

Drewsteignton Parish Council.

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Minutes for meeting of Drewsteignton Parish Council that took place on Monday the 20th of July 2026, at 7.30pm in The Lond Room Drewsteignton Church.

Present, Peter Brennan, Andy Di Battista, Ian Rowe, John Redman, Laurence Bennie, Julie Macy, Anna Imrie, Sue Hember, Lou Butler(clerk) WDB Cllr Steve Gutherie and 2 members of the public.

Business Transacted

1.7.26: 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.

2.7.26 Current Vacancies.

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

3.7.26: Apologies for absence:

No apologies.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered.

It was agreed that future meeting papers could be circulated through WhatsApp as well as by email, according to individual councillors' preferences. [Cllr Bennie proposed the minutes were approved as a true record of the last meeting.](#) [Cllr Hember seconded the motion.](#) All in favour. Motion carried RR26/24

5.7.26: 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.

6.7.26: Public Speaking Time (please see agenda item 8.7.26 (b))

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

Cllr Steve Guthrie provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation.

The Government appeared to favour the proposal submitted by Plymouth and Exeter, despite alternative proposals having been developed by West Devon and other Devon authorities. Concerns remained that the proposed structure would create a geographically very large authority with insufficient focus on the needs of rural communities.

It was noted that rural areas often experienced higher service-delivery costs and lower levels of service. The alternative proposal supported by West Devon had sought to provide a stronger rural focus.

The detailed arrangements, including councillor numbers and divisions, would not be known until the Structural Changes Order was published. This was expected on 16 August. Shadow authorities were expected to be created during 2027, with the new authorities becoming operational from 1 April 2028.

Potential opportunities could arise from closer working between parish and town councils and the new authority. However, concern was expressed about the cost and disruption of the reorganisation and the transfer of major responsibilities, including adult and children's social care, to authorities that had not previously delivered those services.

Cllr Steve also reported on the following:

- Tamar Energy Community provided free advice and home visits to residents considering energy-efficiency improvements or retrofitting.
- A consultation on the emerging West Devon Local Plan was due to run from 16 July to 24 September.
- Changes to national planning policy would make it increasingly difficult for planning authorities to refuse development on greenfield sites.
- Conservation area appraisals were taking place in Lifford and Okehampton between 27 July and 6 September.
- The Apricot Centre at Dartington supported regenerative farming, new agricultural enterprises and farmers experiencing mental-health difficulties. Members were encouraged to find out more about its work.

The Council thanked Cllr Steve for his report.

Councillors' reports

Whiddon Down Chapel

A new access had been created from Chapel Hill into Whiddon Down Chapel. The works appeared tidy and the new access was welcomed.

Road closure signs

Concerns were raised about road closure signs around Whiddon Down and Crockernwell. Some signs were difficult to read from a moving vehicle and did not clearly identify which road was closed. One sign had also been positioned partly within the carriageway, causing vehicles to move around it.

Dry weather and fire risk

Members noted that conditions were extremely dry and the risk of fire remained high. Fruit trees and other vegetation were showing signs of stress.

Telephone box restoration

Work on the telephone box was continuing but was taking longer than anticipated.

The contractor had been asked to clear away materials and debris following the work. Additional equipment had been obtained to help speed up the restoration.

Chagford Show

Councillors were reminded that volunteers would be required for Chagford Show. Further details and timings would follow.

The Di Batista family was thanked for sponsoring a rosette.

Vehicle-activated speed sign

A councillor reported that the Whiddon Down speed sign had displayed an inaccurate speed on one occasion, showing 42 mph when the vehicle was travelling at approximately 28 mph.

The sign appeared accurate at other times. It was agreed that the sensor should be cleaned and monitored.

Action: The speed sign sensor to be cleaned and checked.

Zip wire update

The Chair reported ongoing difficulties obtaining information from Sovereign regarding the manufacture and installation of the new zip wire.

A provisional installation date of 16 September had now been provided. This meant that the equipment would not be available during the school summer holidays.

Members expressed disappointment at the delay.

Community energy project

An update had been received regarding the proposed community energy project involving the pub, church, church cottages and church rooms.

Despite significant work having been undertaken during the first stage, it had now been confirmed that no second-stage funding was available.

Members expressed frustration that approximately £37,000 of public funding had already been spent on the preliminary work without a clear route to delivering the project.

It had been requested that the consultants use the remaining work to prepare and cost a more focused proposal. This would consider:

drilling a borehole within the church courtyard, away from graves;

providing heating to the church and cottages; and

locating the associated storage tank within the cottages' garden.

The Council would consider any practical and reasonably costed proposal that resulted from this work.

8.7.26: Planning

- a) 0208/26 Full Planning Permission, Temporary site to provide parking and storage (2no shipping containers) for contractors working on 1-3 Glebe and Trinity Cottages Expires 21/08/26. The Council considered an application to provide a temporary site for two shipping containers and associated contractor storage in connection with the restoration of Glebe and Trinity Cottages.

The site would be accessed close to the playing fields and would help keep contractors' vehicles, equipment and deliveries away from the village square. The land would be restored following completion of the works, which were expected to take approximately 18 to 24 months.

Members considered the proposal to be sensible and beneficial in reducing disruption and parking pressures within the village. [Cllr Redman proposed a positive response to be given, and Cllr Imrie seconded, all in favour, motion carried. RR26/25](#)

- b) 0213/26 Listed Building Consent, Repairs and restoration of barn group, replacement roofs, replacement access gate, new car port, swimming pool, and greenhouse. Lambert Barn Lambert Lane, Crockernwell. Expires 31-07-2026

Resolved: To support the application.

The Council considered an application for listed building consent and associated works at Lambert Barn. The proposals included:

- repairs and restoration of the historic barns;
- replacement roofs and structural timbers;
- replacement entrance gates;

- a timber carport;
- an above-ground swimming pool;
- a greenhouse; and
- solar panels on the south-facing lincay roof.

Jonathan and Murray addressed the Council. They explained that they had moved to Lambert Barn in November 2024 and that the historic barns had suffered from many years of limited maintenance. The buildings contained substantial structural cracking, failing roof coverings and decayed timbers. During storms, parts of the roofs lifted, and one roof had begun to slip.

The intention was to preserve the cob and timber buildings before they deteriorated beyond repair. The barns would continue to be used for storage and workshop purposes, with no proposed change of use or conversion to holiday accommodation.

Original features, including the remains of the former roundhouse, central post and sections of the historic floor, would be retained wherever possible.

The proposed above-ground swimming pool was required to provide non-weight-bearing exercise for their daughter, who had hypermobility. The pool would require minimal groundworks and could be removed without leaving a permanent impact.

The carport would provide sheltered unloading, and the greenhouse would allow more produce to be grown on site.

The solar panels would be black, non-reflective panels installed on black roofing sheets on the south-facing lincay. The works would be screened by existing hedges and would not be readily visible from the public footpath.

Members welcomed the applicants' commitment to the long-term custodianship of the listed property and its associated historic buildings. It was considered particularly commendable that the barns were being repaired without seeking an income-generating change of use.

Resolved: To support the application. [Cllr Imrie proposed to give a positive response to the application and Cllr Bennie seconded all in favour motion carried. RR26/26](#)

- c) 1863/26/FUL. Full Planning Permission, Installation of 1 no. 200KW Ev charging unit supplying 2 no DDA-compliant charging bays, together with a LV meter cabinet, associate ducting and surfacing reinstatement. Petrol station Whiddon Down. EX20 2QT expires 20/08/26 (WDDC)

The Council considered an application for the installation of electric vehicle charging units at Whiddon Down Service Station.

The units would occupy existing parking spaces close to the shop. Members considered the installation appropriate and in keeping with the future needs of the service station.

Resolved: [To support the application. Cllr Redman proposed a positive response for the above application Cllr Imrie seconded all in favour motion carried RR26/27](#)

Action: The Clerk to submit the Council's responses to the relevant planning authorities promptly.

- d) The Clerk reported on several enforcement matters.

A West Devon planning enforcement officer had visited the site, at Whiddon down services and taken photographs and investigated the effect of the sign on surrounding views. Further information from a parishioner had also been passed to the enforcement officer. The Clerk had subsequently been advised that contractors had been instructed to remove the sign during the first half of August. The sign had been erected without the necessary advertisement consent. The Council welcomed the proposed removal.

A DNPA officer had inspected the site at Drewsteignton and confirmed that a structure appeared to be in residential use. The officer described the use as unlawful and confirmed that the matter was on the enforcement team's radar. As the investigation remained active, no further information could be provided.

The enforcement officer was aware of the reported issues at Hole Woods and the land west of Drewsteignton. Both matters remained under active investigation, and no further details were available.

9.7.26: Highway Matters

The Council noted that Josh Scillitoe had left his role on 1 July to take up a new position covering the Tavistock and Yelverton Rural Division. The Council recorded its thanks for his work and assistance over the previous three to four years. His replacement was understood to be Jade Ash, who had several years' experience in the role. The Clerk had not yet received direct contact from her.

10.7.26 Current and new business

- a) **Nomination for providence school trustee.** The Council considered the nomination of Connie Thomas of Glenna Cottage, Sandy Park, to serve as the Parish Council's representative trustee for the Providence School. Connie was a teacher, came highly recommended and was keen to join the board.

Resolved: Cllr Redman proposed to nominate Connie Thomas as Drewsteignton Parish Council's representative trustee. Cllr Rowe seconded, all in favour, motion carried RR26/28

Action: The Clerk to inform Roger and the Providence School trustees.

- b) **DNPA Local plan notice.**

The Clerk reported that Dartmoor National Park Authority had opened an early consultation on its new Local Plan.

The consultation sought views on:

- the proposed vision for the new Local Plan;
- its scope and content;
- how well the current Local Plan was performing; and
- how the Authority should engage with communities during preparation of the plan.

Responses were required by Sunday 23 August and an online survey was available.

It was agreed that councillors would respond individually rather than the Council submitting a single corporate response.

Action: The Clerk to circulate the consultation link to all councillors.

c) **Parish Council insurance.**

The Clerk reported that the Council's annual insurance premium had increased from approximately £475 to £837.75.

The significant increase was largely attributed to the inclusion of the new zip wire.

A three-year agreement was available at an initial annual premium of £781.70, although the premium would not be fixed and could increase in subsequent years.

Other insurers approached had either declined to provide cover or had been unable to cover the zip wire.

Members considered that a one-year policy provided greater flexibility.

Resolved: Cllr Di Battista proposed to renew the Parish Council insurance for one year at a cost of £837.75. Cllr Bennie seconded, all in favour, motion carried.

RR26/29

d) **Allotment land acquisition**

The Clerk reported that it had been difficult to find a solicitor willing to act for the Parish Council on the proposed acquisition of the allotment land.

Bertram Law had expressed an interest in acting and had provided an estimated fee of between £1,750 and £2,550 plus VAT. The higher cost reflected the need to review tenancy arrangements, licences and the proposed overage or clawback provision.

Tozer's had also indicated that it might offer a reduced charitable rate, subject to reviewing the papers.

The land was being transferred to the Parish Council for £1. The landowner's family wished to retain a right to a share of any significant future uplift in value if the land ceased to be used as allotments and was subsequently sold for development.

It was agreed that the matter should progress during the summer rather than being delayed until the September meeting.

Resolved: Cllr Redman proposed to authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair, to appoint a solicitor and proceed with the transaction within a

legal budget of up to £2,550 plus VAT, subject to consideration of the quotations received and compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Cllr Rowe Seconded, all in favour, motion carried RR26/30

Action: A councillor would provide the Clerk with an additional contact at Tozer's.

Action: The Clerk to circulate updates to councillors during the summer.

11.7.26: Finance and Consideration for approval of purchases.

The Clerk reported that the purchases for the children's play area within the church had now been completed.

The facility was already being well used, and positive comments had been received.

The financial documents and payments were reviewed and approved. By Cllr Di Battista and Cllr Brennan.

Drewsteignton pc online payment log July 2026					
Voucher n	Date	Supplier	Discription	Amount	VAT reclaim
41	20.07.2026	Louise Butler	Salaries and expenses	£541.94	N
39	20.07.2026	EDF	pf electric	£19.69	Y
38	20.07.2026	Scribe Accounting (Starboard Systems Limited)	Scribe	£28.80	Y
37	20.07.2026	EDF	Electric W/C	£23.68	Y
36	20.07.2026	Amazon	church space grant	£111.74	Y
35	20.07.2026	Ikea	church space grant	£165.00	Y
34	20.07.2026	information commisioner	GDPR	£47.00	N
33	16.06.2026	EDF	pf electric	£19.53	Y
32	20.07.2026	Phil Tucker (Parish Magazine Printing)	Parish post printing	£125.88	N

12.3.26: Confirmation of the next Council meeting: 21th of September 2026.7.30 at Whiddon down village hall to include defibrillator training. - Any changes will be posted on the Website.