

LYDFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Meeting of the parish council at the Nicholls Hall, Lydford on
Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7:00pm

Present: Cllr Hulett (Chair), Cllrs Moyse, Robson, Lenton K, Cllr Southcott (WDBC), Cllr Fife-Cook (DCC) Josh Scillitoe (Highways), Simon Thompson (NT Lydford Gorge), 3 members of the parish.

1. Public Session (15 minutes)

Lorraine Ellicott expressed the concerns she and her neighbours were feeling about the work being carried out to land at Vale Down. Some of the land is in Lydford parish, but most is in Bridestowe. The Chair was able to reassure Lorraine that the parish council have been made aware and are communicating with Bridestowe on the matter. The National Park are aware of the majority of issues already raised and are working with the landowner. Lorraine and her neighbours are concerned lest the piles of gorse brush accumulated on the site are incinerated. (AP1 – Clerk to pass concerns to local Dartmoor Ranger).

Councillor Fife-Cook updated the council on Local Government Reorganisation: The process is now on hold as a Government review has been commissioned by the Minister responsible. These reviews typically have a time scale around 2 years. Current political thinking is that by the time the review is published a new government will be in power and they're likely to not want to proceed with LGR.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Purnell, Cllr Lenton L, Cllr Mott (WDBC)

3. Declarations of Interest

Nil

4. Minutes of the monthly meeting 14th July 2026

Ammendment - Item 1, paragraph 2 line 3 – the grant application from the Lydford Bellringers is to allow them to repair their existing chimes device rather than purchase a new one. Following this amendment the minutes were accepted by all and duly signed by the Chair

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

Nil

6. Urgent matters to report

Nil

7. Lydford Gorge Bridge

Simon Thompson felt that the damage and injury were mercifully slight compared to what could possibly have happened. One of the trees damaged was covered with very rare lichens which will take care over many years to regrow. Visitor numbers through the year suggest that the Gorge has lost @ 5000 visits as a consequence of the accident and the subsequent road closure. The consensus of the meeting was that speed was likely a contributory factor in the collision and that the 60mph limit is an issue at that location

There was a deal of praise for the Highways officers and contractors for their speed and efficiency in dealing with the outcome of the collision, effecting repairs and re-opening the bridge in very good time.

Councillor Fife-Cook felt that the work went well with the exception of communications from the parish on the progress of works.

Josh Scillitoe informed the council that the strength of the parapet is limited because of the strictures of being a listed building – reinforcement or collision barriers cannot be used. Presently Highways are limited on what can be done to reduce speed.

Josh stated that the roadway after the bridge will be closed 14th - 16th December (24 hours each day) for new work to the road infrastructure.

Josh announced that from 14th to 16th December the road at this point is to be closed 24 hours per day for the installation of new ducting.

8. Items for Action (from Action Plan).

a) Affordable Housing

(**AP2** – Clerk to enquire of Katie West whether she knows how many Lydford residents are on the Devon Choices waiting list).

The members of the working group explained that the received definition of an “Affordable Dwelling” is one that is reduced by at least 20% below its market value. Given that a property in Hawthorn Park sold recently for over £400,000, a reduction of 20% would not bring the price down to a level which could be afforded by someone on a low income.

Cllr Robson referred to her report which was circulated earlier. (**AP3** – Clerk to circulate again)

The feeling in the working group is that whilst the feedback from the two recent online surveys was indicative of a need the numbers involved were too small to be considered fully representative, and that before further work was done a full survey of the village should be conducted face-to-face. This was accepted. (**AP4** – Cllr Robson to compose an appropriate survey questionnaire for completion by everyone in the village).

b) Ancient Spring

Plan is to open the track to put a drain in and resurface the track.

c) 20's Plenty

Josh explained to the council that if the village had been accepted onto the original 20's Plenty campaign, it is highly likely that the speed through the village will be reduced in the future by Highways when funds allow. There is no need to press the case further.

Cllr Fife-Cook suggested that village gateways might be an alternative traffic calming method, although Josh pointed out that the parked cars through the village create their own traffic calming obstructions. The idea of rumble-strips was discussed and Josh has agreed to take the idea away to investigate further.

20's Plenty signs are acceptable to Highways provided that they are displayed on private property and not on Highways posts or land. The signs must clearly not imitate official road signs

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– heart-shaped signs bearing “20” as an example are acceptable. A member of the parish felt that she might be able to find a sponsor to have these signs printed for the village.

9. Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) opposite Lydford Farm Shop – location

Josh felt that the sign could be moved but asked the council to suggest a suitable site which could be explored.

10. Council website

Councillors agreed that the whole site, rather than merely the council’s pages, might be relocated to a commercial provider, removing the council’s dependance upon Cllr Gilpin to maintain the site. (**AP5** – Clerk to explore options and provide some quotes for next meeting).

11. Disabled access parking bay, School Road

The Highways Officer felt that there was nothing further that could be done about removing or relocating the bay at the present time, and that communications through official channels served only to entrench positions.

12. Planning

Councillors noted the decisions from DNPA on the following applications:

26/0055 Sewage Works EX20 4BH – works to trees in a conservation area approved

0124/26 Plot 6, Hawthorn Park – permission granted in principle for the erection of either an affordable residence or local need self build.

13. Finances

a. Councillors approved the following payments:

i. J. Bright	£ 412.77	Salary September
ii. HMRC	£ 98.79	PAYE & Employer’s NI September
iii. Steve Hulett	£ 94.24	Litter pick equipment (3 invoices)

Proposed: Cllr K Lenton, seconded Cllr Robson, all in favour.

b. Grant application

Councillors approved a request from Lydford Bellringers for a £100 grant to support their refurbishment of a Chimes device.

Proposed Cllr Hulett, seconded Cllr K Lenton, all in favour.

c. Clerk’s salary

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services has agreed on pay rates applicable from 1.4.26 to 31.3.27. The new rates are increased by 3.3% per annum.

The council agreed to increase the Clerk’s salary in line with the agreed new rate, with effect from 1st April 2026.

d. Banking reconciliation for period 1.4.26 to 31.8.26

Opening balance 1.4.26	£12,942.21	Bank holdings at 31.8.26	
Add receipts	£5,777.49	Deposit Account	£13,632.66
Less payments	<u>£5,074.69</u>	Current Account	<u>£12.35</u>
	£13,645.01		£13,645.01

14. Actions taken by the Clerk under the Scheme of Delegation

Cllrs approved the following actions taken by the Clerk through the month of August:

- i. 11.8.26 - Payment of Clerk's August salary (£412.77), PAYE & Employers' NI contributions (£98.79), Room hire for Extraordinary Planning Meeting (£11.00)
- ii. Planning application 0261/26 Application at Heatherlands to demolish existing barn structure without replacement. After email consultations, the Clerk made no response to the request for consultation.

Meeting closed 20:30

Table of action points arising from the meeting:

	Action required of:	Action required:	Outcome:
1	Clerk	Convey to Dartmoor planners the residents' concerns on the accumulation of gorse brush on Vale Down.	Passed to local Dartmoor Ranger 10.9.26, ready for his meeting with DNPA planners later that week.
2	Clerk	Enquire of Katie West whether she knows how many Lydford residents are presently on the Devon Choices waiting list.	Relevant information contained on page 4 of Katie's report from February 2026. Re-circulated to Members 19.9.26
3	Clerk	Circulate initial report from Cllr Robson re affordable housing.	Circulated 19.9.26
4	Cllr Robson	Compose affordable / social housing survey questionnaire for approval at October meeting.	
5	Clerk	Explore options for exporting the Lydford.co.uk website to a commercial supplier.	