

Drewsteignton Parish Council.

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Minutes for meeting of Drewsteignton Parish Council that took place on Monday the 15th of June 2026, at 7.30pm in Drewsteignton Church Space.

Present, Peter Brennan, Ian Rowe, John Redman, Larence Bennie, Julie Macy, Anna Imrie, Lou Butler(clerk) and 1 member of the public.

Business Transacted

1.6.26: Welcome

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that an audio recording would be taken from item 1 on the agenda to aid note taking and would be deleted once the draft minutes had been written.

2.6.26 Current Vacancies.

Chair reminded the council of the current vacancy in the Crockernwell ward.

3.6.26: Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Di Battista and Cllr Steve Guthrie. It was noted that Cllr Sue was not present. [Cllr Brennan accepted the apologies and Cllr Bennie seconded, all in favour. Motion carried RR26/22](#)

4.6.26: Minutes of the Last Meetings. Draft Minutes were made available on the website.

The minutes of the previous meeting, including the record of the Annual Community Meeting, were considered. The following corrections were agreed:

- The Gardening Club's reserves should be recorded as approximately **£4,000**, rather than £24,000.
- Whiddon Down Village Hall's reserves should be recorded as approximately **£12,000**.
- The minutes should clearly record that the Council's reviewed policies and procedures, including the Financial Regulations, were approved.

[Subject to these amendments, the minutes were proposed for approval by Cllr Macy and seconded by Cllr Imrie, All in favour, motion carried RR26/22.](#)

5.6.26: Declarations of Interest

Cllrs were invited to declare any interests they may have in items on this agenda, including the nature of the interest. Cllrs were reminded of their responsibilities to keep their register of interests updated. No interest was declared at this time.

6.6.26: Public Speaking Time (max. 3minutes/person. Session time: 10 minutes).

No Members of the public spoke on this occasion.

7.6.26: To receive reports (if any) from County Cllr. Davies & Borough Cllr Guthrie. Plus parish councillors' reports.

No reports had been received from the district or county councillors.

Members noted information published by West Devon Borough Council regarding the securing of leisure facilities in Okehampton, including the contract relating to the swimming pool.

8.6.26: Current and new business

a) Parishioner correspondence and communications.

1. Members were informed that the Chagford Recreational Trust AGM would take place on **Thursday 18 June at 7.00 pm** at the clubhouse in Chagford. Councillors were invited to attend.
2. The Council had received an invitation from Plastic Free Okehampton to a screening of The People's Emergency Briefing at the New Carlton Cinema. The film concerns the impact of the climate and nature emergency on areas including food security, health, economics, national security and daily life in the United Kingdom.
3. A request had been received for information about the date on which Whiddon Down became wholly located within Drewsteignton Parish. Members discussed the available historical information and believed that the change was likely to have taken effect on 1 April 1991, under local government boundary changes introduced at that time.
Action: The Clerk to respond to the enquirer, making clear that this is the Council's current understanding and suggesting that the Devon Archives may hold the definitive records.
4. The Council discussed correspondence concerning an article submitted for publication in the Parish Post about Whiddon Down Village Hall. The article had not been published because it was considered overly negative and potentially discouraging to residents who might otherwise support or volunteer for the hall. Members recognised the considerable work undertaken by the Village Hall committee and the difficulties faced in attracting new volunteers. It was agreed that the Council should respond positively, expressing appreciation for the work carried out by the committee and recognising the importance of the hall as a community asset.

Action: The Clerk to prepare a response acknowledging the contribution of the Village Hall committee.

5. The new footpath had been completed. The original quotation had been approximately **£4,600**. By arranging the purchase of stone and materials through the Parish Council, allowing VAT to be reclaimed, the net cost was reduced to approximately **£3,900**.
Members were pleased with the completed work and noted that the contractor had been helpful and responsive.
6. Play equipment had been purchased for the children's area at the church, including toy vehicles, a garage, a climbing frame, slide and floor mats. The Parish Council had awarded a grant of **£500**. Approximately **£214.49** had been spent to date. Savings had been achieved by purchasing equivalent equipment from lower-cost suppliers. The remaining grant funding may be used for further suitable equipment within the purpose of the original grant. Any unspent balance would remain subject to the terms of the grant award.
7. The Clerk had contacted West Devon Borough Council regarding a large advertising sign recently erected at Whiddon Down. No current planning or advertising consent had been identified at the time of the enquiry. An older advertising consent from approximately 1980 had been noted, but its relevance to the present sign was unclear.
West Devon Borough Council was investigating the matter.
Action: The Clerk to circulate any response received and copy Cllr Steve Guthrie into the correspondence.
8. Quarry site and suspected residential use. A concern had been received regarding possible residential use of a water tank or similar structure at the quarry. The matter had been referred to the relevant enforcement officer, who intended to inspect the site. The enforcement team will also be informed of increased activity at Hole farm in Whiddon Down within the wooded area and the unauthorised use of land as a residential site in Drewsteignton.
9. The Council remained concerned about faded or missing road markings, particularly in areas where inconsiderate parking had restricted access. It was reported that an emergency vehicle had recently had trouble passing due to parked vehicles. The Clerk was awaiting an update from the highways officer regarding the programme for renewing the markings.
10. Public toilet block A further builder had inspected the public toilet block. The builder considered that the roof may require full replacement rather than a temporary covering. There was evidence of deterioration to timber beneath the roof and around the ladies' toilet doorframes.
The builder intended to provide quotations covering limited repairs where possible; removal and replacement of the existing roof; associated repairs to internal woodwork and damaged areas; and the possible construction of a pitched roof draining towards the rear. It was suggested that the existing skylights should be removed, as these could create future maintenance and leakage problems. Members agreed that further quotations should be obtained before any decision was taken.

The Council also discussed the building's ownership and lease arrangements. Previous attempts to replace or regularise the lease had resulted in an estimated legal cost of approximately £2,500 to £3,000.

Members considered that it would be unwise to invest substantial sums in the building without secure tenure. It was agreed that, once repair quotations had been received, the Council should approach the National Trust again to discuss: the possibility of purchasing the toilet block; obtaining a satisfactory new lease; or alternative arrangements for the building.

The Council noted that temporary closure may become necessary if the condition of the building deteriorates further.

Actions:

The Clerk to obtain further repair and replacement quotations.

The Clerk to seek a clear specification for the required work where possible.

Once costs are known, the Council to reopen discussions with the National Trust regarding ownership or lease arrangements.

11. The Council received an update on the proposed acquisition of the allotment site. The aim is to complete the transaction by the end of March. The site comprises approximately 10 allotment plots, with around four currently used by residents of Cheriton Bishop. Members noted that there is no mains water supply and that some boundary fencing may require attention. Sample tenancy agreements have been obtained for review, and solicitor's quotations have been received, with the lowest currently approximately £1,000 plus VAT. A further quotation will be sought. The allotments can be added to the Council's existing insurance policy. The Council agreed to continue progressing the purchase, subject to satisfactory legal advice and costs.

Actions:

Obtain a further solicitor's quotation.

Review the tenancy agreement.

Confirm the boundary fencing requirements and insurance cover.

Continue negotiations with the landowner.

Explore whether Cheriton Bishop Parish Council may contribute towards the project.

9.6.26: Finance and Consideration for approval of purchases.

The Council reviewed the month's payments and supporting financial documents.

Expenditure during the month was higher than usual, largely because of the footpath project and associated materials.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's insurance renewal was expected to cost approximately £437.

The zip wire needed to be included on the Council's insurance schedule.

Action: The insured value of the new zip wire and its installation costs, approximately £18,000, should be checked to ensure that the cover is adequate.

It was noted that several electricity invoices had been received in the same month. This is part of the ongoing issue with SSE and the **clerk will continue to try to resolve the dispute.**

Members also discussed the increase in the approved mileage rate from **45 pence to 55 pence per mile** from 1 April and the need to ensure that relevant claims were calculated correctly.

The payments and financial documents were proposed by Cllr Brennan seconded by Cllr Rowe and approved. RR26/23

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return documentation would be presented for completion before the filing deadline of **30 July**.

Drewsteignton pc online payment log June 26				
Voucher n	Date	Supplier	Discription	Amount
31	15.06.2026	Phil Tucker (Parish Magazine Printing)	Parish post printing	£106.31
30	15.06.2026	Louise Butler	Salaries and expenses	£617.07
29	01.06.2026	EDF	Electric W/C	£23.68
28	20.05.2026	EDF	Electric W/C	£18.90
27	05.05.2026	EDF	Electric W/C	£23.68
26	01.06.2026	Scribe Accounting (Starboard Systems Limited)	Scribe	£28.80
25	09.06.2026	Ian Pinnegar	Car park footpath	£2,080.25
24	10.06.2026	Crediton Tool hire	Car park footpath	£72.00
23	05.06.2026	H E Services Plant hire	Car park footpath	£291.12
22	08.06.2026	H E Services Plant hire	Car park footpath	£108.70
21	03.06.2026	Bradfords	Car park footpath	£69.60
20	29.05.2026	Bradfords	Car park footpath	£532.68
19	28.05.2026	Ikea	church space grant	£143.00

12.3.26: Confirmation of the next Council meeting: 20th of July 2026.7.30 at The long room Drewe Arms - Any changes will be posted on the Website.

Signed

Dated