

KENTISBEARE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 14th April 2026
at 7pm in Kentisbeare Village Hall

Present: Cllrs: Nick Allan (Chairman), Oliver Forster, Mrs Elise Ellicott, Martin Disney, the Clerk, DCC Cllr. James Buczkowski and MDDC Cllr. Cathy Connor (part of meeting).

42/04/26. Public Question Time: None.

43/04/26. Apologies: Cllrs. Neil Woofenden, Edd Southerden and Mrs Felicity Ryan.

44/04/26. Declarations of Interest: None.

45/04/26. The Minutes of the parish council meeting held on 10/03/2026 were approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

46/04/26. Matters Arising: None.

47/04/26. Planning & Planning Correspondence/Information:

a) Applications considered by the Parish Council:

-26/00357/FULL Formation of vehicular access. Land at NGR 305410 106688 (North East of Aller Cross) Kentisbeare. No objections.

-26/00172/HOUSE Erection of single storey rear extension. 11 Parsons Close, Kentisbeare, EX15 2BN. No objections. *To note that revised plans and additional drawings have been received in respect of the following – no objections submitted by the Parish Council previously:*

-26/00065/HOUSE Formation of new vehicular access and associated hardstanding. Galliards, Blackborough, EX15 2HH. No further comments.

b) Results of applications from Mid Devon District Council.

-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. Approved.

-26/00015/FULL Erection of self-build dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling. Woodside, Kentisbeare. EX15 2EU. Approved.

-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. Permission granted.

-25/01710/FULL Erection of roof over existing yard. Land & Buildings at NGR 308045 107366 (Orway Crescent Farm) Kentisbeare. Approved.

-26/00073/FULL Erection of general purpose livestock building to cover existing yard. Land & Buildings at NGR 309253 108812 (Ponchydown Dairy) Blackborough. Approved.

c) Culm Garden Village: The next Delivery Board meeting will take place in June.

d) Neighbourhood Planning and Presentation: The Clerk reported regarding a possible presentation to be provided by Polden Planning at a cost of £500. Further enquiries will be made with Devon Communities Together before a booking is arranged.

e) Any other Planning Matters: None.

48/04/26. Highways - items to report and any other matters. Works are taking place to the hedge towards Post Cross. The Clerk has reported the overgrown vegetation obscuring visibility at Post Cross. Cllr. Mrs Ellicott raised concerns regarding pedestrians crossing the road on the bridge at junction 28 which had been raised some time ago by a previous serving county councillor. A date to meet with the NHO to look at the Road Warden Scheme is awaited - the agreement has been returned.

49/04/26. Reports.

a) The Clerk: The upcoming MDDC Annual Clerks meeting will now take place online.

b) The Chairman/Vice-Chairman: None.

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Reports continued:

c) Any Reports from MDDC and DCC Councillors. **DCC Cllr. Buczkowski** provided a report details include - Highways is one of the biggest issues currently due to a combination of prolonged wet weather and years of underlying wear. DCC Cllr. Buczkowski has been out on site with the NHO to look at some of the more complex and persistent issues. An additional £3 million has been agreed to support road repairs across Devon following the significant damage caused by winter and storms. The funding is focused on reactive maintenance, including pothole repairs and addressing immediate safety issues, following a sharp rise in reported defects. Casework and Surgeries – there has been a steady flow of casework; issues include highways, drainage, parking, and estate management concerns. Whilst many are individual matters, there are clear recurring themes around infrastructure pressure and service responsiveness. The monthly surgeries continue to provide an opportunity for residents to raise issues directly - they remain an important part of staying accessible and hearing issues first-hand. Crisis and Resilience Fund - a new fund is being developed for Devon which replaces the Household Support Fund and marking a shift in how support is provided to residents facing financial hardship. Devon is expected to receive around £8.4 million per year over the next three years. Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) - Changes are being introduced to the way families are supported through the EHCP process, with a new locality-based model aimed at providing quicker, clearer, and more joined-up support. Local teams will work more closely with schools and services to respond at key points such as assessments and plan updates. This reflects ongoing feedback from families that the current system can feel slow and difficult to navigate, and whilst this is a step in the right direction, it is part of a much wider programme of reform needed to improve SEND services across Devon. Extra Support for Heating Oil Costs - Devon is set to receive an additional £1.3 million of government funding to support low-income households who rely on heating oil, reflecting the impact that rising global energy costs are having on rural communities. Unlike areas connected to mains gas, many parts of Devon remain particularly exposed to fluctuations in international fuel prices, with limited alternatives available. This funding will be targeted at those most in need and delivered through local councils, but it also highlights the ongoing vulnerability of rural households to wider global pressures beyond their control. Plan Agreed to Strengthen Domestic Abuse Support - A new four-year strategy has been agreed to strengthen support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse in Devon, with a particular focus on improving access to safe accommodation and ensuring more consistent, joined-up support across services. The plan reflects the scale and complexity of domestic abuse, which often requires coordinated input from housing, health, and safeguarding partners, and builds on existing work to provide more trauma-informed and accessible support. Whilst this sets a clearer direction for the next four years, the challenge will be in ensuring that this translates into real, visible improvements for those who need support most. Locality Budget - Over the past year, DCC has distributed almost £400,000 through its Locality Budget to support 474 community groups funding a wide range of grassroots initiatives including; sports clubs, arts and cultural projects, festivals, play areas, community transport and support services. Each councillor allocated funding locally, enabling targeted investment in volunteer-led organisations to improve community assets, deliver activities, and support residents' wellbeing. This included over £40,000 for support groups, £35,000 for children and schools, and additional funding for heritage, environmental and sporting projects, demonstrating the continued value of locally directed funding in strengthening communities and addressing local needs. Recycling of coffee pods – coffee pods are now accepted at recycling centres where they will go on to produce renewable energy. DCC has introduced recycling at its Household Waste Recycling Centres, allowing residents to dispose of used aluminium and plastic pods locally rather than sending them to general waste. The scheme, delivered in partnership with Podback and site operator SUEZ, ensures pods are recycled within the UK, with materials reused in products such as packaging and construction components. Coffee grounds are processed through anaerobic digestion to generate renewable energy and soil improver, supporting both waste reduction and environmental sustainability. Residents are encouraged to store pods at home and take them along during routine recycling visits, with plastic and aluminium pods separated on-site. Local Nature Recovery Strategy - DCC is developing a long-term strategy, a statutory plan required under the Environment Act, to guide how nature can be restored and enhanced across the county. It brings together detailed evidence on habitats and species and identifies priority areas and actions, from restoring wildlife habitats and improving green spaces to supporting climate resilience and sustainable land use. It is intended to inform planning decisions, guide public and private investment, and support communities, land managers and businesses to take coordinated action, with an emphasis on collaboration and local delivery to create a more wildlife-rich Devon. M5 J28 Project - The proposed improvements to the junction at Cullompton have been shortlisted by government for potential national funding, marking a significant step forward for a long-standing local priority. The scheme, which includes new southbound slip roads and a bridge, is designed to reduce congestion, improve safety, and support planned growth in the town. It is one of a small number of schemes nationally to progress to the next stage, positioning Cullompton and surrounding communities well to secure substantial investment that would unlock infrastructure capacity.

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Reports continued:

MDDC Cllr. Cathy Connor - The new Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) and heating oil support - MDDC will administer the CRF which replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). As soon as the scheme is fully approved, information will be available on MDDC website. Mid Devon Creative Communities Grant Scheme - up to £5,000 from MDDC to help bring tourism, arts, cultural and heritage into town centres and villages or village, deadline 24/04/26. Cullompton Relief Road - Main Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road construction work has now started with the road due to be completed in March 2028. The town experiences poor air quality and high levels of congestion. The road will unlock land to support the future growth and vitality of the town. Planning permission for the road, which will run from Station Road in the north to Duke Street in the south, was secured in January 2021 and a funding package with Homes England was signed in February 2025. 2026/27 Pubs & Live Music Venues Business Rates Relief – on 27/01/26 the government announced a new business rates relief scheme to support eligible pubs and live music venues in England for the 2026–27 financial year. MDDC held an information event in March; see the MDDC website for further information.

d) P3 Footpaths, Parish Paths & Silver Wood: Repairs have taken place on FP4. The bridge in Silver Wood is in need of repair and Tilhill Forestry as contractor for The Woodland Trust have been informed.

e) Any other reports: None.

50/04/26. Finance.

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

Direct Debits taken: 09/03 Nest £95.01, 10/03 EDF £50.88, 11/03 ICO £47, 17/03 Lloyds Bank Service Charge £4.25, 31/03 Utility Warehouse £47.65. Credits Received: 4 x £15 allotment payments 18/03, 19/03, 20/03 & 27/03. £337.50 in respect of advertising on the Parish website.

b) Payments were approved:

Payment 1	£ 22.07	SMA Services. Payroll Provider.
Payment 2	£ 300.00	Helen Rose. Website & digital communications.
Payment 3	£ 1036.91	Clerk – salary and expenses.
Payment 4	£ 414.00	R&R Services Ltd. Grass maintenance contract.
Payment 5	£ 380.40	HMRC. Quarterly PAYE.
Payment 6	£ 25.00	Kentisbeare Village Hall. Hall Hire March.
Payment 7	£ 576.00	Project Cosmic. Website annual support contract.
Payment 8	£ 1292.40	T K Play Ltd. Play Area – repairs/maintenance.

c) The bank interest for 2025/26 was noted as £365.08.

d) Income and Expenditure 2025/26 and Bank Reconciliation as at 31-03-2026. The Clerk reported on the end of year figures prior to the internal examination prior to external audit - approved.

e) The subscription renewal invoice from Devon Association of Local Councils was noted as £401.43 – to be deducted from the precept. f) Any other financial matters: None.

51/04/26. Kentisbeare Play Area and Pump Track.

a) Pump Track: It was agreed for the pump track grass cutting to take place every other cut. The Clerk is continuing to monitor the track with assistance from Cllr. Forster when required. A site visit will be arranged with the advisory group next month.

b) To report on the recent cable runway incident and the subsequent repair – the Clerk reported that the chain had failed recently and that repairs had been undertaken almost immediately as agreed between the Clerk and the Chairman and reported to Cllr. Mrs Ellicott at the time; subsequent photos have been circulated to all councillors. The Clerk reported on liaising with a member of the public who was grateful for the communication and for news that the matter would be dealt with immediately. Having discussed the matter with MDDC and T K Play Ltd., as the play area contractor it was considered that the chain had failed due to the immense amount of rainfall and subsequent water remaining in the sleeve; both organisations had not encountered a failing chain in this manner previously.

c) Inspections of the play area equipment: Monthly inspections will continue as normal to be undertaken by an MDDC Play Area Inspector with an annual inspection. Any matters arising will be dealt with ASAP as per normal and the bottom end of the sleeve will be removed annually to check the chain on the cable runway. Following the incident it had been agreed at the time for works to the basket swing – the covered chains were replaced with ropes and a new basket was installed.

d) R&R Services – quotation to attend to an area around the basketball pad. Agreed not to proceed; Cllr. Forster will attend to the matter on a complimentary basis.

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52/04/26. Digital Communications and the Parish Website.

a) Update regarding .gov.uk domain name, emails and Microsoft 365 migration: The Clerk reported that due to a restriction following the current business advertising on the Kentisbeare.net website the move to a gov.uk domain will be put on hold. Enquiries will be made with reference to securing www.kentisbeare-pc.gov.uk for 2027-28. The Clerk will continue with info@kentisbeare.net and via Microsoft 365 with a view to Cosmic attending a meeting to advise further.

b) Advertising on the Parish website: Advertising will continue as normal until further notice. The Clerk will make enquiries for 2027-28.

c) Parish website – details in respect of upgrading the Parish website in order to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Cosmic has reported that the website does not meet the guidelines and an estimate had been provided for various options which include a new website and a full accessibility audit (£2400) - both costs were higher than anticipated and due to this it was agreed for an “Accessibility Smoke Test” at an estimated time of 4 to 8 hours. This process should demonstrate that the council is taking reasonable informed action whilst keeping costs down. It was considered that the current website works well but it is understood that work will need to be carried out following the smoke test which will incur costs.

53/04/26. Correspondence & Any Consultations. Generic emails and information.

54/04/26. Items for information, future agenda items, and dates of future meetings. The next meeting will follow the Annual Parish Meeting on 12/05/26.