

# LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

**13<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

<b>Present</b>	Councillors: Mark Glover John Davies David Ley Penny Stowell Jenny Coles Colin Edworthy Chris Whateley (TDC)
<b>In attendance</b>	Clerk, James Fishleigh ( Prospective councillor)
<b>757</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies were received from. Pat Mitchell Geoff Bond Melissa Baker (PCSO) Andrew Saywell (DCC) Cheryl Cottle Hunkin, (TDC)
<b>758</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>
758.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TDC will not provide a salt/grit bin for the Parish Hall – so the hall committee have agreed to purchase their own.</li><li>• Letter from chairman to TDC to approve salary increase was signed at the meeting.</li><li>• Council vacancy was advertised on Facebook as well as the Parish notice Boards.</li></ul>
758.2	Minutes of meeting held on 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 to be confirmed and signed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These were agreed - proposed by John Davies and seconded by Penny Stowell – duly signed.</li></ul>
<b>759</b>	James Fishleigh introduced himself and discussed why he wished to join the Parish council.
759.1	Council discussed and voted to appoint James as a parish councillor with immediate effect.
<b>760</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was no declaration of interests.</li></ul>

<b>761</b>	<b>REPORTS</b>
761.1	<p><b><u>Police Community Support Officer:</u></b></p> <p>No report received as Melissa is no longer our PCSO. We await the appointment of her successor.</p>
761.2	<p><b>County Councillor:</b></p> <p>DCC Update Report for Langtree Council – February 2024 Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation</p> <p>The Government have announced that the DCC Elections for May 2025 will still be going ahead. Unfortunately, they have also confirmed their intention to abolish the County and District Councils and replace DCC and TDC with a new unitary council.</p> <p>Following the announcement in the House of Commons we received another letter from the Minister of State for Local Government. In that letter the Government have instructed all councils in Devon – the 8 Districts, the County Council and the Plymouth and Torbay unitary councils – to submit an ‘interim plan’ to the Government by the 21st of March. They then expect full and final proposals to be submitted by 28th November. If the Minister accepts the proposal, they would then, according to his letter to local councils, look to hold elections to the new ‘shadow’ unitary council(s) as soon as possible.</p> <p>So potentially good news for election aficionados. We will have elections in May this year for the County Council and then potentially have elections for the new shadow unitary council in May next year...</p> <p>Do I think this scenario will definitely happen? Probably not, but I wouldn’t rule anything out in this ever-changing political environment we now live in.</p> <p>What I do think however, is that it will be extremely unlikely to find a consensus between 11 councils as to what the future of local government in Devon will look like. There are frankly too many organisations, too many opinions and bluntly too many vested interests for everyone to agree that ‘X’ or ‘Y’ solution is the way forward.</p> <p>What is more likely to happen is that competing proposals will be submitted to the Government. They will then take a decision and impose it on us, whether we like it or not.</p> <p>I also think it highly unlikely that this process will be agreed within the year. Leaving aside the elections, the Government have already prioritised 8 other council areas to reorganise ahead of Devon. Any delays in those areas will likely have a knock-on consequence for us.</p> <p>But regardless of that, and regardless of the elections in May, whether we like it or not the Government have set a deadline to put in interim proposals in March. There appears to be no scope for waiting until after the elections, and I feel it would be a dereliction of duty just to sit on my hands and say nothing and let other Councils like Plymouth, Torbay and Exeter dictate to us and the</p>

	<p>Government over what the future representation of Torrington Rural should look like without the involvement of the County Council.</p> <p>A new County Council elected in May might decide to rip up those interim plans but that would be their prerogative. What I would say however, is that the longer this goes on for the more likely it is to have an adverse effect on day-to-day services. For example, the Highways, Youth Services and Libraries contracts are all up for renewal in the next 2 years. The HR Payroll software system is up for renewal, and there will be other contracts and decisions about other service provisions due in the next 3-4 years.</p> <p>If we are still arguing over what the new unitary council(s) should look like by this time next year then it goes without saying that taking decisions on the future of youth services, etc. is going to be difficult if we don't even know what the shape of the new council looks like. Awarding either very short-term contracts or doing temporary in-housing pending a break up of Devon CC could be very costly and ultimately will mean less money for bread and butter services. The effect this has on the Council workforce is again, hugely unsettling and if there is long term uncertainty over people's jobs and roles, the more likely it is people will leave both DCC and the District Councils for more secure jobs, and the Councils must fill those posts with agency staff. Again, more expensive and less money for frontline services.</p> <p>But for the time being we have a deadline of 21st March to work to and this is what DCC will be doing. I know that talks are being held with other District and Unitary Councils so I hope there will be cooperation and not petty infighting in the coming weeks as we all work on a proposal that work best for our residents.</p> <p>Hopefully by next month's meeting I'll be in a better position to advise what this new council will potentially look like for us all. The stakes in this are very high – if we get this wrong it will cost us, the residents of Devon, very dearly.</p> <p>Other Matters</p> <p>DCC Budget – The final budget will be agreed by DCC Full Council next Thursday, so pending any further changes I will brief the Parish Council fully on the budget next month.</p> <p>***</p>
761.3	<p><b><u>District Councillor:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</u></b> TDC has previously put out a request to parish councils re listed buildings but not heard anything back, so now considering looking at compiling a targeted list of buildings at risk.</p> <p><b><u>Asset management plan-</u></b> heard from Harvey Gardner new estates manager. Torridge holds 141 assets 84,000ft Income stream commercial and non-commercial equals approximately £1M</p>

The void is currently 2.8% don't want it to go above 5%

Climate change response- we now have 2 electric commercial vehicles with third proposed for Burrows team. Decarbonisation program 2025: 10 higher energy-using properties assessed looking at potential for solar PV, air source heat pumps, LED lighting etc. EV charging: nine additional at Riverbank house coming forward in the next few months.

Car parking- 2024/25 revenue projection £2.1M 10% up on 23/24. Considering investment in new machines for National Parking Platform- cashless payments as well as cash and debit cards.

Chris Fuller- economic development officer:

**Economic strategy brief update:**

The strategy for 2024-29 was agreed by full council last year. Wider action plans are now progressing from this. Business workshops are being held at Caddsdwn. Clean maritime and green energy cluster, 40 businesses met at Appledore. Lego robotics workshops, sponsoring schools for national competition. North Devon plus and Biospehere doing lots of work with businesses and grants being given through Rural England Prosperity Fund.

**Estuary strategy update:**

Looking at the opportunity of Appledore maritime innovation Centre. Looking at the future of Biddeford Quay and its place-making role. The regeneration of Bideford with the Quay front as a focal point. The heritage harbour stretches right the way up the River Torridge to Rosemoor.

Overall vision: bringing together innovation, protection, and enhancement. Recognising the importance and increasing interest in the harbour and estuary and how it can be best used to develop the economy and regeneration of the area.

A lot more work to be done on the strategy to consider all the options and opportunities, and the committee gave an extension of time for this.

**Joint Planning Policy Committee:**

Revised national planning policy framework:

Looking at key implications and ongoing reforms. Looking at local Housing Need and local constraints for the assessment of minimum number of houses. The change is that they've now removed discretion. The number is now a requirement unless we can robustly justify significant constraints.

The standard method of calculation is used which shows we need to deliver approximately 1300 houses per annum. This is an increase from the mid-700s previously. A significant increase across Torridge in North Devon.

Councillor Stowell asked how many of this number of houses would be affordable for local people?

In terms of the five-year housing land supply and tilted balance there is apparently a positive change, directing all development to sustainability, affordability, and design, so it's still expecting good quality development regardless of 5YHLS

There's no certainty over new plan-making system. Letter from deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner states they need a timetable by 6th March for plan-making.

Strategic flood risk assessments to be commissioned to prepare for the new local plan. Also, a gypsies and travellers need assessment and housing and economic needs assessment.

Both councils have £50,000 set aside as a consultancy budget each year plus there's the local plan reserve. Councils are confident they have sufficient funds.

Over the past few years, we've delivered approximately 800 houses per year; but have never reached anything near 1300. Recognised it will be a struggle for the industry to reach housing targets. It's not realistic.

Five Year Housing Land Supply:

Original plan required 861 houses per annum. There is now an updated requirement figure. If we hadn't updated it, it would be subject to challenge. New metric requires 1330 per annum. This is a stark difference over 5 years. There is however a move from a 20% buffer to 5% buffer, and no expectation to include the backlog which is welcomed. Considering delivery performance over past three years we can no longer demonstrate the five-year housing land supply. The figure was originally 5.18 years this has reduced to 4.86 years which is not that far short considering. It's a shortfall of 192 dwellings. Potential matters to consider:

- Will it undermine Planning?
- Future choices
- Constrain opportunities for infrastructure development
- Undermine communities' confidence in Planning system

The councils will reevaluate 1st April as part of the annual review and there will be an updated statement in the summer.

### **External Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

We had a very constructive and excellent presentations regarding Arts, Music, theatre and creativity from the Chief Execs Emma Marston, the Plough Torrington with Grace Rodger's, Harriet Harper from the Burton Art Gallery in Bideford and Phil Parker co/founder Director of Artmakers in Bideford and some public speakers! There was a lot of interest and highlighted the importance of Arts and the creative industries in our community for young, old, and reaching out to those with physical and mental disorders, particularly in these troubled times. Involving young people, schools, workshops, plays/theatre, comedy, and being creative by nature, and working with TDC, and NDC, Arts Council, Lottery, and others for funding.,

	<p>The Plough in Torrington has a Youth Theatre with 70 members. Between June - August this year there are 29 shows, and 13 venues scheduled including Panto this April. The Plough has 65 volunteers with 7 full time staff currently. It is 50 Years Anniversary of the Plough so watch this space! A better bus service between Barnstaple, Bideford, and the Plough would help.</p> <p>Burton Art Gallery in Bideford is 75 years old in October and had over 149,000 visitors including from many parts of UK and overseas. The Burton Gallery is somewhat hidden by trees along Kingsley Road and Victoria Park though like the Plough recognises the importance of youth/schools and had 19 school visits. The upstairs gallery is to be developed, and the adjoining Cafe Du Parc does very well with ground floor access to the Burton. Fantastic ceramics, art along with famous artists are on show and noted internationally with free entrance to their galleries.</p> <p>Artmakers Exhibition is located 1st Floor the Quay Bideford. Artmakers has a virtual gallery made up of over 200 local artists. Workshops, working with mental health, textile artists and largely voluntary! We are very fortunate to have so much creativity here in Devon.</p> <p>Active Torridge</p> <p>Chris Keeble Chief Operating Officer for Leisure and Active Torridge updated the committee regarding Active Torridge including standard-monthly membership charges of £33.50 and discount for youth working out at 10% off membership price.</p> <p><b>Elections News</b></p> <p>It was decided by Government recently that the 2025 Devon County Elections go ahead as normal on May 1st, 2025.</p>
<b>762</b>	<b>PARISH MATTERS</b>
762.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on Langtree Park. - Council want to investigate selling the park to the Parish Hall trustees. To safeguard its future as a green space for the parish.</li> <li>• Clerk to arrange a meeting with Adrian Avery of TDC to discuss how to claim S106 funding for park equipment for Langtree Park, Beech Road Park, and Muga.</li> </ul>
762.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Other Matters impacting the parish –</b></li> <li>• Councillors Glover, Davies and Bond have installed the two grit bins and filled with salt.</li> <li>• Councillor Ley has volunteered to take training for street sign cleaning. The online course would be better, if possible, as the alternative would be a two-day face to face. The full course includes tasks that are not needed for the cleaning of village signs.</li> </ul>

762.3	<p><b>Report from DALC zoom meeting –</b></p> <p><u>Report from Zoom Meeting held 30/1/2025 - NALC Devolution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a Devolution Priority Plan – for areas that are ready to go ahead.</li> <li>• Devon and Torbay are still being considered.</li> <li>• 500,000 residents in each unitary Authority as a minimum.</li> <li>• Elections in May 26 for Mayors and new unitary Authorities will be 2027 or 2028 depending on which tranche you are in.</li> <li>• Cornwall has been a Unitary Authority for some time and NALC will liaise with them for best practice for Devon.</li> <li>• Appears to be an undue emphasis on mapping assets!</li> <li>• Parishes are required to list what is important to them and their residents.</li> <li>• Consensus is that parishes will need to take up more as unitary cut back on what they do.</li> <li>• DALC and NALC will lobby MPs in Westminster to ensure they voice the fact that our needs are totally different to a large town/city.</li> <li>• Parish plans and elections – not sure if should go ahead.</li> <li>• Most questions from the participants were answered with – we don't know yet!!</li> </ul>
762.4	<p><b>Beech Road council support this area –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROSPA will check and report again in March, and there are still outstanding findings from last year's report. Councillor Stowell will check if the carpentry items can be scheduled for repair.</li> <li>• Play equipment Catalogues were shared, and several items were chosen to be discussed at the meeting with Adrian Avery of TDC once S106 funding has been received.</li> </ul>
762.5	<p><b>137 Fund applications –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local grants were discussed, and it was agreed to advertise for recipients.</li> </ul>
<b>763</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>
763.1	Any updates on potential planning application for land at The Crescent, Langtree – Holding item - None
763.2	<p>Applications for discussion –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/0100/2025/FUL Multi use building = council support this application.</li> </ul>
763.3	<p>To consider any other planning applications received between issuing of agenda and meeting. -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application 1/0973/2024/REM – granted permission.</li> </ul>

<b>764</b>	<b>CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCE</b>						
764.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at the end January 2025</p> <p>The position at the end of January was:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lloyd's account</td><td>£6164.46</td></tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td><td>£1574.09</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£7738.55</td></tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition, there is £2235.03 the Langtree Park account.</li> </ul>	Lloyd's account	£6164.46	Reserve account	£1574.09	Total	£7738.55
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764.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request approval to spend –</li> <li>£51.19 on external hard drive.</li> <li>£434.00 plus Vat on a new notice board for Stibb Cross and £75.00 plus Vat for delivery and fitting of same.</li> </ul>						
764.3	<p>To review correspondence received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register of interests – all members need to complete a register of interests form for TDC.</li> <li>80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day 8<sup>th</sup> May.</li> <li>Notification of ROSPA inspection in March, for both parks and the MUGA.</li> <li>Melissa Baker resignation as PCSO.</li> <li>Notification that trigger has been reached for S106 monies from planning permission in Stibb Cross.</li> </ul>						
764.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies Review: Safeguarding and Data Protection Policies were agreed.</li> </ul>						
<b>765</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public participation. – None</li> </ul>						
<b>766</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION</b></li> <li>Councillor Ley has been made aware that the hedges and banks have been removed from the building plot at the end of the village and could be an environmental concern, if they are not reinstated.</li> </ul> <p>The meeting closed at 9.20pm.</p>						
<b>767</b>	<b>Date of next meeting – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>						