

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council at the Nicholls Hall, Lydford on Tuesday 13th May 2025 on the rising of the Annual Parish Meeting.

Meeting commenced 19:30

Present: Cllrs Hulett (outgoing Chair), K Lenton, L Lenton, D Moyse, J Gilpin, B Cook, A Purnell. Cllr Mott, Cllr Southcott (WDBC)

1. Apologies for absence – Cllr Purnell. Cllr Fife-Cook (DCC). Accepted.
2. Election of Officers 2025 – 2026
 - a. Councillor Hulett was nominated by Councillor K Lenton and seconded by Councillor Cook. No other nominations were received. The motion that Councillor Hulett be approved as Chair of the Council for the coming year was agreed by all.
 - b. Councillor Hulett accepted the nomination as Chair. The existing Declaration of Office was deemed to suffice going forward and Councillor Hulett assumed the Chair of the meeting.
 - c. Councillor L Lenton nominated Councillor K Lenton for the position of Vice Chair to the Council for the coming year. The nomination was seconded by Councillor Hulett. There being no other nominations, the motion that Councillor K Lenton be approved as Vice Chair for the coming year was approved by all.
3. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 14th May 2024
The minutes of the meeting were accepted by all.
4. Matters arising from Annual Parish Meeting
 - a. The proposal was made that the Council commission an audit of facilities within the village for disabled users. (**AP1** – Clerk to investigate how this might be carried out.)
 - b. The advisory disabled bay at the end of the Granite Way has become obscured or erased over the years since it was last painted. (**AP2** – Clerk to discuss with Highways how the bay might be repaired)
 - c. Councillors agreed that the priorities for the coming year should be: To agree council objectives for the year ahead.
 - The approval and adoption of a Planning Protocol which governs exactly how the Council should respond to any planning application. (**AP3** – Chair and Clerk to begin drafting a proposal for Council consideration). (**AP4** – Cllr Mott to obtain hard copies of the Local Plans for West Devon Borough Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority).
 - Affordable housing survey – the Council will distribute the survey and begin any response that may be required by the findings of the survey.

5. Annual Audit

a. Feedback from internal audit

The Clerk apprised the Council on the feedback from the Internal Auditor, notably:

There were no issues identified with the financial management of the Council, although a greater degree of oversight was advised. To that end, Cllr Cook agreed to have oversight of finances, and Cllr K Lenton agreed to assume responsibility for Council personnel.

Under HMRC legislation, The Clerk is entitled to £6 per week payment to cover the costs of working from home. Proposed by Cllr Hulett that this payment be approved. Seconded Cllr Cook, all in favour.

As of the start of the current tax year, the Council is responsible for paying Employers' National Insurance for all employees, regardless of whether the employee is required to pay. This is likely to result in a budget overspend this year but will need to be built into next year's planning.

b. Documents required for external audit.

To comply with the SBAA external audit requirements under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and complete the Council's external audit for the financial year 2024-25 the following documents are required to be adopted by the Council:

- a. Certificate of Exemption 2024-25
- b. Governance Statement 2024-25
- c. Accounting Statements 2024-25
- d. Dates for public rights to access financial documents 2024-25

Proposed by Cllr Hulett that these documents be adopted and signed by the Council. Seconded by Cllr L Lenton. All in favour. The documents were duly signed (**AP5** – Clerk to send Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn. Remaining audit documents to be published on the Council website).

6. Annual review

Following internal audit, the following Council documents were reviewed and adopted by the full Council.

Standing Orders
Financial Regulations

Meeting closed 20:00

Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council

On the rising of the Annual Parish Council Meeting – 20:00

Present: Cllrs Hulett (outgoing Chair), K Lenton, L Lenton, D Moyse, J Gilpin, B Cook, A Purnell. Cllr Mott, Cllr Southcott (WDBC)

There being no members of the public present, the Chair moved the meeting on to Apologies.

1. Apologies for absence
Cllr Purnell, Cllr Fife-Cook
2. Declarations of Interest
Nil
3. Minutes of the meeting 8th April 2025
Councillors agreed to accept the minutes.
4. Matters arising from the meeting 8th April 2025, not included elsewhere on the agenda.
Nil
5. Housing needs survey
The survey has been circulated to Councillors and largely agreed by them. It was agreed that there should be information in the preamble to the questionnaire explaining that whatever is built will be at least five years down the line.

Getting on with things before the survey is ready by inviting Katie West from WDBC (**AP6** – Clerk to invite Ms West to a future meeting to discuss how to progress).

On questionnaire – do you want a confidential meeting with someone from WDBC / do you want a parish meeting – if you wish to be contacted about this survey, provide email
6. Invite in principle to a proposed meeting with Geoffrey Cox MP on protecting the area of West Devon from large scale development.
Councillors decided not to send anyone to the meeting.
7. Planning
Presently there are no applications to consider.
8. Council email addresses:
The 2025 Practitioner's Guide (Audit) changes the requirement on Data Compliance relating to council email accounts: by next audit the council needs to have created a generic email account hosted on an authority-owned domain. It was suggested that maybe emails could be provided through the lydford.co.uk website. (**AP7** – Cllr Gilpin to investigate).
9. Superfast Broadband
Clerk reported that the SW of England will begin switching from landline telephones to broadband telephones this autumn. After switchover, the ordinary landlines will cease to function.

Lydford is part of the next round of the Government's Project Gigabyte. Contracts for installation have been signed and work is expected to start in 2026. There is no need for any Council action.

10. Finances

a. The following payments were approved:

i. J. Bright	£386.77	May salary
ii. HMRC	£92.20	PAYE May
iii. Zurich Insurance	£366.00	Annual council insurance
iv. Penny Clapham	£105.70	Internal audit fees
v. DM Payroll Services	£120.00	Payroll services
vi. Nicholls Hall	£110.00	Room hire 2024-25
vii. Devon ALC	£19.20	New Councillor training fees

Proposed by Cllr Hulett, seconded by Cllr L Lenton. All in favour.

b. Clerk overtime:

Cllrs voted to approve payment to the Clerk for 23.25 hours overtime for the six month period November 2024 to April 2025. Proposed Cllr Hulett, seconded Cllr L Lenton. All in favour.

c. Banking reconciliation for period 1.4.25 to 30.4.25

Accepted

Opening balance 1.4.25	£10,606.72	Bank holdings at 30.4.25	
Add receipts	£5,726.79	Deposit Account	£10,330.89
Less payments	<u>£904.97</u>	Current Account	<u>£5,097.65</u>
	£15,428.54		£15,428.54

d. Payments made by the Clerk under the Scheme of Delegation

Nil

11. Any urgent business not listed on the agenda below, by permission of the Chair.

Cllr Hulett proposed that the Lengthsman be employed to clear Gorge Hill from the top of the hill to the end of the footpath. This was approved. (AP8 – Clerk to book Lengthsman).

The hedge at the top of the hill is overgrowing the footpath. It was agreed that Cllr Moyse would speak to the owners of the The Old Priory about having the hedge cut back. (AP9)

Councillors agreed to fund a voucher as a contribution to the tombola at the fayre.

Cllr Gilpin reported that the repairs to the playground identified in the latest RoSPA report have been completed as recommended. It was further stated that when removed the pole was cut in section to inspect the core of the wood, which was found to be perfectly sound through the majority of its diameter and did not need replacing. It was agreed that the Council would write a letter to RoSPA explaining the Council findings and expressing its concern that funds are being wasted in repairing materials that do not require repair (AP10 Clerk to compose letter for signature).

Meeting concluded 20:30

	Action required of	Action required	Outcome
1	Clerk	Investigate ways that an audit of facilities for the disabled presently provided in Lydford might be carried out.	Leonard Cheshire audit document downloaded. Prices for professional audit appear to begin at approximately £300. How does the Council want to proceed?
2	Clerk	To consult with Highways on how the advisory disabled bay at the end of the Granite Way might be repaired.	Request to Highways to have the bay cleaned as a first action to ensure signage is visible. Referred to WDBC. Problem reported.
3	Clerk and Chair	To produce possible first draft of procedure for Council to respond to planning applications.	First draft produced by Chair. Question of priorities to agenda for June meeting.
4	Cllr Mott	To try and locate hard copies of the local plans for WDBC and DNPA	
5	Clerk	Send Certificate of Exemption to external auditors, and post remaining AGAR documents online.	Sent 4.6.25
6	Clerk	Invite Katie West from WDBC affordable housing to speak at a coming meeting of the Council.	Invite sent 4.6.25. Unable to attend June meeting, invite accepted for July meeting
7	Cllr Gilpin	To investigate possibility of setting up email accounts for Councillors on the lydford.co.uk website to meet audit requirements.	
8	Clerk	Book Lengthsman to clear Gorge Hill from the top of the hill to the end of the footpath.	Presently on holiday. Will catch up with him when he returns.
9	Cllr Moyse	Request that the owners of The Old Priory take measures to cut back their hedge at the top of Gorge Hill	
10	Clerk	Compose letter to RoSPA regarding concerns over sound materials being assessed as unfit for purpose.	