

LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

9th April 2026

	Councillors: John Davies Pat Mitchell James Fishleigh Jenny Coles Geoff Bond David Ley Penny Stowell Chris Whateley (TDC) Cheryl Cottle Hunkin, (DDC) and daughter.
In attendance	Clerk – Linda Davies
887	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from. Mark Glover Colin Edworthy
888	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
888.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clerk had not circulated ROSPA reports as promised.
888.2	Minutes of meeting held on 12 th March 2026 to be confirmed and signed. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These were agreed - proposed by Penny Stowell and Seconded by David Ley – duly signed.
889	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None.
890	REPORTS
890.1	<u>Police Community Support Officer:</u> No report - Place holder
890.2	<u>County Councillor:</u> March has seen significant developments across Devon County Council, including children’s services, rural support, infrastructure planning, public protection, and ongoing discussions on local government reform. Children’s Services and Fostering Devon County Council continued its appeal for more foster carers this month,

highlighting the need to increase local capacity for the 810 children currently in care. The Hearts and Homes Conference, held in Exeter on 20 March, offered prospective carers the opportunity to meet experienced families and understand the support available. I was so pleased to be able to attend the event. I did find it very emotional and our foster carers do such a fantastic job. Please if this is something you might be interested have a look at the website and find out more. It doesn't need to be long-term fostering, many offer fostering at weekends which is also hugely needed and valued for our children in care. Change a young person's life and consider Fostering Devon! also found out that Devon County Council are a Fostering Friendly employer and it is free for businesses to join to be able to better support foster carers who work Fostering Friendly Employers Scheme | The Fostering Network
Cost-of-Living Support: Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF)

The national Household Support Fund will conclude at the end of March and will be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF). Devon will receive £8.4 million per year (2026–2029) and this is a decrease from the previous years from the household support fund. The new fund moves away from blanket support, to provide targeted crisis payments, housing support via district councils, financial-resilience services, and community-based support. Devon confirms plans for new crisis support fund –
North Devon Today

As Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, I stressed that large rural counties such as Devon face hidden deprivation, higher transport and fuel costs, and increased vulnerability to inflationary pressures. Torridge households, farmers and rural businesses are particularly affected by rising prices. I continue to lobby Government for long-term, sustained rural investment to ensure that no rural household is left behind.
Local Government Reorganisation Consultation

The Government's consultation on the future structure of local government in Devon closed on 26 March 2026. Devon County Council has proposed a single Devon Unitary Council, which it argues is the most financially sustainable and least disruptive model. Alternative models submitted by other authorities include several options that would reorganise rural areas—such as Torridge—into new unitary arrangements.

We await to hear the decision by central government.

Environment, Public Health and Community Updates

DCC published multiple updates this month, including progress on nature recovery work, public health messaging around meningitis What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself - News and tick awareness, and continued enforcement

activity against illegal tobacco sales.

New Livestock-Worrying Legislation and Partnership with Police

On 18 March 2026, strengthened legislation to tackle livestock worrying came into force. Devon County Council and Devon & Cornwall Police issued joint guidance urging dog owners to keep dogs on leads near livestock and to act responsibly. The new law:

- Extends offences to include incidents on roads and public rights of way.
- Officially recognises alpacas and llamas as livestock.
- Grants police greater powers, including the ability to seize dogs, enter premises under warrant and collect forensic evidence.

I publicly welcomed the legislation as a long-overdue step in protecting farmers and livestock, given the significant distress and financial loss such incidents cause. This is particularly important in Torridge, where public paths frequently cross grazing land and we have a lot of sheep. New laws to protect livestock backed by council and police –

News

Support needed for Rural Households, farmers and Businesses

I have written to Chancellor Rachel Reeves seeking support for rural household and businesses. Not only in relation to heating oil, but LPG, red diesel, fertiliser, road fuel- all of those commodities which are seeing prices hikes due to the war in Iran and are disproportionately affecting rural areas. There are price caps on energy for all urban residents but not for us in rural areas and that's not fair- regardless of household income. As we know the chancellor has pledged some money to support heating oil costs but only for those who are "eligible". Farmers and rural communities facing 'perfect storm' as fuel costs spike - North Devon Today

Domestic Abuse Support Strategy

Devon County Council approved a new four-year Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy (2026–2030). This includes expanding refuge capacity, enhancing therapeutic support and improving access for individuals facing additional barriers. The strategy is part of Devon's wider coordinated approach to interpersonal violence and abuse. New four-year plan agreed to strengthen domestic abuse support across Devon – News

In relation to Langtree, I have been extremely frustrated that the road at Gortledge still hasn't had any work done to it. I was told it was going to be properly patched last year (soon after being elected!) and it still hasn't been done. I physically went there in the Highways Van to make sure it was down to be done.

	<p>I was wondering whether the Parish Council might be able to write an email to the cabinet member Dan Thomas, Highways directors and the chief executive too, and if you could cc me in and I will also put the pressure on and we can try and get this finally sorted. It's exactly the same situation at Stowford so I'm hoping they could do both areas at the same time.</p> <p>Dan.Thomas@devon.gov.uk Donna.manson@devon.gov.uk Meg.booth@devon.gov.uk Robert.richards@devon.gov.uk</p>
890.3	<p><u>District Councillor</u></p> <p>The Taw and Torridge River Champions (TTRC) meeting took place on Saturday 4th April from 10am at the Lib Dem office at Chingswell Street then onto Kenwith Stream and carry out our water quality tests at our new location situated not far away to the previous one due to ongoing works. The UK Parliament are currently in the process of strengthening water legislation with the Water (Special Measures ACT 2005) which includes banning executive bonuses when environmental standards are missed and reform infrastructure management and addressing water company ownership. Introducing legislation for MOT checks for pipes and treatment works ensuring long term improvements.</p> <p>I attended a recent councillor briefing session given by Alan Burrows, Head of Local Government Affairs Pennon Group who own Southwest Water regarding their priorities and new business plan -</p> <p>4 TOP PRIORITIES -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 -Water Quality and resilience 2- Storm overflows and pollution 3- Net Zero and environmental gains 4- Delivering for customers and affordability <p>Priority 2 - To transform their sewer network by 2040 starting with all sites which affect our most loved places.</p> <p>It is encouraging that we are making some progress regarding gathering information of sewage spillages, public awareness yet there is still much to be done! The next meeting of TTRC in May to be confirmed.</p> <p>Pleased Linda that Langtree received the 106 monies from Torridge..</p> <p>North Devon Biosphere - Taw and Torridge Water Quality Project</p> <p>Recently I attended the North Devon Biosphere Project Meeting with Rob Jordan providing an enlightening presentation.</p> <p>Rob presented the latest developments on building a smart Biosphere covering water quality data, flood data, biodiversity, soil,</p>

	<p>Carbon emissions, energy use, land-use, visitor, grid connections. The Biosphere is working on new Data Platform hopefully going live in 2 months' time. It will operate as a dashboard, and I have seen the latest prototype though more work is needed!</p> <p>We hope to see rankings of the water quality of the 92 River bodies as 1 per dashboard. Expanding the network of river champions and citizen science. Provide analysis to get each river waterbody to a good ecological status. Integrating other data on each dashboard to include Land use data, urban, farmland, woodland, highway, water company data- storm water overflows duration, septic tanks data, highways data, others including risk data landfill, mines and quarries, industrial discharges and others</p> <p>The Biosphere is also working with South Westwater, dairy industry, woodland owners the EA (Environmental Agency) and planning authorities.</p> <p>Other projects include the smart Biosphere approach to key bathing areas with monitoring in Croyde and Westward Ho integrating the Environment Agencies weekly monitoring data (May- September).</p> <p>External Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>We received a proposal from Robert Blake National Director and Network Director for Rail Future Ltd regarding the potential of a new Bideford to Exeter and beyond Railway service. Of course, this is very much at its infancy stage and Councillors and some members of the public raised concerns and issues that would need to be considered as below-</p> <p>The Tarka Trail widening and access needed Huge cost! £ 300 Million plus as an approx. estimate</p> <p>Instow Sea wall</p> <p>South Westwater sewage pipes.</p> <p>Tarka trail rerouting to use underpasses and over bridges and being moved away from existing scenic route.</p> <p>Bideford station car parking and potential huge congestion of traffic issues.</p> <p>Bideford Station Short platform and an important heritage area</p> <p>Near to a site of scientific interest.</p> <p>Brunswick Wharf development- parking and congestion</p> <p>Noise and Traffic</p>
<p>891</p>	<p>PARISH MATTERS</p>
<p>891.1</p>	<p>Update on Langtree Park. -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monies from Torridge DC have now been received (16th March) £27,120.00 to cover both parks and ongoing maintenance. • The equipment to be ordered was agreed prior to the S106 claim, but as we now have a maintenance fund Council have agreed that the quote for the removal of the old condemned wooden frame should also be accepted. So, this work will take place at the same

	time as the install of new equipment.						
891.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new equipment in Stibb is due to be installed on 20th March. The climbing frame for primary/preschool age children was agreed prior to the claim from Torridge DC. 						
891.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Matters impacting the parish – Councill discussed the lease on the allotments and agreed that the lease was renewed – until 2029, but there is no hard copy on record. Clerk will therefore contact Torridge Legal department and request a copy of the signed contract. Salt bags left in Langtree Park in case of bad weather have been vandalised and the salt emptied across the grass and path. A resident in church close has complained about the Hicks building site. The church clock as broken down again. Villagers have requested a new part be made by the company that repaired it last time, but no one has discussed how the part will be paid for!!! Council will need to discuss at the next meeting. Council mentioned that there was a noise complaint (loud Music)– this was discussed and it was agreed that Parish had no power to combat this and Torridge would need to be notified by the complainant direct. 						
892	PLANNING						
892.1	Any updates on potential planning application for land at The Crescent, Langtree – Holding item - None						
892.2	Applications for discussion – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None received. 						
882.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications received between issuing the agenda and the meeting. None. 						
893	CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCE						
893.1	<p>To receive update on financial position at the end March 2026</p> <p>The position at the end of March was:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lloyd’s account</td> <td>£32,719.02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td> <td>£ 4,088.17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£36,807.19</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition, there is £1,499.17 the Langtree Park account. 	Lloyd’s account	£32,719.02	Reserve account	£ 4,088.17	Total	£36,807.19
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893.2	<p>To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques.</p> <p>Payments to be approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zurich insurance £437.00 						

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DALC £364.60 • Torridge DC £1,600.02 <p>Payments made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service charge (bank) £4.25 • ROSPA £298.80 • S137 payments to Langtree PTA. £100 <p>Income received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £27120. Torridge S106 • £727.23 HMRC Vat refund
893.3	<p>To review correspondence received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zurich insurance renewal. • Request from PTA for S137 grant. • E mail from Sue Bale regarding monies for Community Garden. <p>There are monies due to the allotments - clerk to write to Sue suggesting the two groups get together to discuss what they want to spend it on.</p>
894	<p>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation – None.
895	<p>ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN’S DISCRETION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • The meeting closed at 8-40 pm.
896	<p>Date of next meeting – Thursday 14th May 2026</p>