

# LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

	Councillors: John Davies Geoff Bond Pat Mitchell James Fishleigh Jenny Coles Penny Stowell Chris Whateley (TDC)
<b>In attendance</b>	Clerk – Linda Davies, 1 Member of the public.
<b>867</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Apologies were received from. David Ley Mark Glover Colin Edworthy Cheryl Cottle Hunkin, (DDC)
<b>868</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>
868.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None.</li></ul>
868.2	Minutes of meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2026 to be confirmed and signed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These were agreed - proposed by Geoff Bond and Seconded by Patrick Mitchell – duly signed.</li></ul>
<b>869</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• John Davies declared an interest in the S137 Grants.</li></ul>
<b>870</b>	<b>REPORTS</b>
870.1	<b><u>Police Community Support Officer:</u></b> No report - Place holder
870.2	<b><u>County Councillor:</u></b> Dear Councillors, The start of the year has been dominated by two major issues: <b>severe winter storms</b> causing significant damage to Devon’s roads (as I’m sure you’re well aware- as we experience them every day), and secondly <b>the County Council’s extremely challenging budget-setting process.</b>

### **Weather Impact and Highways**

This winter's combination of long periods of heavy rain and freezing temperatures has caused some of the worst road damage we've seen. Potholes have been appearing rapidly as water saturates the road base and repeated freeze-thaw cycles break the surface apart.

Highways teams are working flat out to meet their legal requirement to repair safety defects (40mm deep, 300mm wide, vertical edge) within 14 days. Wet weather means many repairs fail and must be repeated which is hugely frustrating, leaving no capacity for wider repairs and preventative work until conditions improve. Please please continue reporting highways issues and share reference numbers with me where problems persist- accurate reporting remains our best way to prioritise limited resources. I have been reporting them as I see them and they are being acted on in most instances. Just a reminder of the scale we're dealing with too- if all of Devon's roads were put together, they would take you nearly 3 times around the world (114,000 km), although I wouldn't recommend it as your teeth would probably fall out and you'd need lots of new tyres. Also, the potholes are bad but the impact of the storm on our South Devon coastline is even more horrendous; I'm sure you've all seen what happened to the road at Slapton Ley. [Devon road washed away after storms - BBC Newsround](#)

### **Emergency Planning**

Devon Communities Together administer grants for emergency planning. They are currently waiving the requirement to have an Emergency Plan in place in order to apply for up to £1500 funding

Please remember that there is financial support available from the Devon Community Resilience Forum if your community has been affected by recent events. You can apply for one of two grants available:

Up to £250 if you want to start engaging your community for emergency planning

Up to £1500 to purchase items like wellies, torches, blankets, radios, PPE etc that can be used in an emergency.

More info here: <https://f.mtr.cool/neufyandbb>

### **Scrutiny & Budget Setting**

January and February involve intensive scrutiny of the council's budget. This year's process has been especially difficult due to a **delayed funding settlement** and **real-terms cuts** from central government. Adult social care accounts for **47% of the total budget (£800m)** and still needs to find **£21m in savings**. We're awaiting the Care Quality Commission report, which we hope will reflect the hard work of staff.

A positive outcome this month was our successful challenge to the South West Ambulance Service, resulting in the protection of **Fire Co-Responders** for rural communities. Meanwhile, the Devon Integrated Care Board has been asked to cut **£200m (8%)**—a level of reduction that is neither realistic nor sustainable

and may shift pressure onto DCC's adult social care services. DCC's final budget for 26/27 is due to be set by Council at the end of February. In some good news- we were relieved to hear that government is stepping in to settle 90% of historic, unfunded SEND costs incurred under national policy [Most of Devon County Council £200m SEND debt cleared - BBC News](#)

### **Broadband**

There is finally some real progress being made in relation to broadband and Project Gigabit. I have for months requested meetings with government ministers, and last month had an online meeting with Programme Director Andrew Field from Building Digital UK (BDUK). I have also been working with Devon MPs and the government have now reopened the voucher scheme for suppliers. We are currently looking at which areas are best placed to use these, with the voucher deadline being August. I will update when I have more information.

### **Devon's Library Consultation:**

I've also been out and about across Devon, listening to communities, speaking with library users and promoting the library consultation. The deadline is 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb and I urge everyone to have their say. We have currently received more than 18,000 responses which is amazing but we would love to have more, especially from children. [Devon residents invited to have their say on future of libraries - News](#)

### **Farming Community Network**

I was pleased to visit a farm in Parkham for The Farming Community Network's Plough Service, alongside other DCC colleagues- including the chair of Council. FCN is a really amazing charity who do great work in our rural communities.

If you're from the farming community, need help and don't know what to do, give them a call on 03000 111999. They are open 365 days of the year. You are not alone. [Can we help you or someone you know? - Farming Community Network](#)

### **Rural Deprivation:**

Given my cabinet role for rural affairs, I am heavily involved in work to get rural areas better understood, both on a County level and also by central government. I am constantly lobbying central government on this issue, and am also part of Devon's Rural Nested Deprivation Group alongside County Council officers and partner organisations. This was established in June last year and is chaired by Devon Communities Together (Devon's Rural Council). We know that deprivation in rural areas is often hidden, and we know that Government data which relies heavily on averages, can mask the true picture of rural poverty. We are committed to developing a fuller, place-based understanding of rurality in Devon. That means working collaboratively with partner organisations and communities to develop an action plan with the

	<p>same aim and passion: to improve living standards and access to services for people across this large, predominantly rural county.</p> <p>Thank you for everything you do for your communities. Your work remains vital to local democracy and deeply appreciated.</p> <p>If there are any safety defects or other highways type issues please do report them here: <a href="#">Report a problem - Roads and transport</a></p> <p>Grit bins can be requested via <a href="#">Grit bins and salt bags - Roads and transport</a></p> <p>Speed concerns can be raised from the “report a concern” link at <a href="#">Speeding, Speed Limits and SCARF - Roads and transport</a></p>
870.3	<p><b>District Councillor:</b></p> <p>The next Taw and Torridge River Champions (TTRC) meeting took place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February from 10am at the Lib Dem office at Chingswell Street then onto Kenwith Stream and carried out our water quality tests. We were joined today by Phil Huddy and continued with our water quality testing, and it turned out to be a beneficial and enjoyable day! The next Meeting will be next month to be confirmed.</p> <p>Another recurring problem which has been ongoing for a long time now is recycle vehicle spillages. This has continued to happen around some of the lanes particularly along hedge and roadsides in Petrockstowe, Newton St Petrock and Merton.</p> <p>We are continuing to monitor the situation too see improvements and please contact me if there are future spillages and report to the Waste/Recycling Team on the Council.</p> <p>Pleased to announce that Shebbear School is the beneficiary of my remaining Council Grant Funding for this financial year. Both Cheryl and I have contributed.</p> <p><b>FULL COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Torridge District Council Climate commitments were on the agenda and initially we had three public speakers and a presentation from our Climate and Sustainability Officer who presented the Report to review progress of the Councils climate commitments and ambitions. There then followed a debate with questions and comments. It was eventually agreed to update the Councils target to be NET ZERO by 2030 and to reduce our carbon footprint from a practical perspective whilst balancing priorities that are important to residents. Funding targets may not be met due to significant funding requirements though likely offset by renewable energy incomes and savings.</p> <p>A vote took place and was carried For - 21, Against -6 and Abstention -1.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION</b></p> <p>All Parishes should have received the link to the government website via Gov Delivery reference LGR public consultation which is open until 26th March 2026 and provides links for people to respond.</p>
<b>871</b>	<b>PARISH MATTERS</b>
871.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update on Langtree Park.</b> -</li> <li>• We were contacted by Adrian Avery stating that the Council would pay an additional sum for maintenance. He came out specially to get the contract resigned. We are now still waiting for funding. TK play has confirmed the price for the equipment. The maintenance grant may be used to remove the old climbing frame.</li> </ul>
871.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update on Beech Road Play Park –</b></li> <li>• Solicitor engaged to search documents and transfer ownership to Langtree Parish Council – Clerk and Chair need to prove identity.</li> <li>• Academic have confirmed price of the play equipment and are keen to schedule the work.</li> </ul>
871.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Other Matters impacting the parish –</b></li> <li>• A member of the parish has written to Geoffrey Cox regarding the potholes around the parish. He has been requested to complete the online portal with specific issues.</li> <li>• It was noted that Beacon Solar has been postponed due to issues with the connectivity of the amount of power it would generate.</li> </ul>
<b>872</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>
872.1	Any updates on potential planning application for land at The Crescent, Langtree – Holding item - None
872.2	<p>Applications for discussion –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/0031/2026/AGMB Prior notification of change of use. Council has no objection.</li> <li>• 1/0925/2025/FUL Solar array – granted permission.</li> </ul>
872.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications received between issuing the agenda and the meeting.</li> <li>• 1/0965/2025/FUL Installation of tracks – granted permission.</li> </ul>
<b>873</b>	<b>CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCE</b>
873.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at the end January 2026</p> <p>The position at the end of January was:</p>

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lloyd's account</td> <td>£5,579.09</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td> <td>£4,086.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£9,665.69</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition, there is £1,498.60 the Langtree Park account.</li> </ul>	Lloyd's account	£5,579.09	Reserve account	£4,086.60	Total	£9,665.69
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873.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques.</p> <p>Payments to be approved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jags Signs = £342.84</li> <li>Donation from Citizens Advice = £100.00</li> </ul> <p>Payments made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service charge (bank) = £4.25</li> </ul>						
873.3	<p>To review correspondence received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email from Cheryl to state there was a new PCSO</li> <li>Notification from ROSPA that the play park inspection would be done in March.</li> <li>Request for a donation from Crime Stoppers – Council agreed to investigate this later.</li> <li>Email re 30% cut in libraries.</li> <li>Amended contract for signature from TDC.</li> </ul>						
873.4	<p>Section 137 grants.</p> <p>Chairman had declared an interest and handed this item over to Penny Stowell (Vice Chairman)</p> <p>Requests had been received from:</p> <p>Langtree Lions, Langtree WI, Siloam graveyard. Council agreed to give £100 to each.</p> <p>It was also agreed to ring fence £200 and contact Langtree school PTA, and the History Group. The public attendee is a member of the History Group and said he would contact them.</p>						
873.5	<p>Grass Cutting Tenders.</p> <p>Four applications had been received, and there was a big price difference between them.</p> <p>After discussion it was proposed that Council accept the most local as it was a good price. All were in favour. Therefore the contract has gone to William Moseby Grass Cutting Services.</p>						
<b>874</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.</b>						

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public participation – attendance was out of interest; there was nothing specific that he wished to bring to the council attention.</li> </ul>
<b>875</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN’S DISCRETION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was discussion around the water quality after Chris Whateley’s report and the fact that the numerous housing developments are adding to this issue.</li> <li>The meeting closed at 8-35 pm.</li> </ul>
<b>876</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> – Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2026