

LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

9th January 2025

Present	Councillors: Mark Glover John Davies Pat Mitchell Geoff Bond David Ley Penny Stowell Andrew Saywell (DCC)
In attendance	Clerk was an apology, so minutes were taken by Councillor John Davies
747	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from. Linda Davies (Clerk) Jenny Coles Colin Edworthy Melissa Baker (PCSO) Chris Whateley (TDC) Cheryl Cottle Hunkin, (TDC)
748	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
748.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TDC have been notified of Councillor Moseby's resignation.• Grit bins and salt have been ordered.• The fence in Southlands Drive that was damaged by the wind has been fixed temporarily.• The funding for Langtree Park was confirmed as the remaining balance of the Little Acorns Toddler group bank account.
748.2	Minutes of meeting held on 12 th December 2024 to be confirmed and signed. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These were agreed - proposed by David Ley and seconded by Geoff Bond – duly signed.
749	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There was no declaration of interests.

750	REPORTS
750.1	<p><u>Police Community Support Officer:</u></p> <p>Report received -</p> <p>Crime – 1 violence – 1 Fraud/forgery, 1 Drink Drive.</p> <p>Logs – 2 Highway disruption.1 Animal/wildlife incident,1 Fraud/forgery, 1 Domestic related and 2 Road Traffic collision.</p>
750.2	<p><u>County Councillor:</u></p> <p>January 2025</p> <p><i>Happy New Year</i></p> <p>Local Government Reorganisation</p> <p>The English Devolution White Paper was published on just before Christmas.</p> <p>Extract from the ministers letter probably gives some explanation as to where we are heading as residents in a two tier area;</p> <p><i>Local government reorganisation My intention is to formally invite unitary proposals in January 2025 from all councils in two-tier areas, and small neighbouring unitary councils. In this invitation, I will set out further detail on the criteria I will consider when taking decisions on the proposals that are submitted to Government. I intend to ask for interim plans by March 2025. As set out in the White Paper, new unitary councils must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. For most areas, this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more. However, there may be exceptions to ensure new structures make sense for an area, including on devolution. Final decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. We will ask you to work with other councils in your area to develop unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area, rather than developing competing proposals.</i></p> <p>In the White Paper the Government has explicitly issued a direction to Councils in two tier areas to reorganise into unitary authorities and to look towards setting up strategic Combined Authorities with an Elected Mayor. In our case in Devon, that would mean a Combined Authority and Elected Mayor for Devon and Cornwall.</p>

Statement from Andrew

Following publication of the Government's Devolution White paper it is clear that considerable change is going to happen in Local Government in Devon. The County Council is going to be abolished, as will all the Devon District Councils.

We have two options;

- 1. Do nothing and the government will impose changes
- 2. Engage with government to get the best result for the residents of Devon.

I believe that engagement with the government is the best option.

While I may not agree with all the government's proposals, I need to do everything I can to ensure that the changes will make local government sustainable for the long term and is able to withstand shocks like the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the world financial crisis. At the heart of all this must be a stronger voice to inform the government of the issues my residents in Torrington Rural and the residents in the wider area of Devon face.

The shape and size of the new unitary council(s) is the discussion that will come next, and will no doubt be contentious. The Government wants draft proposals submitted by March, discussions in the summer and a final proposal agreed in September.

DCC held an emergency Full Council meeting on the 9th January and resolved the following.

- a. Support the Leader of the Council to submit a letter of intent to Government committing to the Government's ambitious programme enabling the Council to Develop plans for local government reorganisation and deliver a Mayoral Strategic Authority.

	<p>b. As a consequence of joining this ambitious programme the County Council will make a request to Government to postpone the County Council elections due to take place in May 2025 to provide the capacity on which reorganisation and mayoral devolution can progress at pace in 2025 to ensure the benefits of reorganisation and devolution for the area are realised as quickly as possible.</p> <p>c. The council will thereafter work at pace to develop full proposals for reorganisation in line with Government guidance which will be issued in January 2025, working with and alongside partners to develop plans for sustainable unitary structures which meet the needs and aspirations of the varied localities within the Devon area, including those of Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay as well as the coastal and market towns and rural areas.</p> <p>County Council elections are due in May 2025. However, if we are to stick to this timetable the practicality of holding an election is somewhat limited. Councillors elected in May will be planning their redundancy in September. And under this timetable we would likely be having elections to the new 'shadow' unitary authority in May 2026, possibly followed by a Mayoral Election in May 2027.</p> <p>However, this will ultimately be the Government's decision. They may choose to continue with the elections. But election or no election, it is clear that Devon County Council and Torridge District Council are going to cease to exist in a few short years and will be replaced by a new unitary council. I will do all that I can to defend the interests of Torrington Rural as we go through this period of change.</p>
750.3	<p>District Councillor:</p> <p>JOINT STATEMENT: Devon District Councils - update on devolution and local government reform This joint statement is made following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper "The Devon districts are fully supportive of genuine devolution of powers from Whitehall to local government. "However, following the publication of the Devolution White Paper, and subsequent statements by the leader of Devon County Council, we would</p>

	<p>like to make it clear that we do not support the creation of one unitary council for Devon.</p> <p>“Our county, including Torbay, is diverse and made up of nearly 1 million residents across urban, coastal, and rural areas. Any reform of local government in Devon should follow a period of proper consultation with residents, businesses, elected representatives, and stakeholders. Looking at the evidence, we should decide collectively what is best for our area. A single unitary council for the county risks diminishing local representation, with decision-making that is remote from the communities we serve.</p> <p>“We do not support postponing the county council elections scheduled for May 2025. The government has indicated that this will only happen in priority areas who have clear and agreed plans. This is not the case in Devon, so we cannot be in the first phase of these reforms.</p> <p>“We recognise that the government’s white paper sets a clear direction of travel. As Devon’s city, district, and borough council leaders, we want to work collaboratively with others in particular with our neighbouring unitary councils to agree how we respond to this. Any changes must be carefully considered, transparent, and inclusive, ensuring that residents and businesses are fully engaged in shaping the future governance of Devon.</p> <p>“Our objective must be to get this right for our residents and businesses. That cannot be achieved if we make rushed decisions that have not been given the serious consideration that they deserve.”</p> <p>Statement agreed by the following leaders: Cllr Paul Arnott, East Devon Cllr Phil Bialyk, Exeter Cllr Julian Brazil, South Hams Cllr David Clayton, North Devon Cllr Mandy Ewings, West Devon Cllr Ken James, Torridge Cllr Richard Keeling, Teignbridge Cllr Luke Taylor, Mid Devon</p>
<p>751</p>	<p>PARISH MATTERS</p>
<p>751.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Langtree Park. - Council want to look into selling the park to the Parish Hall trustees.
<p>751.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Matters impacting the parish – • Snow warden scheme is ongoing and to date I have 4 volunteer wardens Geoff, John, Greg Mitchell and Mark Stacey, I have another couple of people to approach but would like to know if any other councillors would like to volunteer. The aim being that if we have a pool of volunteers then

	<p>it will not be the same people turning out night after night to grit paths and clear snow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council discussed the need to decide where the 2 new salt/grit bins will be positioned, one in Langtree and one in Stibb. • Highways will be asked if can we apply for a highways grit bin to position near the Parish Hall – as hall is our emergency centre and will need to be kept clear? • Council agreed wording of the advert for a new councillor, to be posted on notice board and social media. 						
752	PLANNING						
752.1	Any updates on potential planning application for land at The Crescent, Langtree – Holding item - None						
752.2	Applications for discussion – none received.						
752.3	<p>To consider any other planning applications received between issuing of agenda and meeting. -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None received. 						
753	CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCE						
753.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at the end December 2024</p> <p>The position at the end of December was:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lloyd’s account</td> <td>£6426.04</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td> <td>£1571.38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£7997.42</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, there is £2231.67 the Langtree Park account. 	Lloyd’s account	£6426.04	Reserve account	£1571.38	Total	£7997.42
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753.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none 						
753.3	<p>To review correspondence received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon Councils update statement on Devolution – covered in reports • North Devon and TDC published five-year housing land supply statement. - Covered in reports 						

753.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies Review: Safeguarding and Financial Reserves Policies were agreed.
753.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget setting – budget was circulated, discussion followed, and precept was agreed. • Clerk Salary was agreed to be increased in line with DALC (Devon Association of Local Councils) salary awards.
754	<p>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation. – None
755	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN’S DISCRETION • 137 grants to be put on February agenda. <p>The meeting closed at 9.10pm.</p>
756	<p>Date of next meeting – Thursday 13th February 2025</p>