

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present: Cllr. J. Sturmer, Chair of the Council, Cllr. E. Cole, Cllr. A. Davies, Cllr. R. Philips, Cllr. Pearson-Bunt, Cllr. S Ware and Cllr. I. Walton.

In Attendance: Cllr. M. Renders, Cllr. M. Fife Cook and members of the public.

102/26. Apologies for absence

None

103/25. Declaration of Interest

Cllr. I. Walton declared an interest in previous matters arising from the minutes relating to Tiny Wilds.

Cllr. Philips declared an interest in planning application 0367/25, as he was the applicant.

104/26. Public Question Time

All members of the public present were there to discuss Tiny Wilds under previous matters arising from the minutes.

105/26. Receive updates from the Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. M. Renders:

There is nothing major to report as the Borough Council has recently returned from the Christmas break.

Cllr. Fife Cook:

Has passed on the information regarding the flooded road between Whitchurch and Grenofen to the Local Devon Highways Officer and it is in hand.

Is attending a meeting next week regarding the ongoing issues of poor broadband and mobile signal in the area and will send out an update to all Parishes following the meeting.

There is interest from Parishes to have training on Planning from Dartmoor National Park. This will either be conducted at a Parish meeting or at Dartmoor's offices. Cllr Pearson Bunt stated that, through the Southern Linking Training Committee, they had been trying to arrange planning training for Councillors for some time, but nothing had come of it yet. She agreed to forward the correspondence they have had with Dartmoor to Cllr Fife Cook.

The Clerk highlighted that the planning portal is not working correctly; as when attempting to submit comments, she received an error message. She has reported this issue to Dartmoor Planning. Cllr Renders advised that a new portal is to be rolled out shortly.

106/26. Approval of minutes of the Council meeting held on the 10th December 2025

All approved the minutes.

107/26. Previous matters arising from the minutes not listed as separate items on this agenda:

- Boundary Stones/Ward Bridge

Cllr. Sturmer gave an update to all present that three further stones are to be placed around the Parish to show the boundary.

Ward Bridge – The Parish Council has been in correspondence with Devon County Council regarding the engraving of the Parish's initials on the bridge. Devon County Council were not supportive of this proposal; however, Cllr Sturmer advised that she has evidence of bridge stones being engraved directly onto bridges elsewhere. Cllr. Fife Cook was supportive of the project.

The Clerk had contacted Walkhampton Parish Council, the neighbouring Parish to seek their views on their boundary being marked, but no response had been received yet.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

Tiny Wilds School

Cllr. Fife Cook explained to the Council and members of the public present that no information relating to Tiny Wilds had been passed to him by his predecessor. Relevant information has now been sent to him. He further explained that there is a process that needs to be followed and, once he has reviewed all the information received, including information received from the Dartmoor National Park Planning Department, he will hopefully be able to arrange a meeting with members of the public to provide an update. He advised that he could not give a timeline at this stage, as Dartmoor National Park will need time to collate their information. However, he confirmed that he would keep the Clerk informed, who would then update all accordingly. Cllr Renders reminded those present that GDPR guidelines must be followed and, as such, some information may be restricted and unable to be shared.

Members of the public expressed their frustration that information and correspondence had been sent to Dartmoor over a number of years but had either been ignored or not answered. It was felt that the situation was going back to square one. Further frustration was expressed that while others are required to follow planning rules, these are not being applied to this development, which is setting a precedent for those who believe they can act without authority.

Cllr Sturmer asked all those present to forward any information, or correspondence previously sent to Dartmoor, to the Clerk. The Clerk will collate this information and forward it to Cllr Fife Cook and Cllr Renders.

- Restoration of 1843 Whitchurch Parish Map

The map was on display in the Hall for all to view. It was noted that the map is not in good condition, and the Clerk was asked to seek a suitable person who may be able to restore it. It was agreed that a copy of the map be made, framed, and displayed in Whitchurch Community Hall. A key document accompanies the map explaining the numbered referenced on the map, and it was suggested that a copy of this document be uploaded to the Council's website. Cllr Sturmer agreed to arrange for a copy of the map to be made. There was a discussion on where to store the original map once restored; however, no decision was made at this time.

- Receive update on Snow Warden scheme/location of salt

There are five grit bins located within the Parish. If any bins are found to be empty or damaged, this should be reported via Devon County Council's Report a Problem webpage. ([Grit bins and salt bags - Roads and transport](#))

Salt bags can be ordered free of charge by Parish Councils and distributed around the Parish for residents to use on public highways. Cllr Fife Cook advised that the Parish Council could also purchase a salt spreader, which can be fitted to the back of a vehicle, to assist with salt distribution.

The Clerk was asked to arrange for salt to be delivered to a local resident for use by residents. Further discussion on implementing a snow plan and identifying suitable locations for future salt storage will be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

108/26. Update on the Council's adoption of the Merrivale and Sampford Spiney phone boxes

It was confirmed, via WDBC that both phone boxes will be retained as a live/ working payphone service due to inadequate mobile coverage in the area. Therefore, the agreements for the Parish to adopt the boxes were now void.

109/26. Discuss the Walkham Valley Landscape Recovery bid to Defra

Cllr. Sturmer asked is anyone was keen on getting involved with this project to let the Clerk know. At present no one step forward. Cllr. Fife Cook said he would be happy to forward on the information he received about this, for the Clerk to forward onto all Councillors.

110/26. Review and approve 2026-27 budget

After review all agreed to approve the budget for £7000.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

111/26. Approve 2026-27 precept

After review all agreed to approve a precept of £7000.

112/26. Discussion and consideration on the Thermal Imaging Camera Scheme 2025/26

The scheme was noted by members. The Clerk to inform residents of the scheme via the Council's website.

113/26. Discussion and consideration of a free landmark tree for the Parish, offered by Saving Devon's Treescapes Planning.

After discussion, all agreed not to apply for a free landmark tree.

114/26. Planning application to consider

- West Devon - 3612/25/FUL - Little Highertown Whitchurch PL19 9EH - Demolition of existing dwelling, sheds and outbuilding and construction of replacement dwelling, outbuilding, new driveway, and associated works

After discussion, six members agreed to support the application. One abstained.

- Dartmoor - 0404/25 - Application at Brook House, PL20 7QX - Conversion of coach house to holiday unit, extension to existing outhouse for additional storage, plus double garage with additional parking spaces, with variation of Condition 6 attached to planning permission ref: 0721/05

All had no objection to the application.

- 0367/25 - Change of use of barn to dwelling at Ashmill Farm, Grenofen, Tavistock, PL19 9EW – to discuss and decide condition of Section 106 agreement.

Cllr Philips explained that, as previously discussed, this application is subject to a S106 legal agreement, which requires that the dwelling be occupied by a local person. Ordinarily, this would apply only to the parish of provision, in this case Whitchurch, unless the Parish Council specifically requests that any or all adjoining rural parishes (Sampford Spiney, Walkhampton, Dartmoor Forest, Peter Tavy) also be included. Cllr Philips suggested that other parishes, including Horrabridge and Buckland Monachorum, might also be considered for inclusion. Cllr Philips then left the meeting.

After discussion, all members agreed that Whitchurch and the adjoining rural parishes listed above should be included in the S106. Members also requested that consideration be given to including Buckland Monachorum and Horrabridge.

Cllr. Philips rejoined the meeting.

115/26. Approve accounts for payment

All approved payments.

116/26. Items raised by Councillors (for information/brief updates only. No Decision can be made)

Last year a broken stile on a footpath was reported to Dartmoor National Park. It has not yet been repaired. The Clerk to follow up.

117/26. Correspondence

1. Letter from Geoffrey Cox detailing the many households and businesses that experience significant difficulties with the digital broadband roll out, while others continue to be affected by poor or non-existent mobile phone signal.' He has therefore arranged a Connectivity Forum, in partnership with Connecting Devon and Somerset, which will be held at the Holsworthy Memorial Hall on 31st January 2026, which will bring the main stakeholders together in order Parish Councils can raise their concerns directly.

PLASTERDOWN GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

After discussion it was agreed to ask if Cllr. Pearson-Bunt if she would be able to attend, if not Cllr. Davies said she would attend

118/26. Discussion on adoption of Councillor's gov.uk email addresses

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had sent all Councillors information on how to sign up to their gov.uk email address. Cllr Davies and Cllr Walton stated that they had signed up but were unable to change their passwords. Cllr Ware reported that she was unable to send emails from her gov.uk address. The Clerk was asked to follow up with the email provider.

119/26. Agenda items for the next meeting to be held on Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 7.30 pm at Whitchurch Community Hall

1. Tiny Wilds School
2. Boundary Stones
3. Snow Warden/snow plan

Cllr. Davies gave her apologies for the next meeting.

120/26. Approve meeting dates for 2026

All were noted and approved.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.