

Christow Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs C Retallick, Bagtor Barton, Ilington, Newton Abbot, TQ13 9RT.

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Minutes of the meeting of Christow Parish Council held on Tuesday, 1st July 2025 at 7.30pm in the Bowden room, Teign Valley Community Hall, Christow.

Present: Cllr G Archer Cllr B Green Cllr AJ Orme Cllr A Cook
Cllr J Orme Cllr G Read Cllr R Slack Cllr H Tucker

Also, present Carol Retallick (Clerk) and 6 members of the public

Cllr Archer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the Council meeting	ACTION
1) Apologies and acceptance for Absence	
Received from Cllr Keeling,	
2) Declarations of Interest: In accordance with the Code of Conduct.	
None present	
3) Public Discussion – To allow any questions, reports by members of the public on any matters relating to the agenda of this meeting.	
MOP enquired if the councillors had any information regarding the container in a site adjacent to the valley road, Cllr Archer informed the meeting that DNPA are aware of it.	
4) County, District Councillor's, DNPA Ranger/Representative, Forestry Commission officer, Police and Lengthsman - to receive reports.	
<p>Cllr R Keeling DCC –my contact details is Richard.Keeling@Devon.gov.uk Tel : 07958500783. See report attached.</p> <p>PCSO Tina Jordon For the period 29/05/2025 to 23/06/2025 in the Christow beat area there were 2 Incident Reports (logs) created of a varying nature and 8 Occurrence Reports being raised and matters being investigated under the following categories: Safeguarding and Concern for Welfare: 2 Theft: 1 Criminal Damage: 1 Other-including Police Generated: 2 Violence Less Serious: 2</p> <p>We continue to make enquiries following the incidents earlier in May and in an effort to provide reassurance to the community and a visible presence the Neighbourhood Team we have scheduled “Talk With Your Local Police Team” drop-ins, the first of which was Tuesday 24/6 at 11am at The Community Shop Bus. The timings of these meetings will vary in order to meet the needs of all folk.</p> <p>We asked Christow residents to report anything suspicious and as a direct result of this the details of a vehicle seen acting suspiciously and potentially involved in criminal offending was reported and submitted for intelligence development and was recently seen acting suspiciously in Exeter. The driver of the vehicle decamped when asked to stop but was quickly located by Exeter Neighbourhood Officers. The driver was found in possession of 30 snap bags of cocaine with an estimated street value of approximately £3000.</p> <p>Giving information Crimestoppers Something you've seen or heard Devon & Cornwall Police.</p> <p>Cllr A Swaine TDC report not much locally however the planning application at the Glen Golf hotel, near Tedburn St Mary will be including a land fill site which is concerning. The new local plan is still under consultation with councillors asking for amendments to it to prevent issues like landfills to be addressed properly with applications of this type. He made himself available for questions from the council or members of the public and reminded the council of his community grant fund.</p>	.
5) Minutes - to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd of June 2025.	
These were signed as a true record of that meeting	
6) Chairmans Business – Information only	

<p>Cllr Archer reported that the new picnic bench and notice board at the skate park has been fitted by Cllrs AJ Orme and A Cook and he thanked them.</p> <p>a) Village speed limits – discussion</p> <p>Cllr Archer reminded the meeting that we have been proactive in the past and worked with the school to create posters to help with vehicle speed reductions. There has been notices on social media and this has created some emails to the council seeking support for a reduction of speed in Devon villages. Later in July DCC have a motion at the cabinet meeting to debate this matter in more details. Cllr Read confirmed that several Devon villages have written to DCC in support of the reduction of speed limits and reminded the meeting of the National 20's plenty campaign, however it would be advisable to wait to see the results of DCC debate.</p>	<p>Update at next full council meeting. Move the 20's plenty signs to different locations within the village and clean them.</p>
<p>7) Clerks Report - Update on matters arising from the last meeting for information only</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting with the highways officer was useful and I was able to deliver the areas which the council would like to receive focus for future funding. The highways officer brought to my attention a small lane near Bennah that is access to a couple of properties, this lane has already been prioritised for repairs. • The surface dressing on Foxhole Hill was delayed due to heavy rain and had been rescheduled. • £500 locality funding has been received for the repair to the goal posts. The contractor has been working on them today; the painting would be carried out later. • Following more information regarding the cemetery extension – it seems that the conveyancing deed is only valid for 12 years after which the land requires a change of use planning application which is approx. £600. Pre app advice is £180 plus £60 if a site visit is required. • I have received confirmation that our external audit has begun. • Invitation to Local Government Reorganisation Drop-In Sessions this July 14th July in Bovey Tracey – on website and face book page • Tag Rugby request for 9th August • Bench at cemetery enquiry from David Goodfellow the councillors have no objection 	
<p>8) Play Area – Update and Consultation discussion and decision.</p>	
<p>Cllr Archer introduced this by explaining the situation at the play area where equipment has needed to be removed. Cllr AJ Orme has hosted local group meetings to get ideas for revitalising the area. Members of the group were going to investigate products being offered by various companies. The feedback from the quote the council had raised was that the design was too young. The clerk had attended an expo and gathered information from several play equipment companies and shared that with Cllr AJ Orme for the group to get further ideas and information. Cllr AJ Orme reported the local children had already started fund raising. It was agreed that its harder to plan without knowing what the great community would support.</p> <p>It was agreed that a stand at Christow Show to seek more information would be a good starting point.</p> <p>Other factors to consider are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make do with some of the existing equipment or start from new. 2. Age zones, keep the same with the top area for 12 and under and the lower site space older children. 3. Queries about the play surfaces. <p>Cllr Tucker supported a questionnaire for the consultation process and also suggested that the safety inspectors could give us independent guidance.</p> <p><i>SO suspended.</i> MOP raised a query regarding accessibility as the current site is not wheelchair friendly. Comments were made about removal of the hedge. Another MOP had discussed with other local councils how they prepared for and delivered new play areas who were able to give lots of useful information and advice. One of which was the importance of appointing a project manager who manages the risk of overspend and liability. He has already spoken to a recommended project manager</p>	<p>Stand at Christow Show, Cllrs to help man the stand along with members of the working party for the play area.</p>

who has offered to visit Christow to give advice for £200, the MOP offered to pay £100 towards this site visit, if the council wanted to accept his offer. Cllr Archer thanked the MOP for that offer; however, it may be a bit soon for a project manager to visit at this moment as we are not entirely sure what we want to deliver until we have consulted with the greater community. <i>SO resumed</i> – Cllr AJ Orme proposed the council book a stand for Christow Show where the consultation of the community could begin, the working group will be invited to help man the stand along with the other councillors.		
9) Highways – Update		
Already covered in clerks report		
10) Local Crime – information about Police Surgeries and Neighbourhood Watch discussion.		
The next Police surgery is planned for Monday 7 th July and the PCSO will send details, the clerk will advertise on the Teign Valley Facebook page and council website. The Police are urging the community to report incidents to the police via the website		Clerk advertise Police surgeries on Facebook and website
11) Drains at Toilet block – discussion and decision		
Cllr Archer reported that since the Community shop has taken over the responsibility of the toilet block there has been reported drain blockages. He noted that the PC had also attended blockages a few times over the years. The shop committee have commissioned a CCTV report which they will share the finding with the council.		
12) Cemetery – quote for repair to gates decision		
More washers onto the hanger so the gate swings more freely. All the councillors agreed to the repair costs		Repairs Approved
13) Right to Bid – Christow Store		
Right to bid – this has been reissued due to the original listing expiring and the reason it is on the agenda this evening. TDC have since written to CLT and advised that the building does not now meet the definition for it to remain of the asset register.		
14) Planning		
a) 0206/25 Creation of parking space and access into outbuilding at Lower Bennah Cottage, Christow, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7NW (full Planning application) No objection b) 0207/25 Creation of parking space and access into outbuilding at Lower Bennah Cottage, Christow, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7NW (listed Planning application) No objection <u>Grant of Planning Permission</u> 0111/25 Erection of replacement stables, tack room and tractor store, Seahill Barn, Dry Lane, Christow, Exeter, EX6 7PH		
15) Finance		
Expenditure:	Clerk's salary for June = £ 664.14 HMRC = £ 438.27 HP Instant Ink, June = £ 7.99 SW Grounds Maintenance = £ 522.00 TVCH 2024 hall rental = £ 278.25 J Jackson– Lengthsman (Re Issued) = £ 864.00 DALC – training for B Green = £ 48.00 Bank Charges for June = £ 9.75 Bank Charges for July = £ 8.75	Authorised and agreed
Bank Reconciliation and Statement: The Chairman has checked invoices and bank statement against the reconciliation statement. Reconciliation and bank statement circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr G Read proposed to accept the payments and details on the bank statements this was seconded by Cllr B Read.		
16) Bank Account – discussion about changing the councils bank account.		
Since Lloyds Bank has introduced bank charges to the councils bank accounts the clerk has been looking for accounts available to Councils that have no or less charges. Unity Bank was created for Councils and local authorities. The clerk will forward more information to the councillors for their consideration at the next full council meeting.		Clerk to circulate information about Unity Bank to councillors

17) MEETINGS ATTENDED: to receive reports from councillors who have attended meetings on behalf of this council or actions from the previous meetings

Cllr B Green attended the DALC Councillors training and found it very informative.

The next Council meeting is Tuesday 2nd September 2025, at 7.30pm in the Bowden Room at TVCH.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20.55pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Position.....

Report from Devon County Councillor Cllr Richard Keeling

Firstly, thank you to the Clerks and Councillors who have contacted me, and I have met over the last month with various issues in their Town/Parish.

I must give my apologies for your full council meeting as I will be attending the Local Government Association Conference, this gives me the opportunity to talk with fellow Leaders and Ministers about our pressures in Devon. I will also at conference be attending a South West Councils meeting of all the Leaders from the region, sharing and problem-solving major issues facing our councils and ultimately our residents.

I have recently attended DCC Cabinet meeting where a frank take on the finances and highways, the household support fund and a huge investment in homes for children was discussed. Please see attached link [Devon County Council - Cabinet 25.06.25](#) I have also pulled together in this report below work that has been agreed.

DCC Finance

We have ended the 2024/25 financial year without going over budget, but only by relying on temporary savings and one-off government funding.

A report presented to cabinet showed that we managed to stay within its £637.5 million budget and ‘balance the books’ despite growing demand for services like social care and support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

We had been expecting to overspend by nearly £4 million in November but managed to avoid this through a mix of short-term measures, including delaying some projects, not filling vacant jobs, and using a one-off grant from government.

The report also showed that £40 million in planned savings were delivered across council services, though this fell short of the £50 million target.

Our highways teams will carry out a repair blitz on potholes in a few trial areas of the county following a decision by the Cabinet

While approving an £83 million programme of capital funded highway maintenance schemes, our Cabinet heard from Councillor Dan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, who stated that the condition of Devon’s roads is not up to scratch because the county is “grossly under resourced by central government”.

Councillors backed proposals to trial areas where all potholes would be filled, rather than just dealing with safety defects. Although the exact details are still to be agreed, this pilot would be used to establish the budget implications of changing maintenance procedures.

Councillors also agreed that a task group from the Audit Committee should be formed to review the previous Cabinet's decision from last November on the future delivery model for highway maintenance.

The Cabinet at the time resolved that a procurement process should get underway for a Term Maintenance Contract to deliver core highway work such as safety defect repairs, gully emptying and winter service, supported with smaller "Framework Contracts" for additional patching, surfacing, drainage and other improvements.

It was also agreed to examine the costs of accelerating the remarking of white lines across the county.

A new long-term plan to improve the outcomes of Devon's most vulnerable young people by overhauling how they are supported and cared was approved.

In a bold move away from the council's previous preference to commission, rather than directly deliver, residential places for children in its care, councillors agreed to an ambitious multi-million investment programme to establish 12 new children's homes; 20 specialist foster places; and up to four new therapeutic schools, over the next 10 years.

'Growing Futures: Homes for children and young people in care in Devon' aims to provide new homes, support, residential therapeutic care, education and treatment for children with complex psychological, emotional and behavioural needs.

Our plan will be delivered through a strategic partnership worth up to £156 million and aims to address deficiencies in current care arrangements.

We are required to provide suitable homes for children in care; but nationally an over-reliance on for-profit providers has contributed to rising costs and poor value for money.

In Devon for instance costs have almost doubled in five years amid rising demand.

There has been a 29 per cent increase in Devon children in residential homes since 2020 and many of those are not in the county.

The new strategy will aim to reduce costs and improve long-term outcomes for children through more stable, local, and therapeutic housing and education options.

It was agreed it to allocate a smaller pot of national funding to help families struggling with high costs of food, energy, and other essential household items.

We have received funding to operate a Household Support Fund (HSF) since 2021. Last year, it totalled £10.1 million, but this year (2025/26) the funding has fallen for the first time, to £8.9 million – a decrease of 11.87 per cent.

Funding is allocated to support households across Devon in various ways. A large proportion of it goes in providing free school meal holiday vouchers to children and young people who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals during term time. Around 22,500 children and young people are eligible for benefits-related free school meals in Devon.

It's also shared among Devon's District Councils to support households struggling to afford essentials, helping those approaching them directly for support and/or targeting households in receipt of some benefits who they already know will be struggling with the cost of living. As the previous Executive Member for Finance at TDC I saw the real benefits this fund has achieved. In the last year TDC identified those vulnerable residents not receiving winter fuel allowance and helped with their cost of living.

Some of it is used by Citizen's Advice Devon, helping households struggling with high energy and water costs through an Energy and Water Relief scheme.

And Devon Community Foundation operates a Food Fuel & More, HSF-funded, grant scheme to support voluntary and community organisations, helping vulnerable people who are less like to access support through the other available support gateways.

Councillors agreed to continue funding free school meal holiday vouchers, to the same level – £15 per child per week during school holidays.

The decision effectively commits half this year's total Household Support Fund (HSF7) for free school meal holiday vouchers, compared to around 26 per cent of last year's (HSF6).

The rest will be allocated proportionally to Devon district councils, Citizens Advice Devon and Devon Community Foundation.

In addition, councillors agreed to set up a vulnerable families' contingency fund, to give the council flexibility to provide additional support for households later in the year, in response to cost of living issues – as a consequence of wider political and economic pressures.

More adult learners will have the opportunity to access education and skills training in the upcoming academic year.

I strongly welcomed this investment as this was identified as a major way of improving work place skills and I have seen first-hand the benefits at South Devon College.

Following an extra £1.4 million investment from the Department for Education (DfE), it was agreed to commission additional delivery of adult learning from external providers.

Devon's adult education service, Learn Devon, currently supports around 6,000 learners, aged 19 and over, each year through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF). The fund supports people to gain qualifications and skills that improve their employability and life opportunities.

Councillors explored a number of delivery options, but decided to commission delivery across a number of external providers through an open and compliant procurement process, supported by our procurement team.

This will build on existing delivery capability in the area which means the programme can start this August, and allow provision in different locations, communities, and qualification areas.

The increase in ASF funding enables local residents, including those on low incomes or with caring responsibilities, to access flexible, community-based learning. Courses funded through ASF are designed to align with local labour market needs, helping residents gain qualifications and skills that are in demand, and supporting progression into secure, higher-paid jobs or further learning.

For local businesses, it ensures the local workforce has up-to-date skills that match industry needs, especially in sectors with skill shortages such as health and social care, construction, and digital. This makes it easier for employers to recruit locally, and by investing in local talent, ASF funding reduces skills gaps and helps build a resilient economy that can respond to change, such as new technologies or market shifts.

As always please contact me by email or call on my mobile if you have any issues in your Town/Parish.