PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of **PLASTERDOWN PARISH COUNCIL** held in **Whitchurch Community Hall**
On **Wednesday 14th October 2026** at **7.30 pm**

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

In Attendance: Caroline Metcalf (Clerk), Cllr. M. Renders, West Devon Borough Councillor.

73/26. Apologies for absence
Cllr. W. Hall and Cllr. R. Pearson-Bunt sent their apologies. Accepted by the Council.

74/26. Declaration of Interest
None.

75/26. Public Question Time
No members of the public were present at the meeting.

76/26. Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th September 2026 and deal with any matters arising.
Min 62/26
Cllr. Walton requested an amendment to Minute 62/26, noting that the member of the public had also stated that "there would be no landowner permission for any works to be carried out on the Leat if the grant application did not proceed."
All members agreed to add to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Resolved: That Minute 62/26 be amended to include the above statement and that the minutes, as amended, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

77/26. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors
Cllr. Fife Cook, Devon County Councillor had sent his apologies.

Cllr. Renders, West Devon Borough Councillor, reported that there were no further updates on LGR and no other matters to report to the Council.

78/26. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

Details of the Parish Council's proposed location for a boundary stone at Jordan Lane have been submitted to Devon Highways for their consideration.

The Clerk reported that Walkhampton Parish Council was not supportive of the proposal to engrave a boundary marker on Ward Bridge, due to concerns about carving into the bridge and previous vandalism of a boundary marker.

It was noted that permission had already been obtained from the landowner, Pascoes & Son had inspected the bridge and the DCC's Archaeologist had provided advice on the proposed engraving. Following discussion, Cllr. Cole proposed proceeding with engraving "SS" only on the bridge and no date. This was seconded by Cllr. Philips. All in favour.

Resolved: The Chair to draft a letter to DCC's Archaeologist to request for the Boundary to be marked by SS and liaise with Pascoes & Son regarding the proposed works.

- Update on restoration of 1843 Whitchurch Parish Map

Cllr. Sturmer reported that Devon Heritage Centre had confirmed that the Tithe Map could be digitally photographed at Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton for £80. Alternatively, an existing digital copy could be obtained for £20, with an additional £60 licence fee. Following discussion, members agreed to proceed with the first option, having the original map digitally photographed at a cost of £80. Printing and framing costs would be considered as part of next financial year's budget, with a possible contribution from Whitchurch Community Hall. Members also agreed that the Parish Council would retain the original Tithe Map rather than transfer it to Plymouth Archives for storage.

Resolved: To proceed with digital photography of the original Tithe Map at a cost of £80 and and make arrangements for its transportation to Taunton.

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- Update on Sortridge and Grimstone Leat

Following the presentation by Lindsey Rogers at the previous meeting and the Council's subsequent decision to send a letter of support for the proposed leat restoration works, Cllr. Davies, who had not attended the meeting, raised concerns regarding the decision. Cllr. Davies explained that, as a leat user, they had not been informed of the proposals and that several other leat users were also unaware of the grant application. Concerns were raised regarding the extent of consultation, whether the necessary agreements had been obtained from those affected, and the governance, financial transparency and communication of the Community Interest Company (CIC).

Cllr. Davies confirmed that these concerns had been raised with the Chair and fellow councillors by email after the meeting and before the letter was issued and expressed dissatisfaction with how their concerns had subsequently been addressed.

The Chair explained that Lindsey Rogers had attended the previous meeting at the Council's invitation and that, following the presentation, members had agreed by majority to send a letter supporting the principle of restoring and maintaining the leat and safeguarding the local water supply, subject to the CIC making efforts to contact all affected leat users. The Council's intention had been to support the proposed works rather than become involved in the management of the CIC. It was also noted that there had been a limited period in which to respond before the grant application deadline.

Cllr. Walton commented that further information should have been obtained before the Council agreed to send the letter, as members had not been fully aware of the differing views and concerns amongst leat users. Cllr. Davies emphasised that they supported the restoration works but felt that greater transparency, consultation and involvement of those affected were necessary. They also stressed the importance of the Council having sufficient information before offering its support to similar proposals in the future.

Following discussion, it was suggested that a Councillor attend the forthcoming CIC meeting to gather further information and report back to the next Parish Council meeting, without expressing any further position on behalf of the Council.

- Update on the damaged Grenofen road sign

Following reporting the damaged sign to Devon Highways, they have confirmed that it would be replaced on a like-for-like basis.

79/26. To finalise arrangement for Remembrance Sunday, 8th November 2026

Cllr. Hall confirmed that she would lay the Parish Council's wreath at Whitchurch Church. Arrangements for laying a wreath at Horrabridge were also discussed, with Cllr. Philips offering to assist if required. The Clerk to request the arrangements for the Horrabridge Remembrance Service and notify the organisers of the Parish Council's attendance.

80/26. To review and approve the Financial Report and Bank Reconciliation for the period ending 30 September 2026

The reports had not been sent out prior to the meeting and it was agreed to defer to the next meeting.

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81/26. Report on DALC's AGM

Cllr. Sturmer reported on the DALC AGM and Conference she recently attended. Due to traffic delays, she missed the AGM, although Cllr. Pearson-Bunt had been able to vote on the Council's behalf.

The conference included presentations and workshops covering collaborative working between parish councils, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), planning legislation, and the Civility and Respect Pledge. Examples of successful joint working between councils were shared, together with discussions on the potential implications of LGR.

A workshop on civility and respect highlighted issues experienced by other parish councils and the importance of maintaining respectful behaviour. Changes to planning legislation were also discussed, including housing requirements, environmental considerations and the role of local planning authorities. Other matters covered included the importance of ensuring that Council assets were insured at their full reinstatement value rather than market value. Cllr. Sturmer also obtained information on alternative providers for gov.uk email addresses, noting that the costs were slightly higher than the Council's current arrangements. Cllr. Sturmer thanked the Council for the opportunity to attend the conference.

82/26. Planning Applications to consider:

There were no applications to consider.

83/26. Approve Invoices for payment

- Clerk's October 2026 salary – £203.70
- HMRC ending 5 Nov 26 – (Direct Debit) - £44.60
- Janet Sturmer – repayment of Poppy Wreaths - £55
- Breakthrough Communications – training course for Clerk - £114
- TEEC Limited – Plasterdown Parish Council – Hosting, emails & domain- £229.20

Two additional payments required approval:

- Janet Strumer – travel to DALC AGM - £44
- 25% Contribution to Clerk's SLCC membership - £50

All proposed to approve all above payments.

84/26. To consider and respond to the consultation on Plymouth becoming a member of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority and its conversion to a Mayoral Strategic Authority.

Members considered the consultation, which closes on 28th October 2026. It was clarified that this was separate from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
The Clerk reported that town and parish councils had been encouraged to respond. Members discussed the potential benefits but felt that further information was needed to provide an informed response.

Agreed: That the Parish Council respond to the consultation requesting further information and clarification on the proposals.

85/26. Items raised by Councillors (for information/ brief updates only. No decisions can be made)

Members noted correspondence from Skylight Broadband seeking interest from residents and businesses in Sampford Spiney. Discussion took place regarding existing broadband services, including connection speeds and reliability in rural areas.
An update was also provided on the ongoing broadband project covering approximately 100 properties elsewhere in the Parish, for which the outcome of a funding bid was still awaited.

Agreed: That information about Skylight Broadband be shared on the Parish Council's website & social media page to raise awareness amongst residents.

Cllr. Walton raised concerns regarding comments made by a member of the public at the previous meeting, questioning whether some leat users had not been consulted.
Members discussed the procedures for managing comments and interruptions from the public during Council meetings. It was acknowledged that the Chair was responsible for maintaining order, including addressing disruptive behaviour and, where necessary, asking individuals to leave.
Members also considered whether the Council's Standing Orders provided sufficient guidance or required clarification to ensure appropriate procedures were followed at future meetings.

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Agreed**:** That the Clerk review the Council's Standing Orders and provide clarification on the relevant procedures.

Cllr. Philips raised concerns regarding the lack of councillor contact details and links to their Registers of Interests on the Parish Council's website. The Clerk explained that councillors' Registers of Interests were available on WDBC's website and that a link should be provided on the Parish Council's website. The Clerk also confirmed that personal contact details and email addresses had not been published without individual consent, in line with guidance on councillor safety.
Members discussed the publication of email addresses, with some expressing a preference for their contact details to be made available to residents. It was noted that residents could alternatively contact councillors through the Clerk.

Agreed: The Clerk to update the Website contact details and link to WDBC's Registers of Interests, and update individual councillor contact details where consent had been given.

86/26. Correspondence
Members noted the consultation on the Dartmoor Partnership Plan 2027–2033 and the forthcoming engagement sessions, with parish councils encouraged to nominate representatives to attend. The nearest session would be held at Mary Tavy on 16th November, from 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm. Members discussed attendance, with the Clerk to establish which councillors would be available to represent the Council.

87/26. Agenda items for the Council Meeting be held at 7 pm on Wednesday 9th December 2026 at Whitchurch Community Hall.
The reschedule HR Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 6 pm in the Stable, Whitchurch Hall.

There be no other business, the meeting closed at 21.03 pm.

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