

Burlescombe Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of Burlescombe Parish Council

On Saturday, 6 July 2024 in the Roger Williams' Committee Room at Burlescombe Village Hall

Signing of the Declaration of Acceptance by all Councillors

At the start of the meeting, the newly elected councillors present signed the declaration of acceptance of office witnessed by the Acting Parish Clerk.

A recording of the Parish Council meeting was undertaken by the Canonsleigh Residents Association.

Present: Councillors Downing, Eaves, Forward, Scott and Smith together with Mrs McGeever, Acting Parish Clerk.

Apologies: MDDC Councillors Clist, Lock and Westcott, DCC Councillor Radford together with Louise Farley and D Palmer.

06072024/1 Election of a Chair

In the absence of an elected Vice-Chair, the Acting Parish Clerk opened the meeting at 9am asked for nominations for the position of Chairman.

Dennis Palmer was put forward as a candidate for the position of Chair. Given he was absent and unable to accept the appointment, the nomination was void.

Councillor Smith proposed Councillor Forward as Chair and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Eaves. Following a vote of four in favour and one abstention (Councillor Forward), it was RESOLVED that Councillor Forward would act as Chair until the next Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2025.

Councillor Forward signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chair duly witnessed by the Acting Parish Clerk.

Councillor Forward took over the Chair.

06072024/2 Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor Forward asked Councillor Downing if she would consider the position of Vice-Chair given her previous experience as a Parish Councillor. Councillor Downing declined the nomination due to time constraints.

Councillor Downing proposed Councillor Eaves as Vice-Chair and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Smith. Following a vote of four in favour and one abstention (Councillor Eaves), it was RESOLVED that Councillor Eaves would act as Vice-Chair until the next Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2025.

Councillor Eaves signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chair duly witnessed by the Acting Parish Clerk.

This appointment meant that both the villages of Burlescombe and Westleigh were represented.

06072024/3 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted at the meeting. The Acting Parish Clerk explained that such declarations were often related to planning applications to be considered.

The Parish Council noted that L Farley and D Palmer required a dispensation to allow them to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office after the meeting given that both were unable to attend.

Councillor Forward proposed and Councillor Downing seconded the proposal that L Farley and D Palmer signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office after the meeting and at the earliest opportunity. Following a unanimous decision, it was RESOLVED that the dispensation be granted.

06072024/4 Review and acceptance of Core Documents

The Acting Parish Clerk had circulated the documentation available on the Parish computer prior to the meeting relating to the current:

- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Risk Assessment

The Acting Parish Clerk advised that the National Association of Local Council (NALC) provided 'models' of all core documents that were then tailored to meet a Parish Council's individual needs/circumstances. Parish Clerks were alerted to any changes in these model documents through the NALC and Devon Association of Local Councils. Such changes were then notified to the Parish Council at a meeting and the Parish Clerk was then requested to update the documents accordingly for approval at the next meeting.

The documents on file appeared to date from 2016-2018 and, therefore, did not reflect the current model documents.

Councillor Downing proposed and Councillor Forward seconded the proposal that the Parish Council accept the current documentation which would then be updated following the meeting in accordance with the current model documents and presented to the next meeting for approval.

Following a unanimous vote, it was RESOLVED to adopt the current core documents and update as necessary.

It was noted that the previous clerk had worked with the clerk for Holcombe Rogus on such procedural matters.

06072024/5 Minutes of Previous meetings

The Parish Council noted that the draft minutes of the meeting on 25 June 2024 were posted on Mid Devon District Council's website.

Given that no member of the new Parish Council had been involved in the meeting on 25 June 2024, it was proposed by Councillor Forward and seconded by Councillor Smith that the Acting Chair of that meeting be asked to sign them as a true record of proceedings.

Following a unanimous vote, it was RESOLVED to ask MDDC Councillor Westcott to sign the minutes.

06072024/6 Public Participation

No comments were received from the members of the public.

It was noted that there had been correspondence sent to the Clerk regarding the Old Railway Line and this matter would be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

06072024/7 To appoint a representative to the Westleigh Quarry Liaison Group

Councillor Evans nominated Councillor Downing to act as the Parish Council's representative. Councillor Downing advised that she had been a representative for Broadpath for many years and had followed the quarry closely and was happy to take on the role.

Councillor Forward seconded the nomination of Councillor Downing. Following a vote of four in favour with one abstention (Councillor Downing), it was RESOLVED that Councillor Downing would be the Parish Council's representative.

Again, it was felt that representation from both villages, Burlescombe and Westleigh, would be beneficial.

Councillor Forward nominated Councillor Scott as the second representative and this was seconded by Councillor Downing. Following a vote of four in favour with one abstention (Councillor Scott), it was RESOLVED that Councillor Scott would be the Parish Council's second representative, if allowed.

Action: Clerk to check and advise the group co-ordinator

Councillor Forward put standing orders down to take representation from the Canonsleigh Residents Association who advised that they also had two representatives on the Liaison Group as did the Parish Council.

The Parish Council representatives would report back to the Parish Council at its next meeting and, if the Canonsleigh Residents Association had any comments these could be raised during Public Participation.

Councillor Forward re-instated standing orders.

06072024/8 To appoint a working group to review all documentation from the previous Parish Council to understand the assets and responsibilities of the Parish Council and to gain access to the bank accounts and website as well as drawing up a job description for the position of Clerk

Given that this was a new Parish Council without the benefit of an existing Clerk, it was felt beneficial for the documentation to be reviewed so that an understanding of the assets and responsibilities of the Parish Council were understood.

It was proposed by Councillor Eaves and seconded by Councillor Scott that the first meeting of the working group should consist of as many members of the Parish Council as possible. Following a unanimous vote in favour, it was RESOLVED that the first working group meeting would be of members of the Parish Council.

Terms of Reference for the working group would be drawn up and following its first meeting, the working group could consider inviting additional expertise into the group to fully understand the management and history of the assets and the associated responsibilities.

It was noted that access to the bank accounts and website needed to be established. The Acting Parish Clerk understood that the current contract for the website ran until 2027. Councillor Smith undertook to pick up access to the website and report for the working group.

Working groups were not decision-making bodies and could hold meetings online and did not require public participation. However, in the interests of transparency, minutes of the meetings of the working group could be published.

Subsequent meetings would be held under the agreed Terms of Reference and the working group would report to the Parish Council.

It was felt that representation from MDDC and DCC might be useful and the Clerk would contact the individuals concerned.

06072024/9 Dates of the next Council Meetings

It was noted that the Parish Council would normally set the meeting dates for the year at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May.

Given this was a new Parish Council assessing its assets and responsibilities, it was not possible at this meeting to be clear on the number of meetings required to carry out Parish Council business.

The following dates were agreed:

5 August 2024 Working Group meeting
3 or 11 September (depending on availability of MDDC/DCC councillors) Parish Council Meeting

Items for the next agenda:

- report from the representatives of the Westleigh Quarry Liaison Group
- gov.uk domain name and associated email addresses as indicated under the best practice guidelines
- need for any sub-committees eg planning
- Westleigh play area
- the Old Railway Line
- footpaths
- Park Wood
- Emergency Plan
- Road/Snow wardens
- copies of the Good Councillors Guide
- Devon Association of Local Council training

The Acting Parish Clerk would create an inventory of physical and electronic information received from the previous clerk.

All councillors to assist with an information gathering exercise.

Action point for all councillors – completion of the Register of Interest and submission to MDDC.

Councillor Forward thanked the Acting Parish Clerk and closed the meeting at 10.05am.

Signed _____ **Date:** _____