

Annual Parish Meeting – 12.5.26

The meeting was attended by 38 people including the parish council, West Devon and Devon County Councillors and representatives of most of the major bodies represented in the village.

The Clerk started the meeting at 6:05 pm by welcoming everyone and outlining briefly the purpose of the meeting as an opportunity for parishioners to gather and raise questions or concerns they may have about life in the village, or to make suggestions for the future.

Steve Hill – a Trustee of the Nicholls Hall reviewed the past year for the Hall and outlined the Trustees' plans for the year ahead. Steve explained that there have been a number of different events at the Hall, some more successful than others.

The Hall now has a drinks license. Trustees feel a responsibility to provide community events, although these seldom cover the costs of putting them on. The recent series of "meet and eat" events was regrettably not well attended and has been cancelled, as have the Bistro evenings.

Trustees would welcome suggestions for other community and fund raising activities.

The Hall is just about managing to balance income and expenditure. However there is some maintenance work and improvements which need doing, for which Trustees are hoping to get some grant funding.

Richard Hollingsworth spoke for the Sportsfield. He explained that the website is now up to date and covers the present issues in greater detail. Trustees broke even through last financial year with the Summer fair raising £2,500, most of which was spent on maintenance costs. Trustees were able to upgrade the kitchen courtesy of a donation.

The field and pavilion are under-used, with only one paying event this year to date. The Summer Fair has been cancelled. No groups or sports clubs use the field or the pavilion now that the Lydford Foxes have left.

Trustees are investigating other possible uses for the field; allotments, community gardens, wildlife meadow or an orchard. There is a questionnaire which Trustees would appreciate parishioners completing that will be used to guide their decisions. This can be completed online at the website or hard copies are available.

There are only two Trustees, and volunteers would be appreciated.

Sue Powne reminded those present that the parish is organising a celebration of Devon Day this year, to take place at the field on Saturday 6th June.

Richard Drysdale spoke for Dartmoor National Park Authority. On the matter of the car park; the charges raised almost exactly what was predicted; the public toilets are open for use again as of today, and are being regularly cleaned. They will be closed as usual from Autumn Half Term until the following Easter break, during which time it is expected that they will be remodelled to include disabled toilet if possible. Two disabled bays will be painted on the car park soon. DNPA are looking at possibly trialling a reduction in the cost for parking for a short period of 90 - 120 minutes starting possibly in early June 2026. Parishioners raised their concerns about the displaced parking and its impact upon local resident. Richard explained that there was very little that the DNPA could do about that problem and referred parishioners to Devon Highways. Questions were asked about

whether DNPA could restrict parking in the splay area leading into the car park as this was obstructing vision for drivers exiting onto the highway. It was explained that this area is owned by - and is the responsibility of - Devon Highways.

Richard stated that 2026 is the 75th anniversary of the creation of National Park. There are a number of activities planned to celebrate this event and to fund the work of the Park going forward. Details are available on the Dartmoor website.

Kit Hancock – Dartmoor Ranger for the Lydford area stated that the Authority had installed a new bridge over the River Lyd at High Down. Although the bridge has the appearance of a wooden construction it has a galvanised steel core.

Working with the parish council, DNPA Access Officer is investigating ways of improving the surface of Bridleway 2a – which gives visitors access to the Ancient Spring.

The field wall at Nodden Gate has been reported as slowly deteriorating, and is being repaired by Commoners. DNPA will be replacing the gate there soon.

Simon Thompson – Lydford Gorge. Management is now divided between the Gorge, Finch Foundry and Castle Drogo. Simon cited a number of examples of damage caused to paths during the winter storms of 2025 – 26. Most footpaths have now been repaired but a small number remain restricted. At the Waterfall end of the site rangers have installed ponds and restored paths by the old railway line and a new viewing area for disabled visitors. A planning application has been submitted to renew and enlarge the bird hide. Simon reported that a large amount of the exposed rock face near the Devil's Cauldron has moved due to water ingress. That section was closed whilst repairs were completed but it is now open again. Visitors need to be aware that climate change events are frequently re-arranging fixtures and walkways in the park.

EV chargers have been installed in the car park at the Waterfall end of the site. The electricity infrastructure in Lydford means that there is no possibility of installing chargers at the Devil's Cauldron end because of supply issues.

Complaints have been received by the National Trust about visitors to the Gorge walking on the roadway between the Cauldron and Waterfall entrances. The staff do try to encourage visitors to use the footpath at the site but this is not always successful.

Otters have been seen in the Gorge. The Trust are looking to install wildlife cameras, and organising drone flights with permission from DNPA to get a better understanding of where they are living.

Jared Lothian – Dartmoor Inn. The pub regretted the disruption caused by visitors to last November's Fireworks event. Jared explained that whilst staff had spent a long time trying to organise visitors to ensure the disruption was minimised, he felt that he would probably end up cancelling the event because of the work required to deal with parking. It was suggested that he could look at other locations, perhaps the sports field, although parking would remain an issue because of the large number of cars that arrived. Simon Thompson suggested that an arrangement could be reached to allow parking at the Gorge site.

Steve Hulett from the parish council presented the Chairman's Report, outlining the issues faced by the council through the year and what actions the council had taken. The full report will be available online.

Steve proposed that the action points for the council for the coming year should be: Enhance access to the Ancient Spring; reinstate and develop the council's prior work on the 20's Plenty initiative with the ambition of bringing in a 20mph speed limit through the village, and furthering the council's work on the provision of affordable housing within the village. These suggestions were accepted and no other suggestions were forthcoming.

A proposal was made that the Sportsfield and the Hall Trustees could solve their recruitment problems by amalgamating. This was supported by Councillor Fife-Cook who explained that Trustees of the Hall and the Recreation Ground at Mary Tavy had amalgamated their Trusts with great success. The suggestion was received by Trustees of both Trusts present at the meeting.

A question was raised by a parishioner from Hawthorn Park, unhappy that she had not been notified of the planning application for the vacant lot in Hawthorn Park and that the first she knew of the application was when she read the council's response in the meeting agenda.

Meeting closed 19:50

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7:50pm on the rising of the Annual Parish Meeting

1. Election of Officers

- a. Councillor Hulett was nominated by Cllr L Lenton for the position of Chair to the Council for the coming year. The nomination was seconded by Cllr K Lenton and supported by all present. There being no other nominations, Cllr Hulett accepted the nomination.
- b. The declaration of office was signed by Cllr Hulett previously.
- c. Councillor K Lenton was nominated by Cllr L Lenton to continue as Vice Chair to the Council. The nomination was seconded by the Chair and approved by all present. There being no other nominations, Cllr Lenton accepted the nomination.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Purnell: holiday. These were accepted.

3. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13th May 2025

It was agreed to accept the minutes

4. Matters arising from Annual Parish Meeting

The objectives for the council for the coming year, proposed at the Annual Parish Meeting were:

- a) Continuing the previous work of the council to bring the 20mph speed limit through the village to fruition,
- b) Working with DNPA to upgrade the footpath to ancient spring, improving the site's accessibility.
- c) Continue with the prior work to bring affordable housing to the village.

All three objectives were agreed. (**AP1** – Clerk to draft an action plan for adoption)

Councillor Fife-Cook explained that there will be no funds available this coming year for the 20s Plenty project as Devon Highways have ceased funding for it. Consequently any initiative from the council will need to be self-financed. As an alternative, Highways are funding village gateways.

Cllr Robson agreed to take a lead on affordable housing, linking the council with a Community Land Trust. Cllr Gilpin suggested forming a sub-committee for the project.

5. Annual Audit

i. Feedback from internal audit

The Clerk outlined the feedback received from the Auditor. The principle points were

- a) The council email address must be hosted on an authority owned domain with a suffix as a .gov.uk or .org.uk
- b) The website needs to include an accessibility statement
- c) The council must adopt and publish an IT policy

(**AP2** – Clerk to arrange for these actions to be completed).

ii. 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 2025-26.

Councillors resolved to approve -

- a. The Certificate of Exemption 2025-26
- b. The Governance Statement 2025-26
- c. The Accounting Statements 2025-26

Proposed Cllr Hulett, seconded Cllr K Lenton. All in favour. The certificates were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

The council agreed the dates for public rights to access financial documents 2025-26
(**AP3** – Clerk to publish audit documents)

6. Annual review

Following internal audit, the following Council documents require review and approval by full council.

Retention (of documents) V1 – 2022, Statement of Internal Control V5 – 2023
(**AP4** – Clerk to circulate)

Meeting closed 8:10pm

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the parish council meeting
Tuesday 12th May 2026
19.55 on the rising of the council's annual meeting

Present: Cllrs Hulett (Chair), K Lenton (Vice Chair), L Lenton, Moyse, Gilpin, Cllrs Moyse & Southcott (WDBC) and Cllr Fife-Cook (DCC)

d) Public Session (15 minutes)

None present

e) Apologies for absence

Cllr Purnell (Holiday) accepted.

f) Declarations of Interest

None

g) Minutes of the monthly meeting 14th April 2026

Councillors accepted the minutes without amendment, and they duly signed by the Chair.

h) Matters arising from the meeting 14th April 2026 which are not part of the agenda items.

The car that was reported to the council for parking at the junction opposite Hawthorn Park appears to have been moved. Councillors will watch for a return.

Councillor K Lenton has spoken to the owner of the hedgerow at Ingo Brake where the plastic wrap was reported. The Councillor has been assured that it has all been removed.

i) Urgent matters to report (For information)

Metal detectorists have been reported to Dartmoor Archaeology department having been discovered with detectors on the Saxon Banks.

A successful litter pick took place on 29th April, led by Cllr Purnell

The council has received a number of grateful comments after the Lengthsman's work on the footpath from Hawthorn Park to School Road. (**AP5** – Clerk to pass on the comments to the Lengthsman).

j) Casual vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Councillor Cook.

Donna Robson was duly co-opted to join the council. Having signed the acceptance of office Donna took her place on the council. (**AP6** – Clerk to arrange induction

documentation. **AP7** – Cllr Gilpin to organise a council email address). The Chair welcomed Cllr Robson to the council.

k) Affordable housing

Councillors agreed that the next step should be to meet with the DNPA planners to identify where in the parish development might be permitted, and to ascertain what development could be acceptable. Cllrs Moyse and Robson agreed to represent the council. (AP8 – Clerk to liaise with Katie West to organise meeting).

l) Disabled access to buses (accessible)

Councillors agreed that the quote received of over £10,000 for the placement of a hard standing to improve accessibility was excessive and that the council should seek its own quotes. (AP9 – Cllr Gilpin to obtain a quote from local business. AP10 – Clerk to forward received quote to Cllr Gilpin). (AP11 – Clerk to contact Stagecoach with a view to getting them to contribute to the costs of installing the hard standing).

m) Broadband working group

All avenues have been explored without success. The only option available now is for individuals to contact satellite providers. Cllr Hulett provided a fuller update in his address to the Annual Parish Meeting.

n) Road Warden Scheme

The council agreed to continue to work to engage with the scheme. Cllrs Giplin and Hulett agreed to undertake the chapter 8 training. (AP12 – Clerk to contact Highways to arrange training)

Cllr Fife-Cook announced that he is trialling software currently which will allow the user to ascertain a good deal more information about individual road repairs. Once approved, he hopes that the software will be distributed to councils. He will push Highways to expedite the road warden scheme in Lydford, hopefully with a more local chapter 8 training provider.

o) Council email accounts

All Councillors' email accounts have now been transferred to the lydfordparishcouncil.com domain. All other email addresses should no longer be used for council business.

p) Planning

No requests for consultation received from either planning authority.

q) Finances

a) Cllrs resolved to approve the payments:

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|-----------------------|----------|--|
| i. J. Bright | £ 412.77 | May salary |
| ii. HMRC | £ 98.79 | PAYE & employers' NI contribution, May |
| iii. Zurich Insurance | £ 402.00 | Annual council insurance |

iv. Anthony Purnell £7.99 Materials for litter picking exercise

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

b) Banking reconciliation for period 1.4.26 to 30.4.26

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|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Opening balance 1.4.26 | £10,606.72 | Bank holdings at 30.4.26 | |
| Add receipts | £11,419.19 | Deposit Account | £12,920.29 |
| Less payments | <u>£9,083.70</u> | Current Account | <u>£21.92</u> |
| | £12,942.21 | | £12,942.21 |

Councillors noted the reconciliation.

c) Actions taken by the Clerk under the Scheme of Delegation

Responses to planning applications received, where no extension could be approved:

- d) 26/0038 Tree works at The Coach House EX20 4BH – the council has no objection to this application
- e) 0124/26 Application for permission in principle for the erection of one new dwelling at Plot 6, Hawthorn Park, EX20 4BD – the council are not objecting to the principle of constructing a dwelling However, they do suggest that, should the Officers be mindful to approve this application, it would be with the stipulations that – a) the dwelling is to meet a local need, b) the structure be consistent with those already in place in Hawthorn Park. The council would strongly support the erection of a dwelling intended to help [provide affordable housing].

8.35 pm meeting closed

Action points from APM, ACM and PCM 12.5.26

| | Action by | Action | Outcome |
|----|-------------|---|---|
| 1 | Clerk | Draft action plan 2026-27, for approval at June meeting | |
| 2 | Clerk | Action the three points identified at internal audit. | i) Applied to transfer Clerk email address to lydfordparish.gov.uk 17.5.26 Awaiting response from Parish Online ii) Accessibility statement uploaded to website 17.5.26 |
| 3 | Clerk | Circulate internal and external audit documents. | |
| 4 | Clerk | Circulate to Cllrs the two policies for review in 2026 | |
| 5 | Clerk | Provide feedback to lengthsman on work carried out in Hawthorn Park | Passed by telephone 13.5.26 |
| 6 | Clerk | Organise induction documentation to Cllr Robson | |
| 7 | Cllr Gilpin | Arrange a council email address for Cllr Robson | |
| 8 | Clerk | Liaise with Katie West (WDBC) to arrange a meeting with DNPA planners re affordable housing | |
| 9 | Cllr Gilpin | Arrange for a quote from local business to construct accessibility ramp by bus shelter. | |
| 10 | Clerk | Forward initial quote re bus shelter to Cllr Gilpin | |
| 11 | Clerk | Contact Stagecoach with a view to obtaining sponsorship / funding to support construction of accessibility ramp | |
| 12 | Clerk | Contact Devon Highways to arrange training for Cllrs Hulett and Gilpin | |