

# LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024

<b>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Present</b>	Councillors: Geoff Bond Jenny Coles John Davies Mark Glover (Chairman) David Ley Pat Mitchell Penny Stowell Anna Moseby Cheryl Cottle–Hunkin (TDC)
<b>In attendance</b>	Linda Davies – Parish Clerk 1 member of the public
	<b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Colin Edworthy, and Chris Wheatley (TDC) Andrew Saywell (DCC) Melissa Baker (PCSO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.</li></ul>
	<b>Election of Chairman and Vice Chair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mark Glover was re-elected chairman proposed by David and seconded by John.</li><li>• John Davies was re-elected vice chairman, proposed by Mark and seconded by Jenny.</li></ul>
	<b>Any other business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was no other business.</li><li>• This meeting was then closed by the Chairman.</li></ul>
<b>PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</b>	
<b>677</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE as above.</b>

<b>678</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>
678.1	<p>Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook posts had resulted in suggestions for play equipment.</li> <li>• 106 process was explained.</li> <li>• Chris (TDC) is investigating the blocked drain close to the allotments.</li> <li>• Correspondence from Claire Allen and Fiona Skilton had been past to The Parish Hall Committee</li> <li>• A response had been sent to Phipps and Poorlands.</li> </ul>
678.2	<p>Minutes of meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 to be confirmed and signed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minutes were proposed by Penny Stowell and seconded by Pat Mitchell. Approved.</li> </ul>
<b>679</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No interests were declared.</li> </ul>
<b>680</b>	<b>REPORTS</b>
680.1	<p>Police Community Support Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report from the PCSO was read out. =</li> <li>• Crime – 3 violence 1 criminal damage – all at the same property and not impactful on the community</li> <li>• Logs – 2 violence 1 suspicious incident</li> </ul>
680.2	<p>County Councillor</p> <p><b>B3227 Surface Dressing</b> – I am aware of the issues we have had with the surface dressing works having driven the road several times during the course of the last few days including when it was being swept. The Engineering Team have been on site with the contractor today and are now waiting for a remedial plan from the surface dressing contractor to correct the failed sections. They are expecting that plan imminently and once I have more information, I will share it with the Parish Council.</p> <p><b>Financial Situation</b> – The outturn figures have now been finalised and I can confirm that DCC came in with an underspend for the 2023-24 financial year. I cannot stress enough what an achievement this is given the wider challenges the Council has faced in the past 2 years, and this puts the Council on a firm footing for this new financial year. Compared with the neighbouring and wider local government family, Devon’s finances are in a far more secure position. Through this careful budget management, this has freed up additional resources for Highways which I will highlight in a moment...</p>

**Devolution** - I have outlined in previous reports to the Parish Council about the Devolution settlement for Devon. The consultation has now closed and DCC and Torbay Councils have voted to approve the settlement. While this won't for most people change things overnight, it is the start of a journey for Devon and puts us in a much stronger position to engage with Central Government, draw down more funding for economic and affordable housing regeneration schemes, and over time see a greater transfer of powers away from Westminster and down to Devon.

The immediate settlement includes:

1. Direct control of adult education to create up to 50,000 new training and retraining opportunities by 2030.
2. Government transfer of over £16 million to invest in new green jobs, homes, skills, and business growth, and accelerate Devon and Torbay's transition to a net-zero economy.
3. Stronger partnership with Homes England to create a joint local action plan for affordable housing schemes for local people and reduce homelessness.
4. Even closer working between Devon and Torbay to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of public transport. There is an ambition to introduce a single ticketing system for travellers and investment in services to provide greater access to public transport.
5. Devon and Torbay would be responsible for developing, designing and delivering the next stages of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 2025
6. Boosting and supporting high growth business sectors in Devon and Torbay, such as advanced marine engineering, defence, photonics and digital

There have been some fears expressed during the consultation that the new Devon and Torbay County Combined Authority will be too remote and focus funding on south Devon only at the expense of the north of the County and we will be 'overlooked'...

I do not agree with that assessment and would point out that, with the recent exception of Levelling Up Funding, that both Torridge DC and Devon CC on their own have been regularly overlooked for the past 50 years! Carrying on with the status quo won't change that... but I believe the Devolution Settlement will re-set our relationship with Government and the poor economic and social indicators in Torridge will mean this area is a priority within Devon. And to give a tangible example, I happen to believe if we'd had this set up in previous years then it would not have taken over 30 years to demolish the old Creamery site at

	<p>Taddipport. Funding for a regeneration scheme could have been drawn down much sooner, and in a way that our existing local government organisations on their own simply haven't been able to do.</p> <p>Above all, in time I believe we will see more powers devolved down to Devon, away from central government bureaucrats in London, and without the need for having an 'elected Mayor' imposed on us. It is the start of a journey and an exciting opportunity for Devon and for Torrington Rural.</p> <p><b>John Hart</b> - As you may have seen in the local news, Cllr John Hart, the Leader of Devon County Council will be retiring in May after 15 years as Leader. He is likely to become the new Chairman of the Council in the next municipal year. Although not officially confirmed yet, Cllr James McInnes, County Councillor for Hatherleigh and Chagford and the current Deputy, is likely to become the new Leader at the Council's Annual General Meeting in May. Andrea Davis, County Councillor for Combe Martin Rural and Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment is likely to be nominated as the new Deputy Leader.</p> <p><b>Special Educational Needs Settlement</b> – Over the Easter period the Government have announced a new funding settlement for Special Educational Needs services in Devon, with £95 million being drawn down to help the County Council balance the SEND Budget and improve the service for our children and young people in Devon. This settlement was more generous than first expected, in part due to our overall careful financial management, as referenced earlier in my report. This settlement also helps to contribute to the Council's long term financial stability.</p> <p><b>£10 million more for Highways</b> – Thanks in part to the more generous settlement from the Government on SEND and prudent financial management, £10 million of savings the Council had made in the past financial year will now be re-allocated to Highways. The majority of this funding will be used to carry out more serviceability patching – which are resurfacing style repairs/patches – and can be used for defect and non-safety defect repairs. A further allocation will be used to boost the drainage budget further too.</p>
680.3	<p>District Councillor</p> <p>At internal overview and scrutiny, we heard from public speaker Mike Teare, chair of the charity "Way of the Wharves" who spoke to the committee about the newly bestowed recognition of Bideford and the River Torridge's Heritage Harbour status- one of only 10 Heritage Harbours in the UK. This extends from Northam all the way up the River Torridge through Bideford up to Rosemoor Gardens in Great Torrington. There is no legal status or pot of money attached to it but brings a sense</p>

of identity and pride which can be drawn upon to develop the area and its cultural identity, promoting visitors to Bideford and its surroundings.

We had a call-in to scrutinise a decision made by the community and resources committee. Councillors on the scrutiny committee voted to endorse a climate change adaptation strategy for the region (Devon Cornwall and Isles of Scilly). Some councillors on the main decision-making committee had previously made comments relating to climate denial and conspiracy theories which is in total contradiction with our intentions as a council, having declared a climate emergency in 2019. So, it's been sent back to the community and resources committee to think again (and maybe do some homework on the realities of climate change!)

We also had a presentation from Chris Fuller our economic development officer in relation to the Torridge estuary. There are a lot of competing interests which need to be pulled together. We have the Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre under way with the help of nearly £16M in levelling up funds, as well as the re-growth of Harland and Wolff at Appledore shipyard. There's also the Celtic Sea floating offshore wind in the pipeline, which has a huge ambition of creating 25GW of energy by 2050. Not forgetting our new Heritage Harbour status. The current strategy was adopted in 2014 and is way out of date given the huge number of changes taking place. So, we made a proposal for the council to develop a new strategy which would take all of these new changes into consideration.

Grounds Maintenance- Richard Haste operations manager gave us an update. Grounds maintenance went in-house two years ago in April 2022. It was a positive report, he told us complaints have reduced across Torridge and they are able to be more flexible with grass cutting etc. There are 124 sites listed across Torridge with 700 different items.

In terms of planting, we now only purchase perennials. We have also purchased a shredder and produce our own compost. We have also purchased a "moss brush" which we were told is particularly good on churchyard paths... 6 biodiversity sites have been identified and link in with wildlife corridors. We have also increased the use of the greenhouses in Victoria Park. We were told that the team are always willing to work with volunteers so don't be worried to get in touch.

Update on planning enforcement workload:

We heard from Helen Smith our senior planning officer. There are currently 332 open cases, down from 446 in December last year. There are 2 full-time permanent enforcement officers. There was a spike of cases in 2021 and we had temporary provision of an extra officer Oct-March which saw 305 cases closed. Enforcement is not statutory but

	<p>discretionary, but obviously needs to happen to ensure planning and associated building is done as correctly as possible. Enforcement starts off with a Planning Contravention Notice which is essentially a questionnaire (early stage). Following this there would be a formal enforcement notice. The first point is to try to negotiate but this doesn't always work. The council has also had 100% success on enforcement appeals over the past 4 years. Grant McGill, Helen Mason and Kris Evely form the enforcement team.</p> <p>Langtree specific: Cllr Wheatley has been following up drainage issues at The Crescent. He has been updated today that SWW have passed it on to their contractors to resolve and they will update him again next week. Hopefully with good news.</p> <p>Having seen complaints on social media about the state of the road resurfacing, I followed this up with the county councillor and with highways and have been told: "Unfortunately due to the nature of the process there can occasionally be failures in the treatment and our contractor is aware and will be addressing these in due course."</p>
<p><b>681</b></p>	<p><b>PARISH MATTERS</b></p>
<p>681.1</p>	<p>Update on Langtree Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ROSPA report was discussed with James French – the basket swing had been mended.</li> <li>• James had sent a questionnaire to the school for suggestions of equipment to be purchased.</li> <li>• Zip wire was very popular, but we are not sure funding will stretch to this.</li> <li>• James requested the Clerk to order the swings that the park committee had chosen using funds already available.</li> </ul>
<p>681.2</p>	<p>Other matters impacting the parish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The surface dressing on the B3227 was discussed, Councillors wondered how much it had cost, how it could be rectified and why Highways had chosen a road that was not really in need compared to other roads in the area.</li> <li>• The church clock had stopped – the Cumbria Clock company had been contacted, as the repair was still under warranty.</li> <li>• Council had not granted any 137 grants due to the cost of the clock repairs, and renewal of the defibrillator contracts. However, it was agreed to make a grant to Siloam graveyard.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Accounts were being audited by the internal auditor.</li> </ul>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council have inspected Stibb Cross play park again and suggested that some of the existing equipment can be repaired, by a carpenter.</li> </ul>						
681.3	<p>Collaborative working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The request from the chair of Winkleigh Parish Council – that had been circulated prior to the meeting – was discussed and Council felt that there was no value in it at this time, and that it would have been more of an advantage if the councils were more local to Langtree.</li> </ul>						
<b>682</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>						
682.1	<p>Any updates on potential planning application for land at The Crescent, Langtree. (Holding item only, no discussion anticipated).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>						
682.2	<p>Applications for discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/0371/2024/FULM Retrospective application for the erection of a commercial extension.</li> <li>• No objection</li> </ul>						
682.3	<p>To consider any planning applications received between issuing of agenda and meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new planning applications have been received.</li> </ul>						
<b>683</b>	<b>CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCE</b>						
683.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at end April 2024.</p> <p>The position at the end of April was:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="432 1503 1386 1720"> <tr> <td>Lloyds account</td> <td>£5233</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td> <td>£1559</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£6792</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments in the month were to £1443.60 to TDC, £280.80 to ROSPA, £336.03 DALC. £50 paid to Siloam Graveyard. Agreed by email by chair and further approved in this meeting.</li> <li>• Receipts were the Precept from TDC for £5026.</li> <li>• Langtree Park account = £3686</li> </ul>	Lloyds account	£5233	Reserve account	£1559	Total	£6792
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683.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Hinchcliff for Millennial Garden Green bin. £55.00</li> <li>• All were approved.</li> </ul>
684	<p>To review correspondence received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twinks Read, regarding Mays Meadow building site. - Councillors will meet with Twinks to discuss.</li> <li>• Thanks, from Siloam Graveyard.</li> <li>• Nicky Sanders re 137 grants.</li> </ul>
685	<p><b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered under Langtree Park above.</li> </ul>
686	<p><b>ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathways through Langtree Park and rubber matting has grass growing up – Pat will look to spray them, but need to check if spray is pet friendly or close off the paths whilst work being done. David will laminate a sign to attach to a traffic cone.</li> <li>• David noted that there is a poisonous plant in the parish streams and ditches – Hemlock water drop wort, - looks like cow parsley but is poisonous to humans and animals. TDC/DCC to be notified in order to publish a warning?</li> <li>• The meeting closed at 8.40pm.</li> </ul>
687	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The date of next meeting is Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024.</p>