

KENTISBEARE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 7pm in Kentisbeare Village Hall

Present: Cllrs: Nick Allan (Chairman), Mrs Felicity Ryan, Edd Southerden, Mrs Elise Ellicott, Martin Disney, the Clerk and DCC Cllr. James Buczkowski.

One member of the public was present for the meeting and five members of the public were present for public question time.

Public Question Time: One member of the public was present to read a statement on behalf of the applicants of planning application 26/00099/PIp which had been withdrawn the previous day – as notified to the Parish Council by MDDC.

The statement expressed apologies to anyone that had been anxious about the application. The applicants had hoped that there would have been an opportunity for a pre-discussion with the Parish Council and the planning department followed by public engagement regarding housing need in the district and Kentisbeare. The statement explained that due to inaccuracies in the original application, its revision and the ensuing confusion a decision had been made by the applicants to withdraw the application.

The Chairman addressed everyone to explain that as the application had been withdrawn it would not be discussed in the meeting itself under item 6.1.

One member of the public expressed various concerns including the process and the means of notification and the timescale for comments – the Chairman explained that the Parish Council is a consultee and anyone concerned should raise such matters with the district council as the planning authority.

The district council currently publishes a weekly list on its website. The Parish Council publicises applications that it receives notification of on its monthly agenda.

26/03/26. Apologies: Cllrs. Oliver Forster and Neil Woofenden and MDDC Cllr. Cathy Connor.

27/03/26. Declarations of Interest: Cllr. Mrs Ellicott (DPI as personal payment) payment number 5.

28/03/26. The Minutes of the parish council meeting held on 10/02/2026 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

29/03/26. Matters Arising: None.

30/03/26. Planning & Planning Correspondence/Information:

a) Applications considered by the Parish Council:

-26/00099/PIp - Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 9 dwellings. REVISED PLANS.

Land at NGR 307000 108214 (South East of Woodlands) Kentisbeare. *Application withdrawn 09/03/26.*

-26/00192/CAT Notification of intention to reshape/prune back 1 Magnolia, prune back 1 Fig and 1 Acer, full crown reduction and shape 1 Copper Beech and 1 Ornamental Pear in a Conservation Area.

Bridge House, Fore Street, Kentisbeare, EX15 2AD. No objections.

-26/00159/MFUL Construction of an earth-banked slurry lagoon, two silage clamps with associated retaining wall, yard extension, fencing and drainage. Land at NGR 298043 107664 (Honey Park Farm) Butterleigh. No comments.

-26/00190/ARM Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for the erection of one self-build agricultural workers dwelling following Outline approval 23/00017/OUT.

Land at NGR 306640 109585 (Croyle Farm), Kentisbeare. No objections.

-26/00110/FULL Erection of one self-build dwelling following removal of garage and associated alterations to the south-west and north-east elevations of the existing dwelling.

Orchard View, Bishops Rise, Kentisbeare. EX15 2BW. No objections.

-26/00015/FULL Erection of self-build dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling.

Woodside, Kentisbeare. EX15 2EU. REVISED PLANS. No objections.

b) Results of applications from Mid Devon District Council.

-25/01642/MARM Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 23/00101/MARM - Reserved Matters for a new cricket facility consisting of 2 storey pavilion, scorers hut, ground equipment store, outdoor cricket nets, landscaping and parking following Outline approval 20/01452/MOUT - to allow revised plans following a minor redesign of pavilion.

Land at NGR 305210 108255 Horn Road, Kentisbeare. Permission granted.

c) Culm Garden Village: News of improvements to junction 28 of the M5 is still awaited. Nothing further to report. A meeting of the delivery board is due to take place shortly.

d) Any other Planning Matters: Cllr. Woofenden will endeavour to attend upcoming planning training offered by MDDC.

31/03/26. Highways

- a)** Items to report and any other matters: Notification of road closures for June received – to be publicised in the relevant newsletter(s). The “Stop” sign at Post Cross has just been replaced. The Road Warden agreement has been returned and a date to meet with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer is awaited.
- b)** The hedge between Oak field and the business park – communication has been received from a parishioner regarding the hedge on the C136 towards Post Cross; the hedge is overgrown with large branches which have been struck by large vehicles as they overhang into the road. DCC Cllr. Buczkowski will ask Highways to contact the landowner.
- c)** Update on repositioning of 30mph sign on the C136 (Rectory Road) – Highways has advised that a request has been submitted to review the speed limit at this location which would require a change to the existing Traffic Regulation Order and physical works to amend the signs/ repeater signs. There is currently no funding for this type of work, and it remains on the list for consideration when resources allow. The scheme can be funded by the local community - the cost of which would be approximately £5000. This cost predominantly covers the cost of the legal traffic order which is required when moving the extents of a speed limit.
- It was agreed that DCC Cllr. Buczkowski will liaise with Highways and advise that the Parish Council is prepared to offer £1000 in the hope that this will progress the project.

32/03/26. Reports.

- a) The Clerk:** (i) Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) session - an online session proved useful where attendees could raise any queries. DALC has prepared a draft response which the Clerk has circulated. (ii) MDDC Register of Assets - the Clerk has spoken with MDDC and there appear to be no assets for the Parish Council to consider taking responsibility for ahead of possible Devolution (LGR). (iii) Assertion 10 online session - an IT policy is to be approved (as 37/03/6 b). The Clerk is looking into a Gov.uk domain (36/03/26 refers).
- b) The Chairman/Vice-Chairman:** A response has been received from The Post Office and it is not possible for a post office to be re-opened in Kentisbeare Village Stores. There is however the option of a Payzone hub.
- c) Any Reports from MDDC and DCC Councillors:** DCC Cllr. Buczkowski’s submitted a report, details include - The budget for 2026–27 has been agreed. This is the first full budget set by the new administration and it establishes the direction for the coming years; stabilising essential services, strengthening financial resilience and investing in the infrastructure that keeps Devon moving. DCC is responsible for managing more than £2 billion of public spending each year across services, grants and capital investment. The core service delivery budget for the coming year is approximately £839 million, covering everything from highways and transport to social care, education and waste services.

Highways - After a challenging winter with significant storm damage, highways have been a major focus and spending on maintenance will rise by £2 million to £32.4 million and an additional £4 million investment has been agreed for targeted highways maintenance. This will fund more road repairs, better drainage, clearing roadside gullies & protecting Devon’s road network. Over the next five years, £546.1 million will be invested in highways which includes an extra £55 million for preventative maintenance and resurfacing. The intention is to move towards a more strategic approach to highways maintenance. For many years financial pressures have meant the service has had to prioritise reactive repairs. Whilst potholes understandably attract attention, the underlying issue is often the deterioration of the road structure itself. This additional investment will support increased resurfacing programmes, preventative maintenance and improved drainage. Addressing drainage is particularly important, as water is one of the primary causes of road failure. By strengthening the underlying structure of the network, the aim is to improve long-term resilience rather than simply responding to individual defects.

Frontline Services - Adult social care remains the largest area of council spending, accounting for around 45% of DCC’s budget. Devon has one of the oldest populations in the country, and supporting older residents to maintain independence remains a central priority.

Children’s services and support for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) remain a major focus with demand for SEND provision increasing in recent years & placing substantial pressure on council finances. There has recently been important national progress on this issue. The government has indicated that it intends to address the majority of historic High Needs deficits nationally, potentially writing off around 90% of accumulated deficits, including Devon’s which had reached approximately £200 million which arose as councils have a statutory duty to support children with SEND. When national funding did not keep pace with rising demand, local authorities were legally required to continue providing services.

Reports continued:

As a result, many councils across the country have accumulated accounting deficits within the Dedicated Schools Grant.

The proposed national reset is therefore an important step toward restoring stability to local authority finances. The next challenge will be ensuring that the national funding system is sustainable so that councils are not placed in the same position again.

Libraries, Communities and Local Investment - The budget includes additional funding to support the library service and help develop libraries as resilient community hubs. In addition to book lending, libraries act as warm spaces, digital access points, community meeting places and gateways to advice and learning which is important in rural areas where access to services can be limited. It has been clear from the recent consultation on the future of the library service that communities value these spaces.

Locality budget - £10,000 will be allocated to each DCC Councillor for 2026/27.

Scrutiny and Accountability Committees - Scrutiny examined the proposed budget in detail prior to it coming before full council. There has been continued national debate around LGR and the future structure of councils in Devon which remains uncertain. Any potential changes to the structure of local government must be approached carefully and updates will be shared with with town and parish councils.

The months ahead will focus on delivering the commitments set out in the new budget. Highways teams will move from winter emergency response into planned recovery and resurfacing programmes, whilst work continues across services to strengthen financial resilience and improve outcomes for residents.

MDDC Cllr. Cathy Connor forwarded a report on behalf of MDDC, details include:

The Extraordinary Council meeting on 25/02/26 which was held to approve the MDDC Council Tax Resolution for 2026/27. The average Band D Council Tax across the district will be £2,656.41 for the year ahead, which represents an increase of £135.24, or 5.36%. MDDC's own share will rise by 2.99%, bringing its Band D charge to £246.29, an increase of £7.17. DCC's precept will increase by 4.99%, partly due to additional Adult Social Care responsibilities, resulting in a Band D charge of £1,891.17. The Devon & Cornwall Police precept will rise by £15 to £303.20 for Band D, while Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue's precept increases by £5 to £109.68. Parish precepts across Mid Devon have increased on average by £18.15/20.65%. Parishes are not subject to referendum limits on tax increases.

The financial position for 2026/27 is shaped by the first year of funding changes under the Fair Funding Review 2.0. Although Mid Devon has experienced a reduction in funding, the impact was less severe than originally expected, allowing a balanced budget to be set without reducing service levels. A one-off government grant has been provided to offset changes in Business Rates Pooling, and the district has also received additional funding for homelessness services. Rising costs have largely been driven by inflation, increased demand for certain services such as housing support, national changes to local government funding arrangements and the need to protect financial reserves against future pressures. MDDC has confirmed that it has been able to deliver a balanced budget for 2026/27 while maintaining existing service standards.

Business Rates Drop-In Day - the recent drop-in day saw an encouraging turnout, with 15 local business owners attending to seek advice, clarity, and support on a range of business rates matters. The event proved both timely and valuable as recent media coverage had caused concern among local businesses.

LGR - Residents have until 26 March to give their views. Government argues unitaries will cut duplication and improve services, but some councillors warn of reduced democratic representation and rising local costs.

Car Charge Points - New rapid car charge points have been installed at Tiverton Pannier Market.

The Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 - A major investment programme has supported households across Devon to reduce energy costs and make homes warmer, greener, and more efficient.

ACTIVE Mid Devon has taken a significant step toward improving accessibility for swimmers with the purchase of two Pool Pods; state-of-the-art equipment designed to help more people enter and exit the water safely, comfortably, and with dignity. Mid Devon is also set to become a hub for one of the UK's fastest-growing sports, with plans for several padel courts across the district.

Cullompton Relief Road – DCC has begun preparatory works on the site. This marks another important step toward delivering the long-promised route that will help ease congestion, improve local air quality, and support the town's future growth. Whilst the main construction phase is not scheduled to begin until the summer, a number of ecological and archaeological tasks are taking place now. These early works are carefully timed to avoid the bird nesting season and ensure that all environmental obligations are fully met. Specialist ecologists are overseeing the clearance of vegetation so that wildlife is properly protected, including the sensitive dormouse habitats along the route.

Progress on land acquisition has been positive, and alongside the road scheme, new public land is being created for the Cullompton Community Association (CCA).

Reports continued:

Replacement sports facilities are also being delivered for clubs affected by the project. The new junior football pitches are already installed and the grass is establishing well, with work on the new training pitch due to begin in May. Some areas of the CCA land will be temporarily affected to allow access for both these early works and future construction. During this period, new paths and bridge links will be put in place to ensure residents can continue to move safely and easily across the site. Archaeological investigations are also underway to record and protect local heritage before full construction begins.

To minimise disruption for residents and improve traffic flow in advance, several upgrades will be delivered early. This includes a new layby bus stop opposite the Weary Traveller at the Station Road / Millennium Way roundabout, allowing buses to pull off the carriageway and reducing delays. Improvements at the Exeter Road junction will also be completed ahead of the main works to help with safety and congestion.

The main contractor for the relief road is expected to be appointed in the spring, with full construction planned to start in the summer.

The Devon Funding News Bulletin provides an update on newly opened and upcoming funding opportunities across Devon.

d) P3 Footpaths, Parish Paths & Silver Wood: The annual surveys are underway. A broken rail has been replaced on footpath 1. The Clerk and P3 co-ordinator have been liaising with DCC regarding repairs along footpath 4. A sign will be sourced informing walkers to keep to the path on footpath 36.

e) Any other reports: The Clerk is to meet with Ken White Signs shortly to look at replacing the village sign on Rectory Road.

33/03/26. Finance.

a) A report was given, the balances were noted and the finance schedule was signed.

Direct Debits taken: 05/02 Nest £95.01, 10/02 EDF £50.88, 17/02 Lloyds Bank Service Charge £4.25, 27/02 Utility Warehouse £47.65.

Credits received: £1130 received in respect of advertising on the Parish website throughout February.

b) Payments were approved:

Payment 1	£ 12.07	SMA Services. Payroll Provider.
Payment 2	£ 300.00	Helen Rose. Website & digital communications.
Payment 3	£ 1119.81	Clerk – salary and expenses.
Payment 4	£ 330.00	R&R Services Ltd. Grass maintenance contract.
Payment 5	£ 65.00	Mrs E Ellicott. P3 expenses 25/26. <i>See declarations.</i>
Payment 6	£ 90.00	Kentisbeare Parish Church Magazine. Printing.
Payment 7	£ 500.00	Bradinch Cricket Club – grant for Kentisbeare Cricket Club.
Payment 8	£ 500.00	Kentisbeare AFC. Kentisbeare Football Club grant.
Payment 9	£ 300.00	Sainthill Baptist Church. Churchyard grant.
Payment 10	£ 300.00	Blackborough PCC. Churchyard grant.
Payment 11	£ 50.00	J Hobday. Electricity for Christmas lights in village square.
Payment 12	£1000.00	Blackborough Village Hall. Annual Grant.
Payment 13	£ 175.00	The Wyndham Arms. Light Refreshments provided for the Parish walk.

c) Defibrillator located at Kentisbeare Primary School – following a request from Kentisbeare Primary School for financial support to assist with spare parts etc., DCC Cllr. Buczkowski advised that the Locality Budget should cover this. The school will be advised to apply; Clerk to liaise and provide information.

d) The Fixed Asset Register was reviewed as updated - agreed.

e) Any other financial matters: Reminders have been sent out to the business advertisers. A valuation on the bier house and the bier will be discussed at a future meeting together with possible renovations if necessary

34/03/26. Kentisbeare Play Area and Pump Track: The first cut will take place shortly.

35/03/26. Allotment Provision.

a) Uffculme Allotment Society – as minute 56/04/23 where the Uffculme Allotment Society had made contact, it had been agreed in principle/should it become necessary, for Kentisbeare Parish Council to cover half of the cost of the allotment fee for a plot in Uffculme for any parishioners of Kentisbeare if one can not be provided in Kentisbeare (there are only four plots in Kentisbeare). One enquiry has now been received.

The Allotment Society will be asked to provide an invoice for payment. The Parish Council will only fund the required cost (50%) of one plot per parishioner.

36/03/26. Information and costings provided via Cosmic regarding .gov.uk domain name, Emails and Microsoft 365 migration and to agree on how to proceed: The Clerk has made enquiries regarding a gov.uk email address as the main email for the Parish Council following the requirement for a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain. It was agreed for the Clerk to look into obtaining kentisbeare-pc.gov.uk and for the Clerk to move to Microsoft 365 Premium with Teams (Premium - if required by the Clerk) at £16.90 per month.

Enquiries will be made with Cosmic regarding the move for councillors with a view to a representative attending a meeting to provide information.

37/03/26. Policies for Review or adoption.

a) The Clerk has reviewed and updated the following - Accessibility Statement, Privacy Policy, Retention Policy, Subject Access Request Form and How to Access your Records, Internal control, Risk Management Policy, Publication Scheme.

The Clerk is working on the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations and will confer with the Chairman.

b) Adoption of an IT Policy – circulated and agreed.

38/03/26. Correspondence & Any Consultations. Various generic emails received. LGR consultation – Cllr. Allan will draft a response to the consultation; the Parish Council has concerns and is dubious that there is any benefit to the proposed reorganisation. It is particularly concerned about the proposals for Exeter and Plymouth, which it will object to.

39/03/26. Annual Parish Meeting (APM): The APM will take place immediately before the Annual Parish Council meeting in May; a reception will not be held this year.

40/03/26. Co-option: One person was present to observe the meeting in respect of co-option and the co-option policy, another person had attended a meeting for same previously (minute 113) following details publicised previously.

Co-option will be included on a future agenda if the two express an interest and complete an application. The Clerk will note details of vacancies on the website and look to further publicise if required.

41/03/26. Items for information, future agenda items, and dates of future meetings.

a) Cllr. Mrs Ellicott suggested that the Parish Council look at affordable housing – the Clerk will make enquiries regarding information/presentations on Neighbourhood Planning. If the Parish Council went ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan this would result in the requirement of a fresh Housing Needs Survey. b) The Clerk will arrange for a reminder regarding an article with the manager of the village stores for an edition of the newsletter.

Next meeting – 14/04/26; apologies from Cllrs. Southerden and Mrs Ryan.