

Sheepwash Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 8th July 2026, 7pm
at Sheepwash Village Hall

MINUTES

Present, Cllr Ansell (Chairperson) Cllr Fairall, Cllr Hutchings, Cllr Etherington, Cllr Ritson left early.
Selina Woollacott (Clerk), Three Members of the Public.

- 1) **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Moys, Cllr Crossley, District Cllr Wheatley.
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:**
In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. Members are also reminded that any change to their Declaration of Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer at Torridge District Council within 28 days of the change. None.
- 3) **Public Discussion, to allow any questions, reports by members of the public on any matters relating to the agenda of this meeting, or any matters the public would like the Council to consider on a future agenda. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes.**
A reminder that members of the public can speak when invited to when council is in committee.
No members of the public wished to speak at this time.
- 4) **Minutes – the Minutes of the meetings held on the 13th May 2026 Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting have been circulated by email. Minutes to be approved for accuracy and signed by the Chairperson.** Cllr Ritson asked it to be noted that he had misjudged the construction of the two bollards down at the bridge. They seem to have been made of stone, he thought they had been constructed of mortar only. In looking closer he saw the whole parapet behind the bollards has been shifted towards the river. It must be very weak. Coupled with any effort to reinforce the bollards, this can only continue when the next vehicle pushes against the bridge. Cllr Hutchings agreed that when the bollards are hit the force is being transmitted into the bridge. The Councillors agreed for the Clerk to inform Highways of the concerns. All Councillors agreed that both Minutes are an accurate record of the Meeting. Cllr Ansell signed the Minutes.
Cllr Ansell moved Agenda items 10 and 11.
- 10) **Jubilee Park grass cutting and Lawn Mower.**
Councillors discussed the grass cutting of Jubilee Park with input from a member of the public (MOP). The Councillors agreed the following, the MOP with a ride on lawn mower who is happy to cut the grass weekly will cut the main area of grass. Cllr Ritson and the other volunteers will cut the edges and around the play equipment. Cllr Ritson will inform the group of volunteers. The wildflowers are looking very good along the path.
The lawn mower is still being used by the Church to cut the Churchyard. In July 2025 it was agreed that the Parish Council lawn mower was not to be used by the volunteers to cut the graveyard. The Parish Council informed the vicar on a number of occasions, and he has had enough time to arrange an alternative or buy a lawn mower. Councillors agreed it is not the Parish Council responsibility to maintain the graveyard. Cllr Ritson will inform the vicar that the lawn mower is no longer available to the Church.
- 11) **Play Inspection report update.** Cllr Ritson gave the following update.
The loose mats mentioned have been in the gazebo for several years now and it is of low risk.

The fence around the swings. I have fixed the broken rail by removing the most rotted part and reinforcing its attachment to the upright.

Litter bin. We should replace this with a new one. I have done nothing about it. We should keep this in place to encourage disposal of litter until we buy a new one. I am happy to instal it when that is arranged.

Multi play tower, bars and climbing holds. Do nothing except fill in gaps where little fingers could be trapped.

Basket swing. I have done nothing but could investigate replacing chain and shackles. Better, to ask Play equipment company to return and replace all chains and shackles

Gazebo. I have removed several staples and nail ends which were put in during various activities. Please use drawing pins for temporary notices during the Shindig etc. not staples or nails.

Compost bins. Do nothing yet. I notice one of the mowing team has left a large pile of rotting grass in front of the northerly bin. This may accelerate the rotting around the posts.

Councillors agreed for a new bin to be ordered, Clerk will Check if TDC will empty them, and for the Clerk to contact the play equipment company to replace the chains and shackles on the basket swing.

Cllr Ritson left the meeting.

- 5) **County & District Councillors' reports.** No County Councillors report. District Councillor sent a report. The Devon Parish Pothole Handbook from Devon County Council has become available and will bring your Parish handbook along with me next Meeting. I would like to ask the Parish to subscribe to the DCC Road Warden Scheme to equip, train and insure small volunteer teams. The Pothole Handbook is comprehensive and covers other areas including reporting issues with Grit bins, overgrown vegetation, Public rights of way, Broken inspection covers, Debris or obstructions, Bridges and retaining walls, Flooding, drainage issues. There are QR Codes in the handbook with quick access to the topic you require i.e. using a smart phone.
- Reporting Potholes is categorised as Defect Potholes - Highways FIX THESE minimum 40 mm deep and minimum 300mm in length with a vertical edge after being reported where each report is allocated a reference number and an Inspector is sent to the location and determine its one for DCC to fix it and the speed of the fix is determined by the safety risk of causing and immediate accident. Add your name to the defective Pothole and don't report it again as this will generate a new reference number and confuse the process.
- Non-defect Potholes - should be reported to your Parish Council and the Clerk records the Reports on the Parish and full Agenda item and used to update the Parish Priorities List. Road Warden minimum 40mm and minimum of 400mm in length with a sloping edge. This could be a pin board inviting Parishioners to locate potholes on a map- DCC.
- The Parish Road Wardens will undergo training and provided with necessary materials. Parish Road Wardens may not carry out the work yet is responsible for coordinating the works that take place. and can have a small team of volunteers who carry out the Works who also must undergo training and qualification requirements. Road Wardens and Parish Council working in partnership with Devon County Council.
- See also enhanced Road Warden Scheme, Paid Parish Lengthman and Pothole Ninjas in Handbook. To download a copy of the Devon Parish Pothole Handbook please go to louise4devon.com and select potholes and scroll down to New Potholes Handbook for Parish Councils to Download Latest Version.
- EXTERNAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** I recently attended the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting where we discussed the Chairman's Report regarding reinstating of the Bideford to railway link to Exter and beyond via Barnstaple. It was agreed and voted for the following will be presented to Full Council to take the following steps.
- 1 - TDC should concentrate efforts to improve connectivity by looking at cheaper and more immediate measures such as a fast coach service linking Bedford and Tiverton Parkway railway station and/or London as proposed with the Bideford Regeneration Plan

2- TDC should develop a comprehensive more Active Travel network providing greater opportunities for cyclists and walkers to access the centre of Bideford from the various new developments around the Town and surrounding communities such as Northam and Westward Ho.

3 -TDC should prioritise looking to improve public transport links between Bideford and other Towns, villages, and rural communities within the District.

4- Although rails travel is greener than car travel to Exeter improving facilities locally would be better for the environment and local economy.

Water Safety - We received a Presentation from Mike Day Northam Burrows Manager and Lead Ranger and Matt Whitley Lead Lifeguard Supervisor North Devon and Somerset. With the unfortunate loss of lives mostly younger people recently in drowning incidents this was particularly prevalent at this time. We discussed and learnt about Active Torridge currently have 20 schools get delivered the Swim England Swimming Program that currently helps primary children. There is also an Ocean Academy Learn to Swim programme where water safety is embedded across each stage of swimming lessons and Active Torridge ensures every swimmer develops confidence and practical safety.

Active Torridge also delivers a Rookie Lifeguard programme offering an introduction to lifesaving and rescue techniques.

Active Torridge currently has 2 employees at Torrington swimming pool who have completed both full Ocean Academy learn to swim programme and Rookie Lifeguard programme and have up skilled to now become fully qualifiers Lifeguards for Active Torridge.

Councillors and the public discussed the BESS which is a massive data centre and battery storage planned for near Great Torrington. Cllr Cottle-Hunkin was invited to the meeting to talk about this. Water supply is a concern as well as many other factors. There will be a public Consultation between the 14th July – 11th August. Then it is likely the planning application will be submitted to TDC. It was agreed an articles for the Chronicle would be a good idea. Clerk to ask Cllr Cottle- Hunkin for information.

6) Clerk Report.

.gov email, Weed killing, Hedge trimming Jubilee Park, Declaration of Interest forms, Flowers Stolen, Landing Light monthly check, Luke's Farm grass cutting. North Street Bench.

.gov email. The Parish Council now has a .gov email address for the Clerk. Emails to the old email address are move into the new email address as we have stayed with the same email and website provider.

Weed killing. At the last meeting it was agreed to add West Road onto the areas to have weed killing work completed on it. I was able to contact the Contractor before he did the May week killing and got West Road added. The next time the weeds will be killed is September.

Hedge trimming Jubilee Park. I have asked the contractor to cut the hedge in Jubilee Park before the Shindig, he will inform me when he plans to cut the hedge so that locals can remove the trimmings.

Declaration of Interest forms. Councillors have new Declaration of Interest forms to complete for TDC.

Flowers Stolen. This was raised at the Annual Parish Meeting. I have reported that the plants/flowers from the sign on South Street have been stolen 3 times. We know there is nothing that can be done about the plants stolen in May. Has there been any issues since? The reason I logged it with the Police is Sheepwash isn't the only place this has happened and the Police can build a picture of where it is happening and when.

Landing Light monthly check. A local member of the public has agreed to complete the monthly landing light checks. Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) do annual checks on the site and light.

Luke's Farm grass cutting. This was raised at the Annual Parish Meeting. When I drove past a few days after the meeting the grass had been cut. I have not taken the matter further.

Cllr Hutchings, the roadside and ditch need cutting. Clerk to contact Highways.

North Street Bench. There is a bench on the verge on North Street, Highways are aware of the bench, and a Highways Officer has been to check that the bench meets Highways criteria. The Parish Council has no connection or responsibility for the bench and Highways now has that logged on their system.

It was commented that the flowers look great the length of North Street.

Cllr Hutchings raised the point that the hedges in West Road need cutting. One hedge being the site hedge. MOP said he would go and talk to the contractors on the site if this doesn't work the Clerk has contact details for the site. The owner of the other hedge will get it cut soon.

7) **Chair's Report.** No Report.

8) **Community Hall site.**

Cllr Ansell updated the meeting with the news that the new entrance and gateway were completed on the 18th June. Documents and photos have been submitted to TDC for the approval of a material start.

9) **Generator.**

Member of the public who is looking into a generator could not be at the meeting this will be discussed at the September meeting. Cllr Hutchings has seen a generator he will talk to the member of the public before the next meeting.

12) **PLANNING:**

12a) **Planning Applications.** None.

12b) **Planning Decisions.** None.

13) **FINANCE:**

13a) **as at the 1st July 2026:**

Main Account £ 12,595.31

Saving Account £19,153.22

Expenditure:

Date	£	Detail	Transfer
27.05.2026	460.00	New Bench	Bacs
27.05.2026	858.30	Insurance. Came and Company	Bacs
27.05.2026	150.00	Weed killing. Devon Garden Solutions	Bacs
27.05.2026	17.98	Petrol Mr M Ritson	Bacs
27.05.2026	76.86	Lawn Mower repair. Northmoor Garden Machinery	Bacs
31.05.2026	7.00	Bank Account Service Charge	DD
02.06.2026	42.00	AI Training. DALC	Bacs
16.06.2026	42.00	Account Audit. Buckland Accounts	Bacs
16.06.2026	9.46	Ink. Clerk	Bacs
22.06.2026	443.00	Clerk's Salary March - June	Bacs
29.06.2026	8.94	Petrol. Mr D Ansell	Bacs
29.06.2026	7,692.00	Entrance. D Hockin Plant Hire	Bacs
30.06.2026	7.00	Bank Account Service Charge	DD
Total	9,814.54		

Income:

Date	£	Detail
08.05.2026	300.00	DCC P3 Funds for footpaths
Total	300.00	

13b) **Parish Council Accounts update.**

Clerk gave the following report. **The** savings account has a balance of £19,153.22.

In 2021 the Parish Council was informed the cost to resurface the Square would be £15,000 - £17,000.

I am going to take the amount £17,000. This leaves £2,153.22 in the savings account which is the Parish Council reserve funds, which is nearly 3 months' worth of Parish Precept. Small Councils are recommended to have 6 – 12 months of precept in their reserves. I am proposing to the Council that £2,205 is moved from the Current account to the Saving account so that there is £4,358.22 in reserves which is 6 months of the Parish Precept. Councillors agreed to move £2,205 from the Current Account to the Savings Account to have a reserve fund.

The Current account has a balance of £12,595.31

Minus off the £2,205 I would like to move to the saving account

Minus off £4,665.48 which is the amount left set aside for the Community Hall Site.

Minus off £606.42 of P3 funds to be used on the Footpaths.

This leaves a useable balance of £5,118.41

It was raised that a separate account will be needed for the Community Hall site in the future. This maybe an account run by the project team.

13c) Village Hall Grant.

The last grant to the Village Hall was £500 this is part hall hire and part grant. The amount on the budget is £500. All Councillors agreed to grant £500 to the Village Hall.

14) Items for Information. Items emailed out to Councillors. All items on this Agenda.

Tuesday 18 August 2026 - Wednesday 19th August 2026 (Both Dates Inclusive) Between the hours of 08:00 And 18:00

Roads Affected - Road from Patchel Cross to East Street, Sheepwash

This Temporary Restriction is considered necessary to enable - Replace 4 X Telegraph Poles.

15) Items to be included in the agenda for the next meeting. The next meeting will be 9th September 2026. Asset Checking report. Generator.

Thank You to Edward for watering the plants outside of the Village Hall.

Meeting Closed 7.47pm

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