

SHEEPWASH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

In the Village Hall

Wednesday 13th May 2026 at 7.00pm

Minutes

Present, Cllr Ansell, Cllr Crossley, Cllr Moys, Cllr Hutchings, Cllr Ritson, Cllr Fairall.
District Cllr Wheatley. Selina Woollacott (Clerk) Nine members of the public.

The Meeting will be Chaired by Cllr Ansell as no one else stepped forward to chair the meeting when asked.

Apologies. Cllr Etherington.

Parish Council Chairperson Report for the year 2025/2026. Report given by Cllr Ansell.

Asset report: a list of Parish Council assets can be found under Documents on the Parish Council website. The assets are wide ranging: metal rubbish bins, the Jubilee Park, the 'telephone' kiosk, the War Memorial and the Square, the Air Ambulance lighting columns, switch gear and cables, a lawn mower, the street furniture, two parcels of land by the river, and so on. The assets are checked each year by the Clerk, and any maintenance requirements are noted and acted upon.

Play equipment inspection: the items in Jubilee Park are checked each year by a play equipment inspection company. The inspection took place on 19 March 2026. The repairs and replacements recommended will be undertaken as soon as possible.

Landing Site Annual Survey: the Air Safety Manager checked the landing site and light on 15th October 2025. All is in good order, and he had no issues to report. Clerk to ask local person if they are happy to do the monthly switch on to make sure the light is working.

Bench in the Square: one bench (the Tom Jackson bench) has been repaired and refurbished by Bob Sherwood, thank you very much. A second bench is in poor repair. We have ordered a replacement which arrived today, 13th May and will be installed shortly.

Pottery Picture at Jubilee entrance: the Alphabet of Parishes village letter pottery plaque, made by Harry Juniper, which is at the entrance of Jubilee Park, now has a new wood surround and the cracks within the pottery have been invisibly mended. Thanks to Bob Sherwood again.

Sheepwash Village sign and 30mph signs: the replacement Sheepwash sign and the new 30mph signs along West Road were put in place in September 2025.

Dipper Mill Flood Watch site: Shebbear Parish Council pay for a Flood Watch Service and website. The Flood Watch Service monitors the height of the river at Dipper Mill and the website, which is accessible to all, shows a graph showing if the river at Dipper Mill is flooded. In the past the Parishioners of Sheepwash have said they do use the website and the information as it is a good indicator of the level of the river at Sheepwash and Black Torrington bridges. In September 2025 Sheepwash Parish Council granted another £50 towards the ongoing costs of the site.

Sheepwash bridge hit again: in January 2025 the bridge was hit again. The bridge was eventually fixed in November 2025. Two stone 'bollards' were constructed to help protect the bridge. One of the bollards was hit and destroyed in March 2026. Clerk to Chek this has been reported. Some people are not happy with the design and idea of the bollards.

Remembrance: thanks to all involved in the Poppy Project. Hundreds of poppies were knitted, crocheted and crafted and then draped over the Memorial in the Square. This made an impressive and respectful display. Over the years the Parish Council has purchased a poppy wreath each year from the Royal British Legion. This year a waterproof, solid and long-lasting poppy wreath was made, using the Chair's Allowance of £30. Thanks to those involved in making the wreath. The Parish Councillors agreed to donate £25 to the Royal British Legion in place of purchasing a wreath from them.

Jubilee Park topsoil and grass seed: in March 2026 a group of 11 people levelled the Jubilee Park ground with topsoil and sowed grass seeds. A sign asking people to keep off the area was put up, now removed. Thank you to all the people who helped.

Finances: in 2025/26 the precept is just over £8,700 per annum – no increase per household, but more households in the parish.

Total income for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 was £10,236. For the same period expenditure has been £6,339 – the biggest items being insurance, clerk's salary, and Luke's Farm s106.

The total funds that the Parish Council has (in its current and savings accounts):

@ 1 April 2023	£18,920
@ 31 March 2024	£21,560
@ 31 March 2025	£35,277
@ 31 March 2026	£39,174

Luke's Farm s106: on 1 September 2022 it was agreed by the Parish Council to allocate £10,000 to the project of securing the Community Hall site for the Parish. We had previously applied for a grant, but our application was not successful as most grant providers will only grant funds when building starts.

To date, 24 April 2026, £8,925 has been spent on the project.

A separate paper entitled Update on Lukes Farm s106 land, put together by the Planning Subgroup (Cllr Ansell, Cllr Crossley, Cllr Fairall) dated 1st May 2026, has been circulated and copies are available.

Update on Lukes Farm s106 land

1. Section 106 (s106) agreements are often referred to as planning obligations, or developer contributions. They force developers to mitigate the impact of new projects on local communities by funding infrastructure, such as affordable housing, schools, transport, or green spaces.
2. The s106 agreement for the Lukes Farm development is a plot of land measuring approximately 1.4 acres to the right as you're going down West Road, adjacent to the Lukes Farm development. The agreement states that the land can only be used for a new community hall.
3. We had to submit a full planning application for a new community hall as part of this s106. This planning application was submitted on 10th February 2023. Planning permission was granted on 19th February 2024 - see **(1/0137/2023/FUL)** on the Torridge District Council planning portal.
4. The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years after the date permission was granted, ie: we must make a Material Start by 19th February 2027. A Material Start will make our planning permission extant (ie: still in existence). If the Parish Council ever makes the decision not to build the hall at all the land automatically reverts back to the Traces, and it has to be returned in its original state.
5. As of 14th April 2026, Sheepwash Parish is the owner of the Lukes Farm s106 land.
6. We had thought that we would start discussions about the s106 land at the Annual Parish meeting to be held on 13th May 2026. To that end we were going to distribute a discussion paper – to as many people in the parish as possible, including the Village Hall Trustees in time for their meeting on Wednesday 6th May.
7. However, we think that it will be best to delay any big discussion until the entranceway and gates are installed. Dave Hockin Plant Hire and Ground Works will soon be constructing an entranceway off West Road and installing gates. This represents a Material Start.
8. We need to be absolutely clear here - there is no question of the Parish not building a community hall on this land because the landowners made that a legal condition – it is a covenant - but the cost of doing that means it is very unlikely to happen for quite a while.
9. We don't think that there many people in Sheepwash who would want to see the land handed back to the original landowners - potentially for even more houses.
10. In the meantime, it's a great resource for the village and it could be used for all sorts of things - in the service of fundraising. Those funds could be shared with local charities as well as this project.
11. So, we would like you to start thinking about how we, as a community, can best do this.

12. We will be inviting your comments, questions and thoughts with a view to holding a dedicated meeting, once an entranceway and gates have been installed and we can get access and see what we've got. Member of the public spoke to say Well Done to all in making this happen in securing the site for the Parish. A lot of work has been put into this, and it has been a long time coming.

County & District Councillor reports for the year 2025/2026. Report given by Cllr Wheatley.

Pleased to announce the new government funded scheme called The Crisis and Resilience Fund is now available and has replaced the Household Support Fund 7. The Crisis Resilience Fund is £453,055 and a further £121,463 allocated for Heating Oil. More details about the Scheme including eligibility and getting help now is available on the Torridge District Council Website. The Crisis and Resilience Fund is designed to help low-income households experiencing a sudden financial crisis or loss of income. Also included is helping you with Heating Oil for low-income households, Food, Energy, Essentials, Appliances and Housing. Like the previous Household Support Scheme, Encompass are partners of TDC.

To apply to the FUND: For HELP ONLINE: www.torridge.gov.uk/crisisandresiliencefund

OR You can telephone Encompass Southwest on 01271 371 499

I attended a recent Councillor Southwest Water Briefing Session presented by Alan Burrows, Head of Local Government Affairs Pennon Group who own Southwest Water regarding their priorities and new business plan - 4 Top Priorities - 1 -Water Quality and resilience, 2- Storm overflows and pollution, 3- Net Zero and environmental gains, 4- Delivering for customers and affordability
Priority 2 - To transform their sewer network by 2040 starting with all sites which affect our most loved places. This needs to happen sooner not by 2040!

Recently I attended the North Devon Biosphere Project Meeting with Rob Jordan - CEO at North Devon Biosphere providing an enlightening presentation. Rob presented the latest developments on building a smart Biosphere covering water quality data, flood data, biodiversity, soil, Carbon emissions, energy use, land-use, visitor, grid connections. The Biosphere is working on new Data Platform hopefully going live in 2 months' time. It will operate as a dashboard, and I have seen the latest prototype though more work is needed! It will certainly enhance information for our ward in Shebbear and Langtree once the Project is ready for dashboards.

We hope to see rankings of the water quality of the 92 River bodies as 1 per dashboard. Expanding the network of river champions and citizen science. Provide analysis to get each river waterbody to a good ecological status. Integrating other data on each dashboard to include Land use data, urban, farmland, woodland, highway, water company data- storm water overflows duration(Treatment Works), septic tanks data, highways data, others including risk data landfill, mines and quarries, industrial discharges, and others

The Biosphere is also working with South Westwater, dairy industry, woodland owners the EA (Environmental Agency) and planning authorities, West Country Rivers Trust, Taw, and Torridge River Champions, National and Devon Wildlife Trusts, Devon County Council, North Devon Council, Torridge District Council.

Other projects include the smart Biosphere approach to key bathing areas with monitoring in Croyde and Westward Ho integrating the Environment Agencies weekly monitoring data (May- September).

External Overview and Scrutiny Committee We recently received a proposal from Robert Blake National Director and Network Director for Rail Future Ltd regarding the potential of a new Bideford to Exeter via Barnstaple and beyond Railway service. Of course, this is very much at its infancy stage, and Councillors and some members of the public raised potential red flag concerns and issues that would need to be considered. Bideford to Barnstaple:

The Tarka Trail widening and access needed

Huge cost! £ 300 Million plus as an approx. estimate

Instow sea wall

South Westwater sewage pipes.

Tarka trail rerouting to use underpasses and over bridges and being moved away from existing scenic route.

Bideford station car parking and potential huge congestion with traffic issues.

Bideford Station Short platform and an important heritage area

Near to a site of scientific interest.

Brunswick Wharf development- parking and congestion

Noise and Traffic

Stagecoach

FULL COUNCIL. I attended Full Council Meeting recently where we discussed Play Zones -Using Extra Funding (£38,000) for shortfall projects was discussed and adopted by Council for Holsworthy (Stanhope Park) and Great Torrington (derelict tennis courts). Pollyfield was withdrawn due to concerns over viability and local opposition.

PlotBox PRO was proposed and adopted by Council which provides a modern cloud-based cemetery management system.

PlotBox provides a modern digital system with digital maps and online portals for staff, funeral directors, cemeteries, crematoria, memorial masons, funeral homes and public.

At the Shebbear Parish Meeting I met a lady from Holsworthy Rural Community Transport. I would like to see this charity promoted more as they do great work.

Review the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025. Minutes reviews no matters arising.

Open Forum for parishioners.

Member of the public (MOP) the Flowers from the planter in South Street have been stolen for the third time.

Clerk confirmed this was happening in Shebbear and they have stopped planting flowers in the planters. Clerk to report this incident.

MOP2. Luke's Farm the grass has been nicely cut on the right side but not on the left side. It was discussed if this is Steven's Homes or if it is part of a garden. Or a management company that cuts the grass in the public areas in Luke's Farm. (Since the meeting the area of grass has been cut).

Cutting the grass in the Churchyard. The Parish Council have informed the Church that the Parish Council lawnmower cannot be used to cut the grass in the Churchyard for a few reasons. Cllr Ansell will have a word with a member of the Church to remind them of this.

Cllr Ansell raised the fact there are taxis parked in the Square and asked if the owners lived at Luke's Farm and if there were issues with parking at Luke's Farm. Perhaps the taxis could be parked near to the owner's home at Luke's Farm. A discussion was had about commercial vehicles parking in the Square. MOP asked if a sign needs to be put up in the Square saying park at your own risk.

Cllr Ritson raised the fact more people are needed to cut the grass in Jubilee Park as we now only have a couple of volunteers. MOP suggested getting a contractor to do the grass cutting. The grass takes about three hours when long and one and a half hours when short. Clerk suggested putting the job out to tender. The grass will need to be cut April – October, sometimes once a week and sometimes once a fortnight. The person can either use own mower or the Parish Council mower. Cllr Ritson has been looking at new lawn mowers for the Parish Council as the current one does go wrong a lot and is costing more in repairs. Looking at about £1,300 for a new lawn mower.

MOP suggested allotments on the Community Hall site.

Closing remarks from the Chairperson. Thank you for coming to the Annual Parish Meeting. We will now continue into the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Meeting Closed 7.38pm

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