

Drewsteignton Parish Council.

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Minutes for meeting of Drewsteignton Parish Council that took place on Monday the 21st of September 2026, at 7.30pm in Whiddon Down Village Hall.

Present: Peter Brennan, Andy Di Battista, Ian Rowe, John Redman, Laurence Bennie, Julie Macy, Anna Imrie, Lou Butler (Clerk), County Cllr. Sue Davies and 5 members of the public.

Business Transacted

1.9.26: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting following the CPR and defibrillator awareness training. The Chair thanked those attending and noted the strong turnout.

2.9.26: Current Vacancies

The Chair reminded the Council that there remained one vacancy in the Crockernwell ward.

3.9.26: Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sue Hember and Borough Cllr Steve Guthrie.

[Resolved: The apologies were accepted. Cllr Bennie proposed and Cllr Rowe seconded. All in favour.](#)
[RR26/31](#)

4.9.26: Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2026 were considered. Members confirmed that circulation of meeting papers by WhatsApp, in addition to email, had worked well.

[Resolved: The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting. Cllr Bennie proposed. All in favour.](#)
[RR26/32](#)

5.9.26: Declarations of Interest

Cllrs were invited to declare any interests in items on the agenda. A declaration was made in relation to planning application 0258/26 concerning an ongoing commercial relationship with the applicant.

6.9.26: Public Speaking Time

Public speaking was combined with agenda item 8.9.26(a), planning application 0258/26, Bowbeer Farm.

7.9.26: To receive reports from County/Borough Councillors and Parish Councillors

County Cllr Sue Davies

Cllr Davies provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation. The process had been paused and further Government information was expected. She advised that updates would be published through the Future Devon website. Devon County Council continued to consider its options, including the possibility of a judicial review, although the potential cost and timescale were noted.

On highways, residents were reminded of the importance of reporting potholes. Cllr Davies explained that an unreported defect could affect a subsequent damage claim because the highway authority may state that it had no prior knowledge of the defect. The prolonged dry weather had allowed some pothole repairs to progress, although gullies and drainage remained a concern ahead of wetter weather.

Concerns were also raised about road closures and diversion arrangements, particularly where contractors unfamiliar with the local area gave unsuitable directions. A number of current and forthcoming closures related to utility works.

Cllr Davies reported that water-quality concerns continued within the parish. She was pressing South West Water for further investigation, as repeated flushing of the system did not appear to have resolved residents' concerns. Residents experiencing water-quality issues were encouraged to contact her so that the scale of the problem could be evidenced. A Devon water-quality conference was expected in November.

Members discussed the repeated flushing of the system at Crockernwell and the associated temporary interruption and pressure changes affecting properties.

Cllr Davies also highlighted a small community safety grant scheme, which could assist with items such as external lighting or CCTV. She agreed to send details to the Council.

An update was provided on the Devon carers service, which was due to return in-house from 1 October. The service supports unpaid carers and includes emergency planning arrangements.

The Household Support/Resilience Fund was also highlighted as a source of short-term assistance for households facing immediate financial difficulty.

The Council thanked Cllr Davies for her report.

Action: The Clerk to publicise the request for residents to report continuing water-quality issues.

Action: Cllr Davies to forward details of the community safety grant scheme.

Parish Councillors' reports

Highways and road condition

A councillor reported that resurfacing works near the A30 had been well received. Further treatment to Long Lane was also discussed.

The Chair reported several punctures at Fingle Bridge over the previous weekend which residents attributed to potholes. It was noted that Fingle Bridge attracts a substantial number of visitors and that the condition of the access road should be raised again with Highways.

Action: The Clerk/Cllr Davies to raise the condition of the Fingle Bridge road with Highways, supported by information on visitor numbers where available.

Vegetation around electricity infrastructure

Members reported that electricity network contractors had been surveying vegetation close to poles and overhead lines and had discussed clearance around infrastructure.

Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping was reported near Trennaway Cross. It was agreed that the matter should be reported for collection.

Action: The fly-tipping at Trennaway Cross to be reported to the relevant authority.

Whiddon Down signage

The large sign previously raised with West Devon had been removed, although the supporting posts remained. Members were advised that the posts could remain while a future planning application was considered.

The Clerk had also received concerns regarding the number of temporary yellow AA-style signs associated with the caravan park. The Clerk would continue to raise the matter with West Devon.

Action: The Clerk to continue correspondence regarding temporary signage at Whiddon Down.

Whiddon Down pub and defibrillator

Members noted that the pub had closed following the tenant's departure. It was understood that the owner might return to the premises and seek a manager, with the intention of reopening.

The possibility of nominating the pub as an Asset of Community Value was discussed.

The defibrillator remained mounted at the pub. Although the unit itself appeared serviceable, access had become unsuitable due to the closure and a chain/gate restricting entry. The unit was also shown as offline on the national defibrillator system, meaning emergency call handlers might not direct members of the public to it.

It was agreed to investigate relocating the defibrillator to Whiddon Down Village Hall, subject to permission and a suitable electrical supply for the heated cabinet.

Action: The Clerk/Chair to approach Whiddon Down Village Hall regarding relocation of the defibrillator and arrange for its status to be updated.

Action: The Council to investigate the process for nominating the pub as an Asset of Community Value.

Vehicle-activated speed sign

The Council's older vehicle-activated speed sign had been returned and tested. The sign was serviceable, although older batteries were no longer working; the replacement battery purchased previously remained operational. It was agreed that the sign should be put back into use.

Action: Arrangements to be made for the sign to be installed at the next suitable location.

Drewsteignton car park

The Clerk confirmed that parking permits had been issued for contractors working on the Glebe and Trinity Cottages project, allowing their vehicles to use designated spaces in Drewsteignton car park on weekdays. This was intended to reduce contractor parking within the village.

Members reported that some contractor vehicles were still causing access difficulties. The National Trust was also dealing separately with a vehicle regularly parked near the cottages.

The permit arrangement would provide a small income to the Parish Council.

Action: The Clerk to raise continuing contractor parking issues with the relevant site contact/National Trust.

Road closures

The Council noted forthcoming road closures, including works near Veet Mill Farm/Crockernwell from 19 to 23 October and works between Trennaway Cross and the Rectory in early November in connection with South West Water.

Action: Details of forthcoming closures to be publicised through the Parish Post and other Council channels.

8.9.26: Planning

a) 0258/26 - Bowbeer Farm - Agricultural storage building for machinery and straw

The Council considered an application for a new agricultural storage building. The proposed building would be approximately 120 ft by 53 ft, with concrete walling to approximately 1.8 metres and traditional agricultural cladding above.

The applicants explained that additional covered space was required for machinery and straw and to provide greater flexibility for livestock during increasingly wet and difficult winter conditions. Existing buildings were constrained by their layout and current use. The proposed height was required to accommodate agricultural machinery and tipping operations and was comparable with an existing building on the site.

The building would sit within the existing farmyard and be set into the hillside, limiting its visual impact. Its rectangular form was considered practical for agricultural use and provided flexibility for future livestock management.

Members considered the investment important to the continuing operation of the farm and noted the animal-welfare benefits of providing adequate covered accommodation during adverse weather.

Resolved: To support the application. Cllr Rowe proposed and Cllr Bennie seconded. All in favour. RR26/33

Action: The Clerk to submit a positive response to Dartmoor National Park Authority, specifically referring to agricultural need, animal welfare, changing winter conditions, the practical design and limited visual impact.

b) 0282/26 - Charisma Cottage, Hillmore Hayes - Listed Building Consent

The Council considered an application relating to the Grade II listed, thatched property to raise the chimney by approximately 300 mm, from 900 mm to 1.2 metres. The works were required in connection with insurance and safe operation of the stove.

Members noted the fire-safety considerations associated with solid-fuel appliances and thatch and considered the proposed alteration proportionate.

Resolved: To support the application. Cllr Di Battista proposed. All in favour. RR26/34

Action: The Clerk to submit the Council's positive response.

9.9.26: Highway Matters

Highway matters were considered within the councillor reports above, including potholes at Fingle Bridge, road closures, drainage and diversion signage.

10.9.26: Current and New Business

a) Allotment land acquisition

The Clerk confirmed that a solicitor had now been appointed to act for the Parish Council in the proposed acquisition of the Drewsteignton allotment land. The land was to be transferred by the Johnson family for £1, with the Parish Council assuming responsibility for its future management and boundary maintenance.

Legal costs were expected to be approximately £3,000. The solicitor was awaiting contact/papers from the landowner's side.

Action: The Clerk to continue progressing the transaction with the appointed solicitor and landowner's representatives.

b) Drewsteignton public toilets

Members agreed that significant structural expenditure should not be committed while discussions with the National Trust continued regarding responsibility for the building.

The National Trust's current position was that the lease had not been formally surrendered and remained registered until 2029. The Parish Council's position was that it had maintained the facility in good faith, but substantial structural works were now required.

A meeting with the National Trust was being arranged to discuss responsibility for the repairs and the future of the building.

Action: The Clerk/Chair to meet with the National Trust and report back to Council before significant structural expenditure is authorised.

c) Annual policy review

The Council reviewed the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, Lone Worker Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy. No amendments were considered necessary and the policies remained appropriate for the Council's purposes.

Resolved: The three policies were approved without amendment. RR26/35

d) Zip wire

The new zip wire had now been installed. During installation it was discovered that the initial spacing was approximately 20 metres rather than the specified 25 metres. The Council declined an offered £500 reduction to accept the shorter installation, and the contractor returned to reposition the posts to the contracted 25-metre length.

The accessible seat had been installed, but the standard pommel seat had been omitted. The supplier had agreed to provide this separately. Until then, use of the equipment remained limited.

The Council thanked Ian Picford for attending the site during the installation works.

Action: The Clerk to continue liaising with Sovereign until the standard seat is supplied and the installation is fully complete.

11.9.26: Finance and Consideration for Approval of Purchases

The Clerk reported that £210 had been paid into the bank from the honesty boxes, representing approximately three months' receipts. The latest precept payment had also been received.

Income from the National Trust contractor parking arrangement was expected once its payment system had been completed.

The national pay award for the Clerk had been received. As this had not been included as a substantive item on the published agenda, formal consideration would be placed on a future agenda.

Members noted that Parish Post printing costs had reduced significantly following the move to black-and-white printing.

Drewsteignton pc online payment Aug and Sept 26					
Voucher n	Date	Supplier	Discription	Amount	VAT reclaim
52	21.09.2026	Louise Butler	Salaries and expenses	£1,025.33	Y
51	16.09.2026	EDF	pf electric	£19.54	Y
50	01.09.2026	Scribe Accounting (Starboard Systems Limited)	Scribe	£28.80	Y
49	28.07.2026	Parish Mag Printers Ltd	Parish post printing	£171.60	N
48	01.09.2026	EDF	Electric W/C	£23.68	Y
47	24.08.2026	Amazon	toilets	£22.00	Y
46	18.08.2026	EDF	pf electric	£20.11	Y
45	03.08.2026	Scribe Accounting (Starboard Systems Limited)	Scribe	£28.80	Y
44	31.07.2026	Colin Campbell	toilets	£580.00	N

The financial documents and payments were reviewed by Cllr Di Battista, and Cllr P Brennan RR26/35

12.9.26: Confirmation of the Next Council Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed for Monday 19 October 2026 in the Long Room, Drewsteignton. Any changes will be posted on the Council website.

Signed

Dated

Signed

Dated