

**Draft**

**Minutes of the Meeting of Shirwell Parish Council  
held on the  
13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 in the Village Hall, Shirwell**

**Present**

Cllr J Friend (Chairman)  
Cllr E Abretti  
Cllr Mrs C Parkhouse  
Cllr Mrs S Pine

Also in attendance County Councillor A Davis and 5 members of the public

**Officer**

G Dwyer

**Feb25/1 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs Watt, Pelling and Shortridge

*With members approval the Chairman moved agenda item 11 (Planning Application to this point on the agenda.*

**Feb 25/11 Planning Applications**

**Planning Reference DCC/4417/2024.Quarry at Muddiford Plantation, Muddiford Woods, Muddiford, Barnstaple.** Extraction of stone (up to 10,000 tonnes) for use on forestry tracks at this location

*Cllr Mrs S Pine declared a personal interest in the Planning Application relating to Plaistow Quarry as she had sold the access to the site to the applicant*

*The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow members of the public to comment on the Planning Application*

Concerns were expressed about the following issues. It was noted that some issues were operational matters and would be for the period of quarrying only but others relating to the site could/would be permanent.

Importantly the site was designated as restored woodland not a quarry and so would/should need change of use. Concern was expressed at the impact on wildlife and the environment.

The present owner had already extracted stone from the quarry without a permit or any form of approval

Specifically

- The application mentioned a tonnage extraction figure but there was no indication as to how this would be measured and previous experience would suggest that this would be flouted.
- The previous unauthorized work had caused disruption and alleged road closures due to repair work
- Since that work the previously underground spring had run constantly onto the highway and during the recent icy weather a vehicle had skidded on the ice and crashed
- Alteration to the water table from the water flow could well affect water supply to farms and residential property
- Moving the amount of stone in the application would necessitate a high number of vehicle movements as the access was inadequate for large vehicles and would cause disruption

The meeting resumed under standing orders and it was **RESOLVED** to Recommend **REFUSAL**

**Planning Application 79703 North Woolley at Arlington Court** Creation of an outdoor hub, to include improved vehicular access from the A39, car park, visitor facilities, multi-use accessible trail, a cycling skills area, natural play features and associated development.

With members approval the Chairman suspended standing orders to allow members of the public to speak on the application.

The following points were made by Members of the Public  
Proposed access was

- by a single track with an inadequate visibility splay onto the A39
- turning onto the proposed site would impact traffic on the A 39
- Access was across farmland creating conflict of use with gates being left open and stock escaping
- Stopping to open the gates as this proposal would necessitate farmers being more rigorous in closing them could disrupt traffic on the A39
- The site could not manage the number of people the facility was planned to attract

The meeting resumed under standing orders and it was **RESOLVED** to Recommend **REFUSAL** as the site was inadequate both in siting and size for the proposed facility

**Planning Application 79765, Playford Meadows Muddiford Barnstaple Devon EX31 4ES** Prior approval for change of use of agricultural building to dwelling house (Class Q A & B)

Members discussed the access issues of this site but noted it was a Class Q application and **RESOLVED** to recommend **APPROVAL**

## **Feb25/2 Public Question Time**

A question related to the siting of the speed awareness monitor is minuted later in the minutes (agenda item Feb24/4)

## **Feb 25/3/ Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes as previously circulated be approved

## **Feb25/4 Matters arising from the minutes**

Deferred to agenda item 12. (Speed Awareness monitor)

## **Feb25/5 Inspection of Defibrillator**

The defibrillator has been inspected and cleaned.

## **Feb25/6 Report of the County Councillor**

The County Councillor had forwarded her report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. She had recently completed an inspection of Marwood area (including Shirwell) with her Highways Officer who had advised that the planted Xmas Tree on the verge at Beeches Childcare was a sightline issue and would be removed

## **Feb25/7 Questions to the County Councillor**

There were no questions

## **Feb25/8 Report of the District Councillor**

There was no report

## **Feb25/9 Questions to the District Councillor**

There were no questions

## **Feb25/10 Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been distributed in advance of the meeting.

- Dalc bulletin
- Climate and Environment grant information

## **Feb25/11 Planning Applications**

See earlier in the minutes

### **Feb25/12 Cheques for Payment**

A cheque to G Dwyer (Clerks salary £150.00) and C Seage (grass cutting £229) were signed at the meeting). The speed awareness monitor cheque to Westcotec £4328.40 to be drawn as soon as invoice is received

### **Feb25/12 Speed Awareness monitor**

Councillors thanked County Councillor A Davis for the Locality Grant contribution to the speed awareness monitor. It was noted that she would try to source a mounting pole for the device.

A member of the public suggested an additional possible location for the device and it was agreed

### **Feb25/13 Reports from Councillors**

All matters dealt with earlier on the agenda

### **Feb25/14 Clerks Report**

The Clerk confirmed he had submitted the second precept letter and its receipt had been acknowledged

### **Feb25/15 Public Questions regarding business on this agenda**

There were none

### **Feb25/16 Urgent Business**

There was none

The meeting closed 7.55 pm

Chairman:                      Dated:.....

**Shirwell Parish Council  
County Councillors report  
February 2025**



**I am very pleased to have funded the Vehicle Activated Sign for the Parish, there should be £3550 in the Parish Council bank account!**

**Local Government Reorganisation**

**The English Devolution White Paper was published just before Christmas.**

**Extract from the ministers letter probably gives some explanation as to where we are heading as residents in a two tier area;**

***Local government reorganisation My intention is to formally invite unitary proposals in January 2025 from all councils in two-tier areas, and small neighbouring unitary councils. In this invitation, I will set out further detail on the criteria I will consider when taking decisions on the proposals that are submitted to Government. I intend to ask for interim plans by March 2025. As set out in the White Paper, new unitary councils must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. For most areas, this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more. However, there may be exceptions to ensure new structures make sense for an area, including on devolution. Final decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. We will ask you to work with other councils in your area to develop unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area, rather than developing competing proposals.***

**Statement from Andrea**

**Following publication of the Governments Devolution White paper it is clear that considerable change is going to happen in Local Government in Devon.**

**We have two options;**

- 1. Do nothing and the government will impose changes**
- 2. Engage with government to get the best result for the residents of Devon.**

**I believe that engagement with the government is the best option.**

**While I may not agree with al the government's proposals, I need to do everything I can to ensure that the changes will make local government sustainable for the long term and able to withstand shocks like the pandemic and the world financial crisis. At the heart of all this must be a**

stronger voice to inform the government of the issues my residents in Combe Martin Rural and the residents in the wider area of Devon face. Update 05.02.25- The Government has turned down Devon County Council's request to postpone its elections in May.

This afternoon Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Angela Rayner announced that the council's request was among those which have been rejected, meaning that the council's May elections will proceed as planned.

The announcement coincides with confirmation that the Government has signed the necessary legislation to bring the Devon and Torbay's Combined County Authority (CCA) into being.

The Devon and Torbay CCA is the governance needed for devolved decision-making powers and funding to flow from Whitehall to local decision-makers in Devon and Torbay. Through the Devon and Torbay CCA, it means that decisions that were previously made in Whitehall will now be made locally on priority issues including housing, jobs and skills, transport and economy.

Letter received from minister Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February

*We ask for an interim plan to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025, in line with the guidance set out in the attached Annex. My officials will provide feedback on your plan to help support you to develop final proposals. I will expect any full proposal to be submitted by 28 November. If I decide to implement any proposal, and the necessary legislation is agreed by Parliament, we will work with you to move to elections to new 'shadow' unitary councils as soon as possible as is the usual arrangement in the process of local government reorganisation. Following submission, I will consider any and all proposals carefully before taking decisions on how to proceed.*

### Free school meals

All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 at state schools in England automatically get free school meals. However, parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free school meals when they enrol their child in school, as this can help their child's school to attract additional ['pupil premium'](#) funding to support learning.

From year 3 onwards, children whose parents are getting any of the following are entitled to free school meals:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).
- Income Support (IS).
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA).
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (IRESA).
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income that does not exceed £16,190).
- Working Tax Credit run-on (the payment you get for a further 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

School children living on their own (16-19 year olds) who receive a qualifying benefit in their own right can also get free school meals.

How to apply

Apply through the [Devon Citizens Portal](#). This is the quickest and easiest way to apply and will result in you getting an instant decision. Alternatively, call the Education Helpline on 0345 155 1019.

### School meals – Education and Families

Energy Efficiency support available

Householders who want to make their homes more energy efficient but are unsure of what steps to take next can get free impartial advice from trusted local experts at [Energy Saving Devon](#).

The Energy Saving Devon Advice Service provides personalised consultations, helping residents to make informed decisions about improving energy efficiency in their homes. This could include a free home visit from a local energy advisor to help you understand which energy saving measures are best suited to your home, advice on grants you may be eligible for as well as solutions to issues such as damp and mould, condensation or underheating.

Energy Saving Devon is a partnership of all the local authorities in Devon, local community energy organisations and other strategic partners, administered by Devon County Council. The Energy Saving Devon team will be able to advise you on the suitability of your home for measures such as insulation, energy efficient windows, heating and hot water systems and renewable energy systems like solar panels. Retrofitting these measures can make your home warmer and more comfortable as well as providing healthier living conditions, lower energy costs and lower carbon emissions.

To find out more, or to book your free home visit, contact your local community energy organisation by phone or WhatsApp on 0800 999 1439, or email [energysavingdevon@devon.gov.uk](mailto:energysavingdevon@devon.gov.uk)

*Please beware of rogue traders who may approach you directly. You will never be asked to make an upfront payment by Energy Saving Devon. If in doubt, please contact the Energy Saving Devon advice line.*

The DCC website is very useful for reporting highway problems and the reports go straight to the contractor. [Report a problem - Roads and transport](#)

Alternatively, the highway contact number is 0345 155 1004

If it's a river flooding the environment agency can be contacted on 0345 988 1188

Winter road updates; <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/safe-travel/winter-travel/>

Travel Devon website; [home - Travel Devon](#)

**Andrea Davis**

**County Councillor**

**Combe Martin Rural Division**

[Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk](mailto:Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk)

To be very clear we will have to go to Barnstaple with any Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (upholstered furniture, chairs, sofas, floor cushions etc)

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