

Minutes of Woolsery Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 15 July 2025 in Woolsery Sports and Community Hall at 7.30pm.

Chaired by: Councillor L Spittles		Clerked by: Mrs S Squire
Present: Councillors H Freeman R Heywood S Hill S Salvidant L Spittles County Councillor R Julian from Minute No. 32.3 District Councillors Dart and Harding until the end of Minute No. 32.2 0 Members of the public		Agenda: - Public Comment Session Declarations of Interest Apologies Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025 Reports Matters Arising from the Minutes of 17 June 2025 Planning & Planning Correspondence Finance To consider a response to items raised under the Public Session Correspondence Clerk's Leave Date and time of next meeting
		Action:
29.	Public Comment Session. None.	
30.	Declarations of Interest. None. Councillor Freeman asked for clarification on this topic which was explained.	Clerk to forward Flowchart
31.	Apologies. Councillors Hancock and M Hill.	
32.	Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025. Approved and signed as a correct record after an amendment regarding Bucks Mills car park and a South West Water item which had been repeated. Proposed by Councillor Spittles. Seconded by Councillor Freeman and unanimously agreed.	
32.	Reports:	
32.1	County Councillor R Julian. ▪ Is a Police Advocate and there is an upcoming Police Meeting. ▪ Has signed up for Farm Watch. Emails received will be passed on if it affects the area. ▪ Has visited Citizens Advice where information was gained about the function of the Organisation. A Board Meeting is planned to help move things forward. ▪ Attended a Committee Meeting regarding the proposal that Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue personnel no longer have a first responder role working in conjunction with South Western Ambulance Service Trust. Efforts are being made to encourage people to volunteer as a first responder but they do not have the equipment. No decision has been taken and pending this, a Petition with almost 2,000 signatures has been compiled. North Devon Council was making the representations being an isolated rural area. Councillor Freeman, in her capacity as running the Community Ambulance, advised she had volunteered previously but had heard nothing. ▪ White lines are to be painted at Powlers Piece.	
32.2	District Councillors Andrews; Dart; Harding.	

A written Report from Councillor Dart had been circulated to Councillors as follows:

To begin, I have some quite worrying news that has been brought to my attention which concerns our rural locations.

Currently, if you are taken very poorly, it may well be the case that a co responder, or first responder, will get to you first and administer oxygen or maintain life until an ambulance can get to you.

In Hartland this is undertaken by our devoted fire brigade.

Given the considerable wait times for ambulances this is an invaluable service, which has doubtless saved many lives.

The SWAST [SOUTH WEST AMBULANCE SERVICE TRUST] together with The DSFRS [Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service] are now looking to cut that service as a cost saving exercise and instead look to the voluntary sector to provide such a life saving undertaking!

This is a move which quite literally has the potential to cost lives.

The CEO responsible for such a decision has been invited to Devon County Council's Scrutiny Committee to answer questions and concerns on July 14th.

Torrige Councillor Claire Hodson will represent all our rural areas at this committee. If you have any questions or comments, please do send them to her to raise at this committee.

We need to keep tabs on this planned change and challenge appropriately. Thank you.

Councillor.hodson@torridge.gov.uk

Next, decisions at full council,

It was proposed to replace three diesel vans run by the council for the last 8 years for electric models.

However it was subsequently voted not to replace them at all, given their low mileage and the precarious future of Torrige District Council owing to the local government reshuffle, and the considerable cost of replacement.

Then, there was a presentation on the spending of the rural prosperity fund, which the government gave 5 days to return projects, which have ended up being:

Play area upgrades £125,539

Bideford tide fountain rejuvenation £60,000

Wayfinding & public realm improvements in Bideford £65,000

Play zones £50,000 {plus £105,000 from capital reserves to complete the project}

Finally a really interesting email from Ian Rowands

For those of you who are unaware, we now collect a significant amount of very detailed information about housing development that is taking place across the district. We record details of all planning permissions for housing and then track their progress from when they start on site through to completion. We record details of every single dwelling, including its type (house, bungalow, flat) and size (number of bedrooms). We also log other details such as whether it is an affordable dwelling (and the type), if it is holiday accommodation, a rural workers dwelling, local occupancy tied, etc. And each of these individual dwellings is tracked to know whether it is still outstanding, whether it is under construction or if it is complete – including the dates that all of this happens.

We now have around ten years of this information and are pleased to be able to make it accessible online to all in what is hopefully a fairly user-friendly fashion. We do this through our interactive housing monitoring dashboard that you can access via www.torridge.gov.uk/housingmonitoring.

On the dashboard you can find everything from simple statistics such as the overall numbers of dwellings that have been built in the district, the amount that are under construction and yet to be built through to very detailed information about individual housing sites. It also provides detailed information for individual wards and parishes. You can even choose the specific time period for which you want the information to relate. The data is updated monthly and there tends to be about a six-week lag to the real-world situation. Obviously, the information is only as good as the data that we receive on progress of development but it does tend to be reasonably accurate.

I think one of the neatest features is being able to see the actual progress that is being made on the development of an individual site, including how many dwellings are started, under construction and completed over time, as this is shown as a simple chart.

The dashboard is constantly being improved and if there is particular information that you would find useful that is not currently available, please do just get in touch and we will see what we can do. Note that we are

	aware of, and working to correct, a minor issue whereby dates are displayed in an American format (mm/dd/yyyy) on some devices rather than the normal British format (dd/mm/yyyy). The dashboard is available to the general public so please do share the link (www.torridge.gov.uk/housingmonitoring) if you are receiving specific questions about housing development. I think it is a really useful resource that will be of interest to a wide audience including many in our communities. Similarly, if you need any help with it, please do not hesitate to get in touch with one of the planning policy team. Devon County as a Committee seemed to acknowledge that there is a real risk in North Devon as regards first responders. New homes at Northam are not selling and more registered providers are coming forward to work with the builders. All affordable homes have to go through the Devon Home Choice (rental) cascade process. There had been a meeting with leaders regarding local government reorganization which they are pressing on with. This affects the TDC workforce in a negative way knowing that their jobs were at risk. S Harding: - There had been a briefing on local government reorganization. - The Appledore Clean Maritime Centre site had broken ground. - He is a Police Advocate. - He has sent a letter regarding the proposal to not use firefighters as co-responders. - The TDC Hardship Fund is open, for the 7th time. - Sir Geoffrey Cox KC MP is holding two surgeries on 8 August, 11.30am at Bradworthy and 3pm at Parkham. - North Devon Plus is giving free one to one agricultural service. - He had been approached about road visibility at Bucks Cross which he is looking into and also a camping site in a field near a Bridleway.	
32.3	Clerk's Report: (Where not mentioned elsewhere on the Agenda)	
32.3.1	Is in correspondence with Community First, the Parish Council's insurers regarding cover for assets. The original premium was £342.59 for an annual premium and £329.50 for a three year Long Term Agreement, with a sum insured of £22,374. The revised premium was £346.65 for an annual premium and £333.37 for a three year Long Term Agreement, with a sum insured of £33,684.29. The Clerk had been given a 10% leeway to proceed but as the increase was slightly over this, did not proceed so that Councillors had the opportunity to discuss further at this meeting. Proposed by Councillor Spittles to renew the Policy with a three year Long Term Agreement at £333.37. Seconded by Councillor S Hill and unanimously agreed.	
32.3.2	Made payments by BACS	
32.3.3	Westward Housing. Correspondence regarding Lease and legal fees in relation to the proposed new bus shelter at East Park. The reply received is that Westward Housing do not have any objections but require the Parish Council to cover the valuation and Westward's legal fees and they would also want specific terms in the Lease such as the Parish Council to cover all maintenance and repair to the bus shelter. The valuation fee is £650.00 plus VAT.	Clerk to respond advising the Parish Council has noted the details. To be an item on the January

	The legal fees are £1,000.00 plus VAT. Councillor Heywood is investigating the ownership of the land.	2026 Agenda.
32.3.4	Interpretation Boards. A reply from the North Devon Coastal National Landscape (NDCNL) advised that they had been in touch with the Woodland Trust (WT) who were keen to repeat the approach previously used in the development of the current weathered boards and to develop the content in collaboration with locals although the impression given was that this was not a priority. If the WT are willing to progress the development of new panels, would the Parish Council support public input to the content? The NDCNL would be keen to support the funding of the panels and may be able to assist in supplying content and images. When the NDCNL officer was at the site, it was noticed that the board at the bottom end of the public car park had been rebuilt to some extent to improve matters and it was asked if the WT had fixed this. The following reply to be sent: Jenny Carey-Wood said at her presentation to the Parish Council on 21/1/25 that regarding the signage that she was aware of the original artwork and it still existed and there was already funding for it and would ensure it would progress. She assured the Parish Council that we didn't need to be involved and that no forms for funding were required and the NDCNL would deal with it all. No parishioner has approached the PC about the state of the boards, it was through a member of the AONB committee requesting that we took responsibility for getting the boards fixed, but as the Parish Council does not own them, it was not and will not be in a position to do so.	Clerk
32.4	Parish Councillors:	
32.4.1	H Freeman. State of the road surface between Cranford and Bucks Cross plus potholes at Kennerland Cross.	Clerk and Cty Cllr to report
32.4.2	D Hancock. Apologies sent.	
32.4.3	R Heywood ⇒ Bus Shelter at East Park. Covered under Minute No. 32.3.3. ⇒ Wording from Highways regarding land outside the Parish Church. Enquiries were still in progress.	
32.4.4	M Hill ⇒ Information on land ownership outside the Parish Church after checking details on the Land Registry website.	To be on the January 2026 Agenda
32.4.5	S Hill ⇒ Has reported to the Clerk that the clothes bank is full. The Clerk has made arrangements for it to be emptied.	
32.4.6	S Salvidant . ⇒ Warning signage about possible water pollution at the Bucks Mills waterfall had not been replaced and children had been seen running through the water.	Clerk to remind TDC that they were obtaining new signs
32.4.7	L Spittles ⇒ Bucks Cross Flower Planters. It had been established that the planters require the services of a professional gardener for which an invoice is awaited. The Clerk had checked that it is in order to use some of the £200.00 funding from District Councillor Dart's allocation for this purpose, which has been confirmed. - Compost had been purchased at £20 and bulbs are to be purchased. ⇒ Reported overgrown Public Right of Way at Kennerland to Woolsery.	LS

	⇒ Query from a resident of Bucks Mills regarding trade waste. Resolved.	
33.	Matters Arising from the Minutes of 17 June 2025.	
33.1	South West Water First Time Sewerage Application. The Clerk was requested to chase SWW about the promised meeting following the Team meeting. A reply was received asking for availability of a venue in 2 or 3 weeks for a drop in session from 3 – 8. The Clerk sent details of Woolsery Sports and Community Hall booking link and further details are awaited from SWW as to the date chosen. No further details were known.	
34.	Planning & Planning Correspondence.	
34.1	The following Applications were considered: ▪ 1/0544/2025/LBC – Conversion of shippon to 1 no. dwelling – Barn at Grid Reference 234739 117648, Woolsery. The deadline date for the Parish Council's response is 28/7/25. Proposed by Councillor Spittles to respond: 'The plans do not show that there is a purpose for the building or a need and therefore we are unable to comment on whether this is a relevant development fit for this rural location. We are minded to support the recommendation from the Conservation Officer.' Seconded by Councillor Heywood and unanimously agreed. ▪ 1/0516/2025/FUL – Conversion of shippon to 1 no. dwelling (self build) – Barn at Grid Reference 234739 117648, Woolsery. The deadline date for the Parish Council's response is 28/7/25. Proposed by Councillor Spittles to respond: 'The plans do not show that there is a purpose for the building or a need and therefore we are unable to comment on whether this is a relevant development fit for this rural location. The Parish Council would like clarification on when it is a conversion of a shippon and what is the self build element.' Seconded by Councillor Heywood and unanimously agreed. ▪ 1/0530/2025/FUL – Replacement extension to the rear and raising part of the main roof – South Bitworthy, Woolsery. The deadline date for the Parish Council's response is 20/7/25. Proposed by Councillor Spittles to respond: 'No comment'. Seconded by Councillor Heywood and unanimously agreed.	
34.2	Planning Correspondence.	
34.2.1	TCD Enforcement Department. E/25/0061/LIS – Lime Kiln, Bucks Mills. An email has been received from the Enforcement Officer following the Parish Council reporting an alleged breach of planning. The following reply has been received: The works carried out at the above site which included the clearing of vegetation was an essential step to enable a full inspection of the Kiln. An experienced conservation-accredited structural engineer has been overseeing the matter. On this basis, it is considered that there is no breach to the listed building and the above case will be closed.	
35.	Finance.	
35.1	Balances: NatWest Current Account as at 15 July 2025: £445.77 NatWest Savings Account as at 15 July 2025: £22,412.40	

	£4,000.00 was transferred from the Current Account to the Savings Account on 18/6/25. Interest of £18.63 was earned for June 2025.																									
35.2	Budgetary figures for June 2025; bank reconciliation and details of payment document for signature by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk will be circulated to Councillors to comply with Financial Regulations.																									
35.3	To approve and authorise the following payments. Proposed by Councillor Spittles. Seconded by Councillor S Hill and unanimously agreed. <table border="1"><tr><td>35.3.1</td><td>BACS</td><td>Mrs S Squire</td><td>July 2025 salary and expenses Salary £534.39 Expenses. £17.85</td><td>£552.24</td></tr><tr><td>35.3.2</td><td>BACS</td><td>HMRC</td><td>PAYE</td><td>£133.60</td></tr><tr><td>35.3.3</td><td>BACS</td><td>Westcotts</td><td>2024/25 Internal Audit Fee</td><td>£390.00</td></tr><tr><td>35.3.4</td><td>BACS</td><td>Woolsery Hall</td><td>Hire</td><td>£32.00</td></tr></table> A thank you letter has been received from Torridge Volunteer Cars for the annual grant.					35.3.1	BACS	Mrs S Squire	July 2025 salary and expenses Salary £534.39 Expenses. £17.85	£552.24	35.3.2	BACS	HMRC	PAYE	£133.60	35.3.3	BACS	Westcotts	2024/25 Internal Audit Fee	£390.00	35.3.4	BACS	Woolsery Hall	Hire	£32.00	
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35.4	Maintenance of bus shelters at Bucks Cross and Woolsery. The Clerk has contacted HTCD Exterior Decorating for an update and quotation if necessary following agreement that the structures would be inspected 6 months after the refurbishment had been carried out. It had not been possible for a quotation to be provided due to volume of work.					September Agenda																				
35.5	2024/25 Audit. The internal audit had been completed by Westcotts and no issues were raised. The Clerk had sent the Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors, P K F Littlejohn LLP by the deadline date of 1 July 2025.																									
35.6	HMRC VAT Reclaim. It was noted that the sum of £171.00 was credited to the Parish Council's Current Account on 19/6/25 for the period 1/1/25 to 31/5/25 bringing the reclaim available up to date.																									
36.	To consider a response to items raised under the Public Session. None.																									
37.	Correspondence. Various emails and publications have been circulated to Councillors.																									
37.1	Taw and Torridge Motor Club. Letter from Holsworthy Motor Club is holding it's 'Roger Pole Taw and Torridge Classic Reliability Trial' on 14 September 2025 and part of the route, involving approximately 80 motorcycles and cars, will be through Woolsery. The Club has consulted Devon County Council, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and all households who may be affected.																									
37.2	TDC. Residents invited to have their say on the future of local government in Devon. The email was circulated to Councillors on 8/7/25. The consultation is running until 11 August 2025. <i>Noted.</i>																									
37.3	EA Online Reporting Service – Westcountry Rivers Trust. A local volunteer has provided the following information: 'You may remember being invited to help us test the pilot of the EA online service for reporting water pollution. Whether you had a chance to use it during the pilot or not, we have been asked to pass on thanks for being part of the trial group. The reports and feedback received have been essential in helping to shape this service.'																									

	The EA have asked us to announce that the pilot phase has finished, and the service is now live and available 24/7 with no access code needed. Anyone can report water pollution via www.gov.uk/report-environmental-problem They have also published a blog and have set up a Community Engagement HQ page which has more information about the online service'. <i>Noted.</i>	The details to be advertised so that residents are aware of the procedure
37.4	State of road between Woolsery and Bradworthy. Bradworthy Parish Council had advised that an email of representation has been sent to County Councillor Julian, as follows: 'We have been contacted by Woolsery Parish Clerk to alert you to the condition of the road between our Parish Bradworthy and Woolsery. It was felt that if we work in collaboration, we may get some progress on the repair of this road. These roads have been a contention for far too long. We understand that the lanes around our Parish are not high priority, and fall below the category for repair in this financial year and that some repairs have been undertaken. But we would stress that as a Parish Council we get a large number of complaints about the condition of these lanes in particular the road from Three Lane End to Whitely Cross which forms part of the main route to Woolsery for our Parishioners. The road from Ashmansworthy Bridge up the hill to Woolsery is also considered a hazard for road users. As a Parish Council we have a duty to pass on these complaints and our concerns. As a Parish Council we acknowledge the importance of the Road Warden Scheme and are going to push forward with trying to establish an "Inter Parish" Road Warden team that we feel will enable safer and quicker repairs of minor issues and we are in the process of contacting adjacent Parishes to gauge any interest. Obviously, we would appreciate any help and advice that you can offer on both the repairs and the Road Warden Scheme'.	
37.5	HM Treasury. Reply to the Parish Council's letter in connection with Farm Inheritance Tax, circulated to Councillors on 7/7/25.	
38.	Clerk's Leave. Wednesday, 30 July to Sunday 17 August 2025 inclusive and Friday, 22 August.	
39.	Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday, 16 September 2025 at 7.30pm in Woolsery Sports and Community Hall. The meeting ended at 9.19pm. There is an August recess and no meeting will be held.	
Summary of Decisions: ➤ Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025 ➤ Insurance Policy with Community First to be renewed and a three year Long Term Agreement agreed ➤ Planning ➤ Payments		
These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.		
Signed: Chair of Woolsery Parish Council.		Date: