

Drewsteignton Parish Council.

Clerk: Louise Butler, clerk.drewsteigntonpc@outlook.com/ 07764683412

www.drewsteigntonparish.co.uk.

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Minutes for Annual Community meeting of Drewsteignton Parish Council that took place on Monday the 18th of May 2026 at 7.30pm at Whiddon Down Village Hall.

Present, Peter Brennan, Andrew Di Battista, Ian Rowe, Laurance Bennie, John Redman, Julie Macy, Sue Hember and Anna Imrie.

Also present, Lou Butler(clerk) Jenny WDVH, Heather NT, Kate Acorn, Alice FODCY, Alison Gardeners club, Joy and Cllr S Guthrie WDDC

Business Transacted

1.5.26 Welcome and Apologies for Absence.

Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. He reminded the room that a recording would be taken from item 1.5.26 to assist with note taking. Apologies were received as follows. Josh Scillitoe Highways, Paula Clarke National Trust, Ruth Marttens Drewsteignton Church, Toby Rubbra Drewe Arms, Cllr Sue Davies. [The apologies were proposed by Cllr Brennan and seconded by Cllr Di Battista all in favor, motion carried. RR26/15](#)

2.5.26 Approval of Minutes from the Previous Annual Community & Parish Council Meeting.

[The apologies were proposed by Cllr Rowe and seconded by Cllr Di Battista all in favor, motion carried. RR26/16](#)

3.5.26 Chair's Annual Report

Attached below.

4.5.26 Financial Report

Attached below.

5.5.26 Community Reports

Alice Friends of Drewsteignton church.

Friends of Drewsteignton Church expressed their gratitude to Drewsteignton Parish Council for the award of a £500 grant towards the development of a dedicated indoor children's area within the community space at the rear of the church.

The project aims to create an indoor facility that complements the existing outdoor recreational provision available on the village playing field, particularly in light of ongoing refurbishment plans for that area. The indoor space is intended to provide a welcoming and accessible environment for children and families during periods of poor weather or when outdoor facilities may be less suitable. The group highlighted the challenges faced by rural families, including limited access to transport during the day, and explained that the facility would provide an important opportunity for children, carers and vulnerable residents to meet socially, reducing isolation and strengthening community connections.

Planned activities and facilities include:

- Organised play sessions and educational activities;
- A toy library and children's book swap;

- Creative sessions led by local artists;
- Opportunities for visiting health and education professionals to use the space;
- Age-appropriate play and educational equipment.

The proposed indoor area is expected to include a climbing frame, slide, playhouse, construction toys, storage facilities, children's furniture, educational resources, art materials, Lego, soft toys and books.

The group advised that volunteers involved in the project have backgrounds in early years education and healthcare, which will support the delivery of activities and the overall management of the space. It was further noted that the project seeks to address issues of rural isolation and early childhood social development. Concerns were raised that some children within rural communities may begin school having had limited opportunities for social interaction with peers, potentially affecting language development and social confidence. The proposed facility is intended to help address these challenges by providing regular opportunities for play, learning and interaction.

The representatives concluded by thanking the Parish Council once again for its support of the initiative and noted the positive response already received within the community.

Kate Acorn Community Support Group Report

A representative of Acorn Community Support Group provided an overview of the organisation and its work within the local area.

Acorn was established in 1989 in response to concerns about rural isolation and the lack of community support available for vulnerable residents in rural Devon. The organisation remains entirely volunteer-led and supports residents across the Chagford and Moretonhampstead GP catchment areas, including Drewsteignton.

The group provides a wide range of support services, including transport to medical appointments, prescription collection, befriending services, welfare support and assistance for people returning home after illness or operations. Referrals are accepted from healthcare professionals, family members, friends and neighbours.

A significant part of Acorn's work involves volunteer transport services. During the last year, hundreds of transport journeys were provided for local residents attending medical appointments and essential services. However, the group highlighted an ongoing shortage of volunteer drivers and encouraged anyone able to offer occasional help to come forward.

Acorn also organises a variety of community activities aimed at reducing isolation and supporting wellbeing. These include coffee mornings, memory cafés, shopping trips, exercise and balance classes, carers' support groups, and social outings.

Specialist support is also available for unpaid carers through the Rainbow Club and sitting services, allowing carers short periods of respite. The organisation additionally runs community training sessions such as first aid and dementia awareness courses.

The Parish Council thanked Acorn for its continued work within the community and recognised the valuable contribution made by its volunteers and staff in supporting local residents.

Cllr Steve Guthrie, West Devon Borough Council Update

A representative from West Devon Borough Council provided an update on several current issues affecting the area.

Residents were encouraged to make use of the Council's website, which contains information on community facilities, local services and business support. The Council continues to offer assistance to local businesses, including advice on grant funding, applications and support for start-ups and small businesses.

An update was also given on the future of local leisure facilities. Following the liquidation of the previous operator, Fusion, there had been concerns regarding the future of the swimming pool and leisure centre facilities. However, these services have now been taken over by a new organisation, helping to secure their continued operation and future improvement.

The meeting also heard about ongoing Local Government Reorganisation proposals, which could lead to significant changes in the structure of local government across Devon. Various options are currently being considered, including the creation of larger unitary authorities. It was noted that these changes could affect the way local services are delivered, with parish councils and community organisations potentially taking on increased responsibilities in future. A Government decision on the preferred model is expected later in the year.

Positive progress was reported regarding the Okehampton Interchange project, which is expected to improve transport connections between local bus services and rail services to Exeter and beyond. Concerns were also raised regarding proposed national planning reforms and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was noted that the proposed changes may reduce the influence of local planning committees and increase pressure for housing development in rural areas, potentially impacting local communities and landscapes.

The Parish Council thanked the representative for their continued attendance and support at Parish Council meetings and for maintaining strong engagement with the local community.

Heather, National Trust Update

A representative from the National Trust provided an update on current activities and projects within the parish.

An update was given regarding the reinstatement works to the fire-damaged cottages. Planning permission and listed building consent have now been approved, with support from Dartmoor National Park conservation officers. Contractors have been appointed and all insurance and governance requirements completed, with work having commenced earlier this month.

The first phase of the project involves salvage and clearance works. Temporary site welfare facilities are now in place and arrangements are being made for contractor parking. Residents were advised that a skip will be positioned within the village for approximately 12 weeks to support the works, and appreciation was expressed for the community's patience during this period. Efforts are being made to minimise disruption and road closures wherever possible.

The representative also reported that Castle Drogo had experienced a successful visitor year, although rising costs and organisational restructuring across the National Trust had created some operational pressures. Staff teams are now working across multiple sites, supported by a strong volunteer network.

A number of upcoming events at Castle Drogo were highlighted, including sensory trails during May half-term, the "100 Years of Play" summer activities programme, outdoor theatre performances, hydro turbine open days, and Heritage Open Day free entry in September.

The representative also noted the return of freshly baked scones in the Castle Drogo café, which had been warmly welcomed by visitors.

The Parish Council thanked the National Trust team for the update and for their continued engagement with the community throughout the ongoing works and wider activities within the parish.

Jenny, Whiddon Down Village Hall Report

Jenny Turner, Chair of Whiddon Down Village Hall Committee, provided an update on the Village Hall and its activities over the past year.

Following last year's AGM, the hall's heating system was condemned, resulting in significant challenges throughout the winter months. Temporary electric heating had to be used, leading to a

substantial increase in electricity costs. After delays in obtaining quotations and contractor availability, replacement works are now scheduled to begin in early July.

Despite these difficulties, the Village Hall has continued to operate successfully. Community events held during the year included an “My Bluff” fundraising evening and the annual Christmas Fayre, both of which generated valuable income for the Hall. The committee noted, however, that organising events and maintaining volunteer support continues to be challenging due to the small size of the committee and difficulties attracting new volunteers.

The committee recently held its AGM, although no members of the public attended. Concerns were raised regarding the long-term sustainability of community buildings such as the Village Hall if younger volunteers are not encouraged to become involved.

An application has recently been submitted to West Devon Borough Council for grant funding towards the replacement heating system, which is expected to cost just under £4,000. The Hall currently has approximately £2,000 in reserves, but further fundraising may be required depending on the outcome of the grant application.

The report also highlighted improvements completed in recent years using previous grant funding, including replacement windows, roof works and refurbishment works to the facilities.

The Parish Council thanked Jenny and the Village Hall Committee for their continued hard work and commitment in maintaining an important community facility for the parish.

Alison, Drewsteignton Garden Club Report

A representative from Drewsteignton Garden Club provided an update on the club’s activities over the past year.

The club currently has approximately 50 members from across the parish and surrounding areas, including Christow and Bridford. The club continues to hold regular talks and events during the autumn and winter months, alongside garden visits and outings during the spring and summer.

Fundraising activities continue to support local charities, with proceeds from plant sales and other events being shared between the club and Children’s Hospice South West. Seasonal social events, including the annual Christmas lunch and summer gatherings, remain well supported by members. The representative noted that the club remains financially stable, with reserves currently standing at approximately £24,000. Membership subscriptions continue at £5 per year.

Discussion also took place regarding attracting younger members and adapting meeting arrangements to encourage wider participation in future.

The Parish Council thanked the Garden Club for its continued contribution to community life within the parish.

Drewsteignton Playing Field Committee Report (read by the pc chair)

The Drewsteignton Playing Field Committee reported another positive and productive year for the village and wider community.

The recently installed swing set has proved extremely popular with local children and visiting families throughout the year. The annual Bonfire Night fundraiser was also highlighted as a successful community event, raising valuable funds while bringing residents together for an enjoyable evening.

The committee was pleased to report that a further National Lottery grant had been secured.

Combined with ongoing fundraising efforts and local support, this funding will enable the purchase and installation of a new zip wire for the play area. It is hoped that the new equipment will be installed by mid-July 2026 in time for the summer holidays.

Regular five-a-side football evenings continue to be well attended, providing opportunities for social interaction, recreation and community spirit.

The committee also organised several maintenance and improvement days during the year, with volunteers generously giving their time to help keep the playing field safe, tidy and welcoming for all users.

The Playing Field Committee thanked all volunteers, supporters and parishioners for their continued financial and practical support, which enables the playing field to remain a highly valued community asset.

6.5.26 Election of Parish Council Chair

[Peter Brennan was Nominated as chair of the council by Cllr Macy and seconded by Cllr Hember all in favor, Motion carried. RR26/17](#)

Cllr Brennan accepted the position and signed the acceptance of office; this was then counter signed by the clerk.

7.5.26 Election of Parish Council Vice Chair

[Andrew di Battista was nominated as vice chair by Cllr Hember, and this was seconded by Cllr Brennan, all in favor, Motion carried. RR25/18](#)

Cllr di Battista accepted the position and signed the declaration of acceptance of office. This was then counter signed by the clerk.

8.5.26 Declarations of Interest

Councilors were invited to disclose any interest they have in agenda items specifying the nature of these interests. They were reminded to ensure their Register of Interests remains current

9.5.26 Review of Policies and Procedures.

DPC 001 Standing Orders

DPC 002 Code of Conduct

DPC 003 Financial Regulations

DPC 004 Scheme of delegation

DPC 005 Data Retention & Disposal Policy

DPC 006 Internal Audit Policy

DPC 015 Internal Financial Control Policy

DPC 023 Reserves Policy

Parish council HR Committee

1 Julie Macy

2 Anna Imrie

3 John Redman

4 Sue Hember

[Proposed Cllr Brennan](#)

[Seconded Cllr Rowe RR26/19](#)

10.5.26 Appointment of Parish Council Representatives to External Bodies/Committees

Community Group/organisation/ facility	Cllr/clerk designated
Stone lane gardens	Cllr Hember
Gardening club	Cllr Macy
Allotments	Clerk

Drewe Arms	Cllr Di Battista
Playing field	Cllr Brennan
Highways	Clerk
Whiddon down village hall.	Cllr Rowe
Public Toilets	Clerk
Car park	Cllr Redman
Parish Post	Cllr Brennan
DNPA	Cllr Imrie
Snow warden	Cllr Redman

11.5.26 Open Forum for Residents

One Parishioner discussed the growing concern from residents regarding parking within Drewsteignton. Cllr Brennan noted the concern and assured the resident that future events held at the Drewe Arms were going to be marshaled correctly.

12.5.26 Planning (DNPA unless otherwise stated) (Chair):

a) 0126/26 Old Rectory, Drewsteignton, Exeter, Devon, EX6 6QT, Erection of single storey double garage, outdoor swimming pool and adaptation of existing outbuildings to provide ancillary studio space and plant rooms together with associated landscaping, with variation of Condition 2 attached to planning permission ref: 0401/24, dated 6 November 2024 expires 05/06/2026

b) 26/0036, Works to Trees in conservation area, Old Rectory, Drewsteignton, EX6 6QT, T1 Beech - Fell T2 Poplar - Fell G2 - Cypress – Fell, expires 29/05/2026

Cllr Bennie proposed a positive response to both the above permissions and Cllr Rowe seconded the motion. All in favour, motion carried.RR26/20

c) 26/0037, Works to Trees in conservation area, Tilford Cottage, 1, Stonelands, Crockernwell, EX6 6NB. T1 Holly - Remove the branches close to our house/roof, some branches have broken and are hanging over our property expires 09/06/2026

d) 1105/26/PDM Land At Sx 683 928 (Land at West Farm Martin Farm) Whiddon Down Prior approval (Class Q) for a change of use of 3no. buildings on an agri. unit to 7no. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) Expires 22/05/2026

Drewsteignton parish council visited the site on the 14th of May 2026 and the conclusions were as follows....

Drewsteignton Parish Council objects to the above application for the following reasons:

1. Unsuitable Access and Intensification of Use

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the intensification of use of the access lane serving the site. Members understand that the lane is a narrow private rural access, originally intended to serve agricultural purposes and a very limited number of properties. The proposed introduction of seven additional dwellings would result in a substantial increase in daily vehicle movements, deliveries, service vehicles and associated domestic traffic along a lane that is single track in nature and unsuitable for this level of residential use.

The Parish Council also notes that concerns have been raised locally regarding existing rights of access over the lane and whether the current arrangements were ever intended to accommodate a development of this scale.

2. Scale of Development in a Rural Location

Whilst members acknowledge the principle of reusing redundant agricultural buildings where appropriate, the conversion of three large agricultural sheds into seven separate residential units is considered an overdevelopment of the site in this rural location.

The scale and density of the proposal would urbanise what remains an agricultural setting and would materially alter the character of the area.

3. Drainage and Infrastructure Concerns

The Parish Council remains concerned regarding foul drainage arrangements and the site's ability to accommodate the required infrastructure. Members noted previous nearby applications where drainage and discharge arrangements proved problematic due to local topography and limited outfall options.

Given the number of proposed dwellings, the Parish Council considers that robust evidence should be required to demonstrate that satisfactory drainage arrangements can be achieved without adverse impact on neighbouring landowners or local watercourses.

4. Impact on Residential Amenity

Members are concerned that the proposal would adversely affect nearby residential properties through increased traffic, activity and general disturbance associated with seven dwellings in what is currently a quiet agricultural area.

5. Landscape and Rural Character

Although revisions have reportedly been made following refusal of previous tree works and the introduction of Tree Preservation Orders, the Parish Council remains concerned about the overall impact of the development on the rural landscape and the relationship with the protected trees and surrounding countryside setting.

Cllr Macy proposed a negative view to be sent to West Devon borough council. Based on the above given reasons, Cllr Bennie seconded, 2 members of the parish council abstained from the vote and all other members voted in favour. Motion carried. RR26/21

13.5.26 Any Other Business

a) Road closures scheduled for the parish. DCC have issue several local road closures for the coming months with a plan to fix many minor roads in the area. Please continue to report all potholes on the DCC portal or report them to the clerk.

b) Planned building work commencing 1st of June 26 Drewsteignton. Closing off 5 parking spaces from the road outside the public toilets. This is to repair a wall and stop the road having to be closed for a 12 week period.

c) Approval of financial documents

Drewsteignton pc online payment log May 26					
Voucher n	Date	Supplier	Description	Amount	VAT reclaim
10	28.04.2026	sovereign	zip wire	£6,611.87	y
11	28.04.2026	Drewsteignton playing field	zip wire	£8,815.82	y
12	05.05.2026	RGB	Car park footpath	£306.00	y
13	18.05.2026	Peter Brennan	phonebox refurb	£19.15	y
14	18.05.2026	Round ash	website	£132.00	y
15	18.05.2026	Parish Mag Printers Ltd	Parish post printing	£189.72	n
16	18.05.2026	Scribe Accounting (Starboard Systems Limited)	Scribe	£28.80	y
17	18.05.2026	Louise Butler	Salaries and expenses	£624.75	y
9	28.04.2026	Markstone Granite	Car park footpath	£804.00	y

14.5.26 Date of Next Annual Community Meeting

The next Annual Community Meeting will be held on 17th of May 2027. The Parish council do hold a meeting every month except August, where everyone is welcome.

Signed

1127

Dated

Chair's annual report

2025/26 AGM DPC Chair's Report

DPC continues to benefit from having knowledgeable and supportive Parish Councillors, who go beyond their remit to support the parish. The Parish Council is fortunate to have operated with an almost full complement of Councillors for the year 2025/2026. This is in contrast to neighbouring PC's who have faced having to postpone meetings. I would thank my fellow volunteers on the Parish Council for their support and guidance throughout the year.

Our Parish Clerk, Lou Butler, has gone from strength to strength with the full digitalisation of our accounts providing time saving and greater governance. The finances of the Parish are in good health however, planned expenditure for FY2026/27 will reduce reserves to more recent levels. Securing Grant funding for projects, has enabled the PC to effectively freeze the Parish Precept for the 6th year.

Where appropriate policies have been amended and brought into line with best practice.

The PC has contributed positively towards reviewing planning applications and where necessary conducting site visits. The reinstatement of the Glebe & Trinity Cottages is now underway, and it is hoped the 18-month plan can be achieved with minimum disruption. The PC remains disappointed the proposed development of Thompson's field in WD was rejected by DNPA despite the proposal addressing and providing much needed quality social housing provision. The ongoing water quality issues in Crockernwell is frustrating with SWW failing to resolve the issue and affirm the water is safe to drink. Thank you to the Fulford Cottage residents for their continued resilience and determination to hold SWW to their legal mandate.

DCC Highways Department continue to be very supportive in addressing incidents of potholes when reported to them. Budget constraints and a backlog of work continue to impact the time to conduct repairs. Parishioners are encouraged to report potholes using the DCC portal.

2026 Parish Community Recognition Award. This year, the Parish Council proudly recognises Shelley Mansfield, whose dedication and quiet determination have shaped the heart of our community. For over eight years, Shelley has poured her time, energy, and care into producing the Drewsteignton Parish Post. Month after month, she has coordinated content, proofed every page, and juggled deadlines to ensure our volunteer distributors can deliver 400 copies of the Post to households across the parish.

Thanks to Shelley, parishioners stay informed, connected, and engaged. Her work has strengthened the fabric of parish life, and we offer our sincere gratitude for all she has done. Her commitment exemplifies the very best of community spirit, and the Parish Council extends its profound appreciation for her invaluable contribution.

Finally, the PC would like to thank all the voluntary acts of kindness, help, expertise and support provided by so many parishioners during the last year. Thank you for all you do. It is this spirit of generosity that often costs nothing but is essential to maintain the Parish.

Peter Brennan – Chair.

Drewsteignton Parish Council
Annual Community Meeting Financial Report
Financial Year 2025/2026

Presented at the Annual Community Meeting – May 2026

RFO Financial Overview

The 2025/26 financial year has been a stable and productive year for Drewsteignton Parish Council. Careful budgeting and responsible management of public funds have enabled the Council to maintain essential village services while supporting community projects and local events.

This year saw continued investment in maintenance of public spaces, improvements to community facilities, and support for local initiatives designed to strengthen village life and environmental sustainability.

The Council remains in a sound financial position, with reserves maintained at prudent levels to protect against unforeseen costs and future infrastructure requirements.

Summary of Accounts 2025/26

Income	Amount (£)
Parish Precept	12,600
Grant/Donations	510
Bank interest	322
Vat Refund	2540
Other income	5464
Total Income	21,435

Expenditure	Amount (£)
Clerk Salary & Administration	4921
Grounds Maintenance & Playing Field	1499
Village Hall Hire	183
Play Area Maintenance	79
Insurance & Audit Fees	647
Utilities	1484
Community Events & Grants	1000

Expenditure	Amount (£)
Subscriptions and memberships	556
Highways & Traffic Measures	3675
Defibrillator costs	82
IT, Website & Communications	2147
Contingency & Miscellaneous Costs	5428
Total Expenditure	16,780

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Signed

Dated

Year-End Position

Summary	Amount (£)
Total Income	21,435
Total Expenditure	16,780
Operating Surplus	4655

Reserves Position

Reserve Type	Amount (£)
General Reserve	12,589
Earmarked Playground Reserve	8341
Asset Maintenance	2474
Lengthsman	568
Major Asset Fund	6782
Grants and Donations	1000
Toilet block maintenance	3530
Defibrillator Fund	200
Total Reserves Held	22,896

Major Projects Delivered During 2025/26

Parish Post Magazine

A monthly look at the goings on in the community. Delivered by hand to the whole parish of Drewsteignton.

Accessibility Ramps Holy trinity Church

Put in place in July 25 they make the church and grounds accessible for wheelchair users and prams.

Gov.uk domain for councillors

As a new regulation from the external auditors for parish councils. All Cllrs and council staff require Gov.uk email domain.

Multi vehicle activated sign (smiley face)

The smiley face sign that is currently situated in Whiddon down purchased in November 25 has made a positive impact on speeding through the village. The sign is equipped with solar panel, so maintenance has remained low.

A30 Emergency Kit

A brainchild of the Whiddon down village hall committee after an incident in winter 2018, where the A30 was closed from late afternoon due to bad snowfall. This emergency kit includes roll mats and blankets for stranded travellers, that will be held at the village hall and is accessible for any emergency, Within the parish.

Looking Ahead to 2026/27

The Council's priorities for the coming year include:

- Continued maintenance of public amenities
- Long-term play area refurbishment (Zip wire)
- Supporting local events and amenities
- Improving digital communication with residents
- Working with Devon County Council on road safety concerns

The Parish Council anticipates modest financial pressures arising from inflation and rising maintenance costs, but current reserves and prudent budgeting place the Council in a strong position moving forward.

Public Accountability

The Council's accounts have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices for parish councils. Full accounts, bank reconciliation statements, and governance documents are available for public inspection upon request.

Prepared by: Lou Butler

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer Drewsteignton
Parish Council Financial Year Ending 31 March 2026

Signed

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Dated