

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Sampford Spiney Church**
On **Thursday 17th July 2025** at **7.30 pm**

Present: Cllr. J. Sturmer, Chair of the Council, Cllr. E. Cole, Cllr. R. Philips and Cllr I Walton

In Attendance: Caroline Metcalf (Clerk)

39/25. Apologies for absence

Cllr. A. Davies, Cllr. R. Pearson-Bunt and Cllr. S. Ware sent their apologies. Accepted by the Council.

40/25. Declaration of Interest

None.

41/25. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

42/25. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors

Both Councillors were not present at the meeting.

43/25. Approval of minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 16th April 2025 and the Council meeting held on the 25th of June 2025

All agreed to approve the minutes.

44/25. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

A letter outlining the reasons why the Council wishes to have the Parish initials engraved on Ward Bridge was sent to Devon County Council. The Clerk read out the response received from the County Archaeologist and Historic Environment Manager. He confirmed that, having visited the bridge, his advice remains unchanged and he continues to advise against engraving the stonework. He stated: "Although not Listed, I believe the bridge is of Listable quality, and engraving would alter the historic fabric. I would suggest either fixing a metal plaque to the bridge (a simple brass plaque, or something similar to a 'Blue Plaque'), or, as my Highways colleagues have suggested, placing a separate engraved stone beside it."

The Clerk also read out a response from Cllr. Fife Cook, which indicated that he may have misunderstood the Parish Council's proposal. Following discussion, it was agreed to revisit the matter later in the year and to discuss it directly with Cllr. Fife Cook when he attends a future meeting.

Cllr. Sturmer provided an update on the additional boundary stones that are hoped to be placed around the Parish. She will also investigate a tree, which a resident had informed her was planted many years ago as a boundary marker.

- Devon Highways Update

The fingerpost sign, which is still facing the wrong way, has now been reported multiple times, yet no action has been taken. The Clerk was asked to follow this up again.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

- Drake's Café update

Unfortunately, there is not enough local interest to support and nominate the café as a community asset. The Clerk had contacted West Devon Borough Council and the Heritage Officer reply was 'Anyone can apply to Historic England for a building or structure to be listed - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/protect-historic-places/apply-for-listing/>. Any application should provide detail of date, designer, historical associations etc. Reference to the Principles of Selection helps - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/principles-of-selection-for-listing-buildings> I note from the DCC Historic Environment mapping that an associated building (most likely stables?) to the NW on the early OS maps has been demolished. Given the level of alteration it has had I would be very surprised if it would meet the criteria for listing and for that reason, I would not consider an application for listing to be something we would initiate.'

After discussion, it was felt and agreed that the building was not suitable to be nominated to be listed, and no further action would be taken.

- Tiny Wilds School

It was noted that the Council had never received a planning application for a change of use at the premises. The Clerk was asked to contact Cllr. Mark Renders, now Deputy Chair of the Dartmoor National Park Authority, to express the Council's concern about the lack of updates.

45/25. Discuss repairs to Warren Cross tree guard

It was agreed that, as a Whitchurch Down meeting is due to be held next week, Cllrs. Philips and Sturmer will raise the matter with Tavistock Town Council—who own the land—regarding the need to repair the tree guard.

46/25. Discuss the adoption of BT phone boxes at Merrivale (Whitchurch) and Sampford Spiney

All agreed that the Parish Council will adopt both phone boxes. The Clerk was asked to confirm that the electricity supply will not be disconnected. Once the adoption process is complete, the Council will consider and decide on their future use.

The Clerk had previously been asked to investigate insurance costs. Zurich, the Council's insurance provider, was unable to offer specific guidance. After consulting with other Parish and Town Councils, it was suggested that valuations could be based on the prices for which similar boxes are sold online.

Following further discussion, the Clerk was asked to contact Zurich to:

1. Confirm the cost of covering the phone boxes under public liability insurance only, with no rebuild value.
2. Provide a quote for the increase in the annual premium if the phone boxes were to be insured for £3,000 each.

The Council will review both options and make a decision at the next meeting.

47/25. To discuss and consider the provision of a Remembrance Wreath for Sampford Spiney Church

Cllr. Sturmer has spoken with Simon Hill, who confirmed that the names of Parishioners who died in the First World War are commemorated on the Horrabridge War Memorial and there were no Parishioners who fell during the Second World War. At the time the memorial was erected, Horrabridge was part of Sampford Spiney, hence is why their names appear on the memorial. Following discussion, it was agreed that a representative of the Parish will lay a wreath at the Horrabridge War Memorial, the wreath will then be brought back and placed in the Church.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPE PARISH COUNCIL

The Council will also continue to lay a wreath at St. Andrew's Church, Whitchurch. It was agreed that Cllr. Sturmer will lay the wreath at Andrew's Church and ask Cllr. Davies, as Deputy Chair of the Council, to lay the wreath at Horrabridge.

48/25. To review and approve the first quarter budget report and bank reconciliation ending 30th June 2025

After review all agreed to approved.

49/25. Approve Invoices for payment.

- Clerk's June salary – £198.20
- HMRC ending 5 July 2025 - £43
- Whitchurch Community Hall hire for May 2025 – £32
- Sampford Spiney Church hire for meetings - £450

All approved payments.

50/25. To review the remaining Council meeting dates for 2025

Cllr. Sturmer wished to reschedule the Council meeting scheduled for 26th November to 10th December. All agreed.

All agreed to hold the first Council meeting of 2026 on 14th January 2026.

51/25. Correspondence

1. Email regarding the APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) call for evidence on access to nature – an opportunity to stop off-roading:

We wrote to you in early 2022 when Defra was consulting on restricting recreational motor vehicle (4x4s, quad bikes and motorbikes) use of green lanes in National Parks and AONBs, as part of the then Government's response to the Glover Landscapes Review. Thank you for responding then; Defra's analysis of the responses showed that 76% of local authorities (including parish councils) who responded wanted legislation to restrict motor vehicle use of green lanes which are unsealed unclassified roads. This email is to ask you to take a second opportunity to ask for legislation to protect green lanes. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature is asking for ideas for new legislation and/or policy proposals that would enable more people to access green spaces, e.g. by enabling "*more people to make use of existing access opportunities*" including public rights of way, ideas which should help inform the current Government's plans for improving access to nature. This is an opportunity for parish councils whose green lanes are affected by off-roading to provide evidence of the need for new legislation to protect their lanes. Please could you provide your evidence of how recreational motor vehicle use of green lanes hinders other users from using these public rights of way to access nature by completing the APPG's questionnaire at <https://forms.paddleuk.org.uk/live/form/APPGforOutdoorRecreationandAccessToNatureCallforEv/formperma/k5Ver8lwFueolTJeUiFAAHZUe15qFcngHHsXRBHPI3g>. The closing date is 20 July 2025.

All members noted the correspondence and were asked to submit their individual comments by the stated deadline.

52/25. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Thursday 18th September 2025 at Sampford Spiney Church at 7:30 pm.

1. Tiny Wilds School
2. Boundary Stones
3. Nominations for representatives of Whitchurch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.27 pm.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPEd PARISH COUNCIL