon is the continued focus on tackling climate change. The framework supports stronger policies on climate mitigation and adaptation, and there are opportunities through the new Local Plan to consider measures such as higher energy efficiency standards, net zero development, renewable energy generation and improved resilience to climate impacts.

You can read the revised NPPF here National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK

Plan Mid Devon Update

Work is underway on **Plan Mid Devon**, the new Local Plan that will guide future development across the district. Information is available on the Council website and the Let's Talk Mid Devon engagement hub.

The Council is working to the Government's new 30-month plan-making timetable, with **adoption currently scheduled for April 2029**. Key milestones include:

- **October 2026**: Publication of the Gateway 1 self-assessment.
- **January to March 2027**: Consultation on proposed plan content and supporting evidence.
- **January to March 2028**: Consultation on the draft Local Plan.
- **September 2028**: Submission of the plan for independent examination.
- **April 2029**: Planned adoption of Plan Mid Devon.

There will be several opportunities for residents, businesses and parish councils to comment as the plan develops, and I would encourage anyone with an interest in Mid Devon's future to take part in the consultations.

Local Green Space Consultation – Opportunity for Parish Councils

You will find attached the **Plan Mid Devon Local Green Space Parish Consultation Package**, which has now been issued as part of the preparation of Plan Mid Devon, the new Local Plan covering 2026 to 2046.

This is an opportunity for parish and town councils to nominate additional green spaces that are particularly important to their communities for consideration as **Local Green Space** designation. The designation can provide additional protection for sites that are demonstrably special to local people.
A few key points:

- This is aimed at identifying **new Local Green Space nominations**. Existing designated Local Green Spaces do not need to be re-submitted.
- Not every valued open space will qualify. Sites must meet the national criteria and be shown to be significant to the local community.
- For each nomination, councils will need to provide a map showing the site boundary and supporting evidence explaining why the space is special and locally significant.
- The Council will assess all nominations before deciding whether any should be taken forward through the Local Plan process.

I understand that the consultation period has been extended, with the current closing date expected to be **7 January 2027**, giving parish and town councils additional time to consider potential nominations and gather supporting information.
If you are aware of green spaces that play an important role in the life of your community, I would encourage you to review the attached information and consider whether a nomination may be appropriate.

New Business Rates Relief for EV Charging Points

Businesses operating eligible electric vehicle (EV) charging point sites may be able to benefit from a new Government-funded Business Rates Relief scheme. The scheme offers **100% business rates relief until 31 March 2036**, with the possibility of relief being backdated to **1 April 2023** where qualifying conditions are met
The relief is intended to encourage investment in public EV charging infrastructure as part of the transition to lower-emission transport. Not every charging point will qualify. The scheme is generally aimed at dedicated EV charging sites that have their own Business Rates assessment and are operational and open to customers.
Mid Devon District Council is currently updating its arrangements for administering the scheme. Businesses seeking further information can contact the Council's Revenues team at **revenues@middevon.gov.uk** or speak to the Council for
Business rates: Electric Vehicle Charging Points Relief – local authority guidance - GOV.UK

Creative Communities Grants Now Available

Community groups, charities, businesses, event organisers, and town and parish councils are being encouraged to apply for funding through Mid Devon District Council's Creative Communities Grant Scheme. The scheme offers grants of up to £5,000 for partnership projects and up to £1,000 for individual organisations to support tourism, arts, culture and heritage initiatives across Mid Devon. The aim is to help bring new life to towns and villages, celebrate local heritage, encourage visitors, and strengthen community connections.
Projects might include heritage events and trails, music and arts festivals, cultural celebrations, seasonal events, food festivals, or other creative activities that benefit the local community. Priority will be given to projects that can be delivered by 31 March 2027 and demonstrate a positive local impact.
The funding provides a valuable opportunity for local organisations to bring creative ideas to life while boosting community pride and attracting visitors.
Further details and application forms are available through Mid Devon District Council's Love Your Town Centre funding programme. Interested organisations can also contact funding@middevon.gov.uk for more information.

Free expert support for Devon businesses

On 14 September 2026, Devon County Council announced the launch of a new programme offering **free business support, mentoring and advice** to businesses, entrepreneurs and young people across Devon.

For businesses in Mid Devon, support is being delivered through the **Devon Business Support Programme**, which provides access to experienced business advisers and one-to-one guidance. Support is available for both start-ups and established businesses and can cover:

- Business growth and development
- Starting a business
- Funding and finance management
- Digital tools and productivity
- Marketing and sales
- Leadership and people management
- Sustainability and net zero initiatives

The programme is intended to help improve business growth, productivity and innovation across the county. Businesses from any sector, including farming and agricultural enterprises, are eligible to seek support.

The announcement also highlighted the **Festival of Business**, hosted by Devon County Council and the Federation of Small Businesses, bringing together more than 100 local businesses, speakers and support organisations to share advice and opportunities for growth.

As always, if there is anything in this report you would like to discuss, or if there are issues affecting your community that you feel I should be aware of, please do get in touch. I value hearing directly from parish councils, clerks and residents.

Cllr Gwen DuChesne
District Councillor for Halberton Ward
Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement
GDuChesne@middevon.gov.uk