

# **PLASTERDOWN GROUPE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Whitchurch Community Hall**  
On **WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025** at **7.45 pm**

**Present:** Cllr R Phillips, Cllr. A. Davies, Cllr I Walton, Cllr E Cole, Cllr. J Sturmer and Cllr. S. Ware

**In Attendance:** Caroline Metcalf (Clerk), Cllr. M. Renders, West Devon Borough Councillor and two members of the public.

## **01/25. To elect a Chair and receive the Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.**

All nominated Cllr. Sturmer as Chair of the Council. Cllr. Sturmer was duly elected as the Chair for the ensuring year.

## **02/25. Apologies**

Cllr. R. Pearson-Bunt sent her apologies, which was accepted by the Council.

## **03/25. Public Question Time**

The members of the public present wished to defer their asking their questions to item 'Discuss and consider BT's proposal to remove phone boxes in Merrivale and Sampford Spiney'.

## **04/25. To elect a Vice-Chair and receive the Vice-Chair's declaration of acceptance of office.**

Cllr. Davies agreed to be duly elected at the Vice-Chair. All approved and agreed.

## **05/25. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr. Walton declared an interest in the item, Projector.

## **06/25. Approval of minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

All agreed to approve the minutes.

## **07/25. Appointment of Finance, HR and Planning Committee Members**

Cllr. Phillips proposed all members of the Council be elected members of the Planning, Finance Committee and HR Committee. Seconded by Cllr. Cole. All agreed.

## **08/25. Appointment of Whitchurch Down Consultative Group Representative**

Cllr R Phillips agreed to continue to be the Council's representative. Cllr J Sturmer to serve as the backup.

## **09/25. Reports from Council representatives attending meetings/events of other organizations.**

Cllr Walton as a Trustee of the Whitchurch Community Hall gave an update:

- It is hoped that a new booking officer will be recruited soon.
- Bookings are now back to pre-covid times.
- Trustees to discuss at their next meeting, where to hang the Portrait of the King.

Cllr. Walton stated that the Trustees had already discussed and agreed not to pursue the purchase and installation of a projector for the Hall; however, those hiring the Hall are welcome to bring their own.

Cllr. Sturmer noted that Devon Communities Together could assist in identifying suitable grants for purchasing a projector. They also provide connections with other Community Halls. She suggested that joining the organisation

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and attending its meetings might be beneficial. After the discussion, it was decided that the Council would benefit from owning a projector. The Clerk will investigate the costs of portable projectors.

## **10/25. Consent to receive agendas by email.**

AGREED by all.

## **11/25. Agree the Council meeting dates June 2025 – May 2026**

A question was raised regarding the number of meetings scheduled. It was explained that having dates arranged in advance provides flexibility, allowing meetings to be cancelled if not required. All members agreed to the proposed schedule.

## **12/25. Approve Financial Regulations**

All agreed to approve the financial regulations.

## **13/25. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:**

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

Cllr. Sturmer provided an update. Following discussions, Cllr. Cole agreed she would contact the landowner to seek permission for the Council to verify whether a boundary stone is located on their property. The Council has also proposed engraving letters on the walls of Ward Bridge to mark the boundary—a suggestion made by the walkers who participated in the Beating the Bounds. To date, the Council has not received a firm no to this proposal. It was therefore agreed to defer the matter again to the next meeting, where it is hoped the newly elected Devon County Councillor will be in attendance, as their assistance will be needed. Consent from Devon County Council would be required before any engraving could proceed. It was also noted that the bridge may become a listed structure. The Clerk had also contacted the Clerk of Burrator Parish Council regarding this matter but has not yet received a response.

## **Devon Highways Updates**

Cllr. Cole reported that a resident has raised a concern regarding a large pole positioned near their property, located outside Brook Crossroads, opposite the telephone box. The Clerk to report.

It was also noted that several large vehicles have been travelling down Plasterdown. While there is a sign at Brook Crossroads stating, "Unsuitable for Large Vehicles," there is no such sign at the other end of Wilmington. It was suggested that satellite navigation systems may be directing lorries down this route. Councillors recalled that there used to be a sign on the verge near the cattle grid at the top of Whymington, which also stated "Unsuitable for Large Vehicles." The Clerk will enquire whether this sign can be reinstated. Plus, another sign, at the end of Fullamoor Lane, Plasterdown is on the ground. The Clerk to report all issues.

The Clerk to report again the fingerpost sign which is still pointing the wrong way.

Cllr. Sturmer noted that, prior to last year's D-Day 80th event at Plasterdown, a local resident had taken the initiative to tidy the area. He suggested that the Council write a note of thanks to the resident in appreciation of their efforts.

- Projector

Previously discussed under 09/25.

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- Drake's Café nomination for Community Asset

The residents who attended the previous meeting, were unable to attend tonight, but stated that they will complete the community asset form 'and we can probably get a petition up and going and prove its heritage, but we will have to crowd fund to buy if we raise enough and there seems to be little support for this in Grenofen and around. And no support to run it'.

## **14/25. Consider request for the Grenofren bus shelter.**

The Clerk read an email from a resident 'Firstly I'd like to thank you for the refurbishment of the Grenofen bus shelter including the bench. The problem we have is we're unable to use the shelter as we have to stand in the road to see an oncoming bus as we can't see through the concrete wall, whereas if a brick sized hole could be made we'd be able to see a bus approaching, then stand in the road to stop it, as unfortunately the buses travel at speed on the only flat stretch of road in this area and sometimes bus drivers don't stop, as they don't expect anyone to be there. It would also be rather nice if the brambles were cut away from around the shelter.'

Discussions took place on various solutions to the issue but there was no concrete idea. Therefore, the Council will continue to investigate further.

## **15/25. Discuss and consider BT's proposal to remove phone boxes in Merrivale and Sampford Spiney**

Two members of the public attended the meeting to voice their objections to BT's proposal to remove the phone boxes. Helen Jackson, a resident of Princetown and author of Dartmoor's Disappearing Red Telephone Boxes, highlighted that these areas are frequented by many visitors, and the phone boxes are critical in case of emergencies. Mobile phone coverage in both locations remains inconsistent and can also vary depending on the weather.

It was noted that, while the Merrivale phone box may have only been used to make three calls in the past year, it only takes one call to save a life. While there is an understanding of the need to replace the copper wires, it was suggested that the phone boxes could perhaps be retained, with an alternative emergency-use function considered.

Following further discussion, the Council agreed to support retaining the phone boxes as working phone lines, recognising their importance for life-saving purposes. The Council will therefore contact West Devon as requested, who will then collate all responses and forward them to BT.

## **16.25/Discuss cyclists on Pew Tor**

Cllrs. Davies and Ware reported that cyclists regularly cycle down Pew Tor at speed, particularly on Saturday mornings. They noted that cyclists are only permitted to use designated cycle paths on the moor. These incidents will be reported to Simon Lee, Head Ranger at Dartmoor National Park.

## **17/25. Planning Matters –**

0174/25 – Change of use from grazing to equestrian, creation of a round pen with surface, creation of pond, and associated works at Huckworthy Lodge, Huckworthy Bridge, Sampford Spiney, Yelverton, PL20 6LP

After discussions, all agreed that the Council had no comment on the application.

## **18/25. Approve Invoices for payment.**

- Payroll Services - £120
- Clerk's Salary - £198.40
- HMRC - £43
- Whitchurch Community Hall hire - £32
- Zurich Insurance - £473.33

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- Donation of Sampford Spiney Church (50% purchase of the defibrillator) - £334
- Easy Accounts - £60

All approved payments.

### **Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

### **160/24. Close**

The next Finance Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 pm, followed by the Council Meeting at 7:30 pm, on Wednesday, 11th June 2025, at Whitchurch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.