

LANGTREE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

11th June 2026

Parish Council Meeting

Present	Councillors: John Davies (Chairman) Geoff Bond Jenny Coles David Ley Pat Mitchell Penny Stowell (Vice Chairman) James Fishleigh Mark Glover Chris Wheatley (TDC)
In attendance	Clerk – Linda Davies, 1 member of the public.
	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from. Colin Edworthy Cheryl Cottle Hunkin, (DDC)
907	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
908	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
908.1	Matters Arising • Councillor Coles had discussed the church clock with Helen Coles. • Payment as agreed had been issued (half of invoice £600)
908.2	Minutes of meeting held on 14 th May 2026 to be confirmed and signed. • These were agreed - proposed by Jenny Coles and Seconded by Penny Stowell. – duly signed.
909	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS • None.
910	REPORTS

910.1	<u>Police Community Support Officer:</u> No report - Place holder
910.2	<u>County Councillor Report- June</u> <u>Libraries:</u> Great news for Devon’s libraries! Following the extensive consultation which received more than 25,000 responses, Devon County Council’s cabinet voted unanimously to support a range of positive proposals and a new vision for Devon’s library service. This includes an extra £2M investment which will ensure there is no reduction in staffed opening hours over the next two years, as well as supporting transformation of our libraries to make them more resilient; making the most of all of the opportunities that came out of the consultation. This includes creating partnership libraries with local organisations and town councils, integrating more supportive services into library spaces, modernising the service to enable extended opening hours beyond traditional staffed opening hours, and training up volunteers (6000 people responded to the consultation saying they would be interested in volunteering in their local library!). As well as this we are investing an extra £100k into the book fund, and will be completely removing book fines which are a traditional and outdated concept: experience from other libraries shows that removing them entirely encourages more people to use the library, and actually makes it easier to get books back too! <u>£2 million cash boost secures future of Devon libraries - News</u> <u>Pothole Pandemic and Revival of the Road Warden Scheme:</u> You may have seen on Spotlight recently, my colleague Cllr Louise Wainwright has been working extremely hard in reviving the road warden scheme to help improve the situation with our roads as much as possible. <u>Call for volunteers to help fix Devon's £1bn pothole problem - BBC News</u> In parts of South Devon the road warden scheme has been working well, and we would love to see this happening right the way across Devon. If you know any keen and willing volunteers, do ask them to get in touch, and as a parish council I would be grateful if you could call 0345 155 1004 or email: <u>communityselfhelp@devon.gov.uk</u> to get the ball rolling and sign the parish up to the scheme. I have printed copies available (one for each Parish) and for anyone wanting to take a look it is also available on Cllr Wainwright’s website here too: <u>Potholes My Site 6</u> More info here on DCC website: <u>Road Warden Scheme - Devon Highways</u> <u>A Positive Direction for Devon</u> Things are very much on the up at Devon County Council. We have reported a £10 million underspend in our first year as a new administration. This is not because we have cut services or held back spending, but because we are managing resources more effectively and efficiently. Significantly, both Children’s and Adults’ Services have delivered a surplus, something that very few councils are currently able to achieve. This reflects improved financial discipline, stronger decision making, and a collaborative approach between councillors and officers. Importantly, these savings are now being reinvested into the services that matter most to residents, including highways, libraries and frontline support. <u>Investing in Our Roads</u>

Improving our roads remains one of the biggest priorities I hear from residents. I have been out and about locally in the highways van, inspecting issues first hand and working closely with officers to push for improvements. We are investing another additional £4 million into highways, including rapid response repair crews and the continuation of a successful repair trial. This allows teams to fix multiple defects in one visit, making repairs more efficient, longer lasting and better value. It is important to note that the past year has largely been delivered under the previous administration's budget. I am hopeful that with continued investment and a good summer of working conditions, we will begin to see more significant and visible improvements to our road network in the months ahead.

[Council unveils £4m boost for road repairs - News](#)

Supporting Children, Families and Foster Carers

Improving outcomes for children and young people remains our top priority. The latest Ofsted report has recognised real progress, including stronger leadership, improved stability and more effective support for families. Social workers are building better relationships and more children are receiving the right help at the right time. There is still more to do, but we are moving in the right direction and remain fully committed to improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children. We are also continuing to appeal for more foster carers. I recently attended the Hearts and Homes conference, which was both emotional and inspiring. Our foster carers do an incredible job and make a lasting difference to children's lives. It is important to know that fostering does not have to be a long term commitment. Short break and weekend care are also hugely valuable and much needed.

[New approach to recruiting foster carers in Devon showing early impact](#)

[Ofsted report highlights progress in Devon children's services](#)

Celebrating Devon's Rural Life

It was fantastic to attend the Devon County Show, which is always a highlight of the year and a wonderful celebration of our rural communities. It was a great opportunity to meet residents, farmers and local organisations.

I was particularly pleased to speak with NFU President Tom Bradshaw. We discussed important issues including food security, the impacts of climate change on farming, and the farm inheritance tax. These conversations are vital to ensuring that the voice of rural Devon is heard at a national level.



Engagement with Torrington Rotary Club

I was pleased to be invited to speak at the Rotary Club of Torrington, reflecting on my first year as a County Councillor.



I highlighted key initiatives including the “Places to Go, Things to Do” youth grant scheme, the need for foster carers through Fostering Devon, and the reinvigorated Road Warden Scheme supporting local volunteers with highways issues.

I also spoke about my role as Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs and the importance of partnership working across agencies and with local communities.

Thank you to the Rotary Club, and in particular Martyn Butler and members, for their warm welcome and continued service to the community.

910.3

District Councillor Report

The Devon Parish Pothole Handbook from Devon County Council has just become available and will bring with me your handbooks tomorrow evening. I would like to ask the Parish to subscribe to the DCC Road Warden Scheme to equip, train and insure small volunteer teams. The Pothole Handbook is comprehensive and covers other areas including reporting issues with Grit bins, overgrown vegetation, Public rights of way, Broken inspection covers, Debris or obstructions, Bridges and retaining walls, Flooding, drainage issues. There are QR Codes in the handbook with quick access to the topic you require i.e. using a smart phone.

Reporting Potholes is categorised as **Defect Potholes** - Highways FIX THESE minimum 40 mm deep and minimum 300mm in length with a vertical edge after being reported where each report is allocated a reference number and an Inspector is sent to the location and determine its one for DCC to fix it and the speed of the fix is determined by the safety risk of causing and immediate accident. Add your name to the defective Pothole and don't report it again as this will generate a new reference number and confuse the process. See page 2 in handbook.

Non-defect Potholes - should be reported to your Parish Council and the Clerk records the Reports on the Parish and full Agenda item and used to update the Parish Priorities List. Road Warden minimum 40mm and minimum of 400mm in length with a sloping edge. This could be a pin board inviting Parishioners to locate potholes on a map- DCC.

The Parish Road Wardens will undergo training and provided with necessary materials. Parish Road Wardens may not carry out the work yet is responsible for coordinating the works that take place. and can have a small team of volunteers who carry out the Works who also must undergo training and qualification requirements.

See also enhanced Road Warden Scheme, Paid Parish Lengthman and Pothole Ninjas.

There are 426 Parishes in Devon and already there are 136 parishes that have Road Warden Teams.

	EXTERNAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE I recently attended the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting where we discussed the Chairman’s Report regarding reinstating of the Bideford to railway link to Exter and beyond via Barnstaple. It was agreed and voted for the following will be presented to Full Council to take the following steps. 1 - TDC should concentrate efforts to improve connectivity by looking at cheaper and more immediate measures such as a fast coach service linking Bedford and Tiverton Parkway railway station and/or London as proposed with the Bideford Regeneration Plan 2- TDC should develop a comprehensive more Active Travel network providing greater opportunities for cyclists and walkers to access the centre of Bideford from the various new developments around the Town and surrounding communities such as Northam and Westward Ho. 3 -TDC should prioritise looking to improve public transport links between Bideford and other Towns, villages, and rural communities within the District. 4- Although rails travel is greener than car travel to Exeter improving facilities locally would be better for the environment and local economy. Water Safety - We received a Presentation from Mike Day Northam Burrows Manager and Lead Ranger and Matt Whitley Lead Lifeguard Supervisor North Devon and Somerset. With the unfortunate loss of lives mostly younger people recently in drowning incidents this was particularly prevalent at this time. We discussed and learnt about Active Torridge currently have 20 schools get delivered the Swim England Swimming Program that currently helps primary children. There is also an Ocean Academy Learn to Swim programme where water safety is embedded across each stage of swimming lessons and Active Torridge ensures every swimmer develops confidence and practical safety. Active Torridge also delivers a Rookie Lifeguard programme offering an introduction to lifesaving and rescue techniques. Active Torridge currently has 2 employees at Torrington swimming pool who have completed both full Ocean Academy learn to swim programme and Rookie Lifeguard programme and have up skilled to now become fully qualifiers Lifeguards for Active Torridge.
911	PARISH MATTERS
911.1	Update on Langtree Park. - Work on the climbing frame install is still ongoing.
911.2	Update on Beech Road Play Park – Our solicitor stated that the land at Beech Road play park has been past to The Crown. Council agreed that she should contact them as there were still monies remaining in the budget.
911.3	Confirm price for allotment hire – This was not increased and remains at £15.

911.4	Other Matters impacting the parish – None raised.						
912	PLANNING						
912.1	Any updates on potential planning application for land at The Crescent, Langtree – Holding item - None						
912.2	Applications for discussion – None						
912.3	- Applications received between issuing the agenda and the meeting. 1/0399/2026/REM, and appeal 1/0425/2025/OUT, condition set on approval – pathway into village centre - both discussed but council is unable to comment on the appeal, Clerk would investigate further. 1/0360/2026/FUL change of use to Gym. – Council would like opening hours restricted. Clerk to comment. 1/0031/2026/AGMB – Application denied – no comment available. - Mr Peter Duncan from Stapleton Farm spoke to the meeting at this point – covered under public participation.						
913	CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCE						
913.1	To receive update on financial position at the end May 2026 The position at the end of May was: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lloyd's account</td><td>£26,224.90</td></tr> <tr> <td>Reserve account</td><td>£ 4,091.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£30,316.60</td></tr> </table> In addition, there is £1,500.47 the Langtree Park account.	Lloyd's account	£26,224.90	Reserve account	£ 4,091.70	Total	£30,316.60
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913.2	To request approval of BACS Payments and cheques. Payments to be approved: - Request approval of – Adrian Hinchcliffe £57.00 - Church Clock £600.00 - TK Play £ 17,436.00. Play equipment. Payments made: - Service charge (bank) £4.25 - Zurich insurance £437.00						

	• Academic £10,584.00 play park equipment.
913.3	Review of 25/26 Accounts - Spreadsheets were distributed showing the accounts, and the report from the internal auditor had been distributed prior to the meeting. The AGAR forms reflecting this information were duly agreed and signed by the Chair. These would now be sent to the external auditor for review. Council discussed changing to a Gov. uk email address – Clerk would investigate. Register of interest forms were completed by all in attendance.
913.4	To review correspondence received. • Update from CPRE re Holesworthy Beacon solar farm – currently on hold as power infrastructure cannot cope with the amount of power to be generated. • The Pothole handbook was presented by Councillor Wheatley and will be discussed once contents are assessed.
914	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. • Public participation – • Peter Duncan stated that he intended to apply for permission at Stapleton Farm and wished to explain the background to the plans. Council were happy to hear from him but warned him that the final decision on planning lay with Torridge even if Parish were happy with the application.
915	ANY OTHER ITEMS AT CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION • Councillor Glover had been contacted by Mr Upfold regarding the cutting of Church bank, which would be cut once the wildflowers had died down. • Councillor Glover had requested information re cutting trees on the Tarka Trail – Councillor Wheatley gave the contact's name in Torridge. • Councillor Glover also requested a list of Parish Councillors for the Berry Cross notice board. • The meeting closed at 8-45 pm.
916	Date of next meeting – Thursday 9th July 2026