

Winkleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 23rd July 2025 7.00pm at Community Centre, Castle Street, Winkleigh

Present: Cllr. G Goldsworthy (Chair), Cllr. A Phillips (Vice Chair), Cllr. A Jacobs, Cllr. P Odulinski, Cllr A Keys, Cllr. A Warner, Cllr. A. Wonnacott and Cllr. T Squance.

In attendance: 6 Members of the public
Lucie Moorse (Parish Clerk)
Josie Hole (Administration Assistant)

01.07.25	The Chair opened the meeting at 7.00 pm and advised those present that there was a re-ordering of the Agenda. Item "09.07.25 (vi) East Park Close Splay" would be moved to follow Agenda Item 04.07.25 Public Participation segment. He went onto explain this change was justified by the structure of Council Meetings, where Councillors cannot engage in dialogue with the public during their speeches and vice versa. The Chair's proposal to reorder was met with no objections. Apologies of absence were received from: District Cllr Simon Newton, DC Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin and Cllr. B Roth.
02.07.05	Declaration of Interest were requested from the Councillors for any personal or prejudicial interests in the Agenda items. Cllr. Wonnacott mentioned the tender related to the work on the Cemetery ditch, but no formal conflicts were declared, and no dispensations granted One Councillor briefly mentioned a tender related to a ditch, but no formal conflicts were declared. There are no dispensations granted either.
03.07.25	Reports • County Councillor's Report – It was noted that this report had been received, distributed to the Councillors before the meeting. • District Councillor's Report – The Chair noted D. Cllr Simon Newton's absence due being on holiday. • Police Advocate – No report. • Chairman's Report – The Chair commenced his formal report, beginning with an apology for Councillors' past failures to use gender-neutral language, which caused offense. He urged all Councillors to be mindful in the future. He reminded the Councillors to adhere to the Parish Council's Financial Regulations Policy and asked that proper annotation of shared documents on the HiDrive and to ensure that everyone uploads current version of documents.
04.07.05	Public Participation • Mrs. S. Jeens (member of the public) provided an update on a potential social housing project, citing a productive meeting she attended in Chawleigh, with District Cllr S Newton, and explained that the Chawleigh group are keen to share its experience with other communities, and went onto explain that the project focuses on social housing, which consists of rented properties for local residents, rather than affordable housing. The housing would be managed by a trust responsible for allocation and maintenance. Discussion then followed regarding the timing and structure of a meeting to introduce the project to the Winkleigh community with a suggestion of holding a Parish Meeting in September. Several speakers voiced concern that this might be too soon, potentially leading to public disappointment or scepticism if insufficient information was available. They suggested that more preparation and internal discussion among Councillors and advisors might be beneficial first.

Other Councillors suggested that the meeting should go forward to gauge public interest, regardless of the level of preparation. A key point of clarification was made about the distinction between social and affordable housing, with the project being described as following a social rent model similar to former council housing.

As a result, the Chair requested that Mrs Jeens consult with District Cllr Simon Newton to get his opinion on the suitability of a public meeting in September. Mrs. Jeens agreed to do so.

It was then agreed to add the topic to the Agenda for the Parish Council's September meeting, when they could ask a representative from the Chawleigh Group to provide a brief explanation, with District Cllr Newton expanding on the information. The Councillors felt they should be well-informed before moving to a broader public meeting.

- Regarding Cllr Warner's requesting information from some of the residents of East Park Close, a response was read out to the Parish Council by a lady resident, giving everyone a full explanation to the individual questions he had asked. The key points were:
 - 1) There has never been a residents' association for East Park Close.
 - 2) Deeds indicate that property owners are responsible for maintenance up to the middle of the road, but the splay in question lies outside these boundaries.
 - 3) There is no existing residents' fund for future expenses and establishing one would be logistically difficult.
 - 4) The splay is not registered with the Land Registry and was historically presumed to belong to Devon County Council (DCC), given the presence of pavements and regular mowing by DCC.
 - 5) Funding efforts have included appeals to the Parish Council and District Council. The Parish Council had agreed in principle to contribute £2,000, conditional on receiving three quotes and final Council approval.
 - 6) The splay is used not only by local residents but also by delivery vehicles, HGVs, and other road users, making it a shared community benefit.
 - 7) The letter argues that any gating or privatising of the splay would simply shift traffic problems elsewhere in the village.
 - 8) When the current owners purchased their property, there was no mention of the splay liability in legal documents.

The Councillors discussed the logistics of funding and the proposed contractor quote of £5,389.48 plus VAT and it expires in August, creating a need for a timely decision. It was noted that LJ Developments has offered to collect funds from residents directly.

The Parish Council had agreed in principle to contribute up to £2,000. It was noted that the contractor would only begin work once all necessary payments, including resident contributions, have been received. To be transparent, the invoice would be made out to the Council to allow for a VAT claim, thereby saving money.

Discussion then followed concerning long-term planning for the maintenance of such work in future years for the ten benefiting households to contribute £50 annually; as well as to consider a formal residents' association for future issues. With respect to governance and precedent, concerns were raised about public funds without a formal agreement in place, and, after future deliberation the Councillors expressed their desire to avoid setting a precedent that could burden the Council with multiple similar requests. They emphasised the importance of developing a robust framework for handling such cases moving forward.

Several Councillors stressed their empathy and willingness to support the residents and that their concern should not be mistaken for resistance. The Chair concurred but emphasised the Council's duty to proceed carefully and responsibly. One of the residents acknowledged the persistent efforts of two lady residents who had repeatedly advocated for the repair. It was noted that there is also commitment to continue lobbying higher authorities if needed.

The Chair advised all present that the "Public Participation Session" had exceeded the designated 15-minute allotment, and the Council must move into its formal Meeting segment. However, he pointed out that the issue raised would be carried directly into the next agenda item for decision-making.

09.07.25	Report from the Parish Environment Committee: (vi) East Park Close Splay The Councillors noted the difficulty of securing contributions from all residents, particularly those in care homes or housing associations. It was supported that Council funds could be used under Section 137 (S137) to assist with road repairs in an "orphan" area, even if not all residents contribute. Cllr Warner further justified this by citing prior discussions and the road's lack of clear ownership, which allows for Council intervention. After further discussion and clarification about contribution amounts from Cllr Phillips and with the agreement of the members, Cllr Phillips proposed that the Council should provide a £2,000 contribution plus VAT, which would then be paid direct to the contractor upon receipt of an invoice to the Parish Council, and the residents would be responsible for the remaining balance. The motion was seconded by Cllr Jacobs and brought to a vote where it was fully approved.
05.07.25	Chawleigh Housing Project : Proposal to Convene a Parish Meeting ***In view of the time elapsed the Chair proposed, with full agreement from the Councillors, that this Agenda item be moved to the end of the Meeting before "Any Other Business" to allow for a full deliberation.***
06.07.25	To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2025. The Chair asked the Councillors to receive and approve the Minutes, then Cllr Odulinski expressed the importance of formally recording an apology and a commitment to gender-inclusive language in the June Meeting's Minutes, specifically raising concerns about terms such as "chairman" and "businessman." The Chair initially opposed including this in the June's Minutes, arguing that the verbal apology had already been made. A lengthy discussion followed regarding the proposed changes to the June Minutes. During this discussion, the Chair and Councillor Odulinski had a heated exchange of words. <i>***At this point, some members of the public left the meeting***</i> Following the discussion, a proposal was made to minute that the Council had agreed to be more mindful of language going forward. The Council affirmed this commitment to using gender-neutral terms in future proceedings and documentation. All Councillors were in agreement. The Chair advised that any formal complaints about behaviour should be submitted in writing to the Monitoring Officer at TDC. The Chair then called for a vote on the approval of the Minutes from the previous meeting. Cllr Phillips proposed that the Minutes be approved as they were written, and the Chair asked for the remaining members for their votes. The vote was: For: 4 (The Chair had the casting vote) Against: 3 Abstentions: 2 The Chair advised that the Minutes were therefore approved and signed.
07.07.25	Matters arising from the Minutes for the previous Meetings not covered in the agenda. -To approve Addendum wording to be uploaded to the Parish Council website and linked with the 24th of January 2024 as follows: <i>"Please note a clarification regarding Agenda Item 14.01.24 (Finance - Precept Request) from the 24th January 2024, Parish Council Meeting Draft Minutes. The actual precept amount submitted to Torridge District Council was £38,000. This discrepancy was discussed and formally noted in the Parish Council Meeting Minutes of 25th June 2025."</i> At 7:43 p.m., while the Chair was reading this agenda item Councillor Odulinski left the room. The Council then formally addressed the clarification regarding the precept request from 24th January 2024. The discrepancy between the amount originally recorded and the actual amount submitted to the Torridge District Council (£38,000) was acknowledged. It was proposed that this be formally corrected with an addendum on the Council's website. The resolution was approved by those Councillors present.

	Following the vote, the Clerk suggested a five-minute break, as a total of three Councillors had now left the meeting. The Chair announced that the meeting would be temporarily stopped to allow the remaining members to take a break. The meeting paused at 7:44 p.m. ***Meeting resumed at 7.55pm.*** All Councillors who had left the meeting returned to the room. The Chair asked the Councillors to return to the next item on the Agenda 08.07.25 To receive updates and report from the People Services Committee Following receipt of Cllr Odulinski's report she went onto talk about the recent community events. (i) Community Activities Fair and Awards The feedback from the Community Awards was overwhelmingly positive and proposed to make it an annual event due to its success in fostering cross-generational engagement. There was also a suggestion to create a Youth Council to better serve younger residents. With respect to the Community Activities Day, which had low attendance, Cllr Odulinski advised the Council that based on feedback from a local sports club, it was proposed to rename the event to the Community Activities Fair and move it to September 2026 to align with the start of the academic year. The motion to hold the event in September 2026 was proposed by Cllr Warner seconded by Cllr Phillips and approved. (Resolution No. 2025-001) Cllr Odulinski proposed to make the Community Awards an annual event. While some concerns were raised about the time commitment for Councillors, it was argued that much of the initial foundational work was now complete, making future events less labour-intensive. The council agreed that the awards are essential for community outreach and recognition, and that momentum should not be lost. It was also suggested that the council should recruit volunteers from the community and local businesses to help with planning and execution. A formal resolution to continue the Community Awards in 2026 was proposed was proposed by Cllr Keys and seconded by Cllr Phillips and approved. (Resolution No. 2025-002) <i>"Item (ii) The Parish Council's Policies & Procedures was inadvertently not addressed at this point in the meeting." This item was later raised by Cllr Odulinski and discussed immediately prior to Agenda Item 16.07.25. See 08.07.25 (ii) The Parish Council's Policies & Procedures for the discussion.</i> (iii) Communications The Chair reminded the Councillors concerning the procedural motion regarding the public posting of agendas and minutes, and that it was agreed in the previous PC Meeting, to publish all agendas and minutes, including those of subgroups, on a notice board in the main hall of the Community Centre. He proposed a formal resolution to this effect. The motion was seconded by Cllr Wonnacott, but with one abstention and passed unanimously, marking formal approval for transparent publication of meeting records. (Resolution No. 2025-003)
09.07.25	To receive Report from the Parish Environment Committee – incorporating Street Safety Group Report a) Cemetery – consideration of annual rise of fees of 3% yearly (ii) Clerk to raise a Purchase Order for Roger Hill to undertake the required work as agreed at the Environment meeting 9th July 2025 his being the best quote. b) Benches – report on maintenance (iv) Bus Shelter planning application (v) Access to Village signs (vi) East Park Close Splay (vii) Speed monitoring – More monitoring (viii) Dog Poo Bins (ix) Playground The Councillors discussed the above Agenda subjects, and the following is a resume of outcomes and further actions: Cemetery – consideration of annual rise of fees of 3% yearly

Following discussion of a proposed 3% annual increase in the fees, it was clarified that the increase should have taken effect in April. After a brief debate, a proposal was put forward to implement the increase starting **1st August 2025**. This motion was proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Jacobs and passed unanimously. The Chair confirmed that future increases will be implemented consistently each April, and the Clerk was asked to set a reminder.

(Resolution No. 2025-004)

- **Request to produce Purchase Order for work to be carried out as agreed at the Environment Committee Meeting of 9th July 2025.**

The discussion on this related to authorising a Purchase Order for Roger Hill to conduct work as per agreed at the above Meeting of the 9th of July, as it was the most competitive. Cllr Phillips proposed, and Cllr Jacobs seconded the motion, which passed with one abstention from Cllr Wonnacott.

(Resolution No. 2025-005)

- **Bench Maintenance**

Cllr Warner gave a brief update, noting that some benches—such as the one near the King's Arms—had been recently repaired by Cllr Keys and himself. However, he advised that two other benches have rotten or loose slats, which certainly pose safety issues. He suggested further assessment was required and he felt that further assistance would be required which would hopefully be supplied by a local repair person as there are also remaining benches needed sanding. He advised that further coordination with others was pending.

- **Bus Shelter Planning Application**

It was confirmed that all necessary paperwork has been completed and ready for submission with the applicable fees once these have been forwarded to the Parish Clerk so that payment can be arranged promptly.

- **Village Signage Access**

Discussion followed regarding this item and also included the aspect of road safety. It was noted that no immediate action was required on existing signage, however, Cllr Warner advised that there was ongoing correspondence about adding a new blue sign to warn heavy goods vehicles, which had been met with resistance from the Highways Authority due to concerns about sign clutter.

Further discussion highlighted dangerous road conditions in some areas not covered by current restrictions, particularly on narrow lanes. The bureaucratic challenges of getting new signs approved were noted, with responsibility split between multiple Parishes and Council levels. The Council agreed to attempt lobbying through official channels but acknowledged that success would be uncertain.

A brief discussion also took place regarding an unofficial cone installed by a resident near a house that had been involved in past traffic incidents. While the resident's intent was understood, it was noted that the cone could be removed by authorities if discovered.

- **East Park Close Splay – officially marked as completed.**

- **Speed monitoring**

This was acknowledged as ongoing, Committee Members agreed that further checks need to be conducted. Specific concerns were raised about Hatherleigh Road and Exeter Road. A new complaint received suggested that heavy vehicles passing early on Sunday mornings may be disturbing the foundations of older homes on Exeter Road.

- **Dog Poo Bins**

Cllr Warner advised that a proposal was made to install a new dog waste bin near the start of Footpath adjacent to High Moor View, and following a recent inspection had been informally approved. He advised that the cost would be in the region of £100. After discussion by the Councillors, it was agreed that the most feasible option would be for Torridge District Council to supply and install the bin, as this includes their maintenance and emptying services. A motion to proceed with the purchase and installation by Torridge District Council was proposed by Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Warner, and passed unanimously. It was confirmed that Cllr Warner would forward the necessary details so that TDC can be contacted to begin the formal process.

	• Playground – upgrades and safety concerns It was noted that Torridge District Council has secured a grant of approximately £126,000 for playground improvements, which would likely be split among several sites. Proposed upgrades for Elms Meadow Playground include a larger swing and interactive ground games. Cllr Warner advised that a significant safety concern has been raised about a roundabout at the High Moor View playground, which has an overly large gap underneath. This issue was first identified in March's inspection report, but action from Torridge has been slow. The Councillors expressed frustration with the delay and called for the issue to be addressed urgently or for the equipment to be temporarily closed. It was also suggested that inspection reports for Westcots Drive and Elms Meadow be requested too. *** 3 members of the public left the meeting ***
10.07.25	Parish Council Policies and Practices: Committee Restructure 1: To consider the Planning Group be placed under the Environment Committee, thereby incorporating the areas: Cemetery; Bungalow; Street Safety; Planning and Highways The Councillors discussed the grouping (as detailed) and following consideration on the category labels, such as "street safety" and "highways" and after further deliberation a motion was proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Jacobs to adopt the restructure. (Resolution No. 2025-006) Cllr Odulinski asked Cllr Warner about the planning group's identity and purpose. It was confirmed that the group has functioned effectively and generated useful insights for the Council, particularly in interpreting planning applications. Rather than replacing or reforming the group, members favoured maintaining its current structure and contributions, simply under the Environment Committee's oversight. It was also emphasised that their past work has included forward-thinking recommendations, and their continued involvement is seen as valuable. The Chair gave clarification to ensure all members are aligned on the implications. He explained that while reporting responsibilities may shift to Cllr Warner under the new structure, the core function and composition of the planning group itself will remain unchanged, as basically the changes are largely administrative and will not affect the substance of the group's activities. Committee Restructure 2: To consider the merging of the Finance & Governance Committee and People Committee. This motion received quick support as it was noted that it simplifies the Council's committee structure, improving efficiency and reducing overlap in responsibilities. With no objections or counterpoints raised, Cllr Phillips proposed, and Cllr Jacobs seconded the motion. (Resolution No. 2025-007)
11.07.25	Planning Cllr Odulinski advised that there had not been any planning applications nor decisions received from TDC for the Planning Sub-Committee to review.
12.07.25	Finance The following had been previously circulated to all the Councillors and were presented at the meeting for approval. c) Schedule of Payments and Receipts since last Meeting held on 28th May 2025 was received and the Clerk asked that the Internal Auditors invoice of £250 also be included for approval, as it had only been received that afternoon. d) The Bank Reconciliation to 30th June 2025. It was also confirmed that the copies would be uploaded to the Parish Council's website under the Finance section. Cllr Phillips formally proposed and seconded by Cllr Jacobs that the payments (including the Internal Auditor fee) should be approved for payment as well as the approval of the Bank Reconciliation. This was unanimously agreed f) <i>The Accounts and Budget update to 30th June 2025 was not discussed nor approved at the Meeting and will be updated and reviewed at the September PC Meeting.</i>

13.07.25	To receive Report from Finance and Governance Committee: The Chair informed the Councillors that the Council has subscribed to Scribe (the financial management tool) and data has been initially entered but awaited confirmation from the Clerk to ensure that there were no initial data inputting errors. The Clerk confirmed that they had been checked during that afternoon and found no major issues and bank balances had been updated as requested. The Chair expressed his hope that the Scribe will be fully functional by the Council's September Meeting, which should significantly reduce the workload for future financial reporting and audit compliance.
14.07.25	S106 Issues Cllr Warner advised no new developments to report.
15.07.25	Paths and By-ways Report Cllr Warner confirmed that he had previously added updates regarding the Parish's designated carriageway as well as including a DCC (Devon County Council) map for reference. He also reported that a form is available for people to report issues related to public paths. However, he did point out that there was a need for better organisation regarding which councillors are responsible for inspecting which paths throughout the year. The Chair noted that this would be an annual responsibility.
08.07.25	Item (ii) The Parish Council's Policies & Procedures Cllr Odulinski noted that this agenda item had been overlooked. The Chair apologised and asked her to continue with her report, and she proceeded to explain that three key areas have been identified and emphasised the necessity of proactive risk planning and documentation: • Scheme of Delegation: Intended to be incorporated into the Standing Orders, which have not yet been reviewed. • Risk Management and Assessment: Not yet formally discussed in meetings. The Assistant Clerk has provided templates, and a basic risk assessment for the use of the Community Hall. • Evacuation Procedures: There is a need to establish and communicate clear evacuation procedures for community facilities. It was also noted that a general event risk template is being developed. It was noted by Cllr Phillips that with regard to venue safety, the Council rents the Community Centre, so the Centre is responsible for its own safety procedures. Discussion then moved to lone working policies, with a reminder that Councillors and their employees who work from home should complete a risk assessment to protect both themselves and the Council from liability. <i>**Parish Clerk's Note: It is noted that the matter concerning the resolution to agree the policies for each Committee to work on and the associated target dates for completion as detailed in the People Services Committee Report was not discussed and this will be deferred until the next Parish Council Meeting**.</i>
16.07.25	Parish Matters a) Applications for Parish Council Grants It was reported that only one application had been received by the deadline: a request for £500 from Winkleigh Football Club for new goals. It was clarified that the goals are for the men's team, and the club is also seeking the remaining 75% of the cost from the Football Foundation. The council agreed to grant the £500 to the club. A discussion on inclusivity in local football led to an amendment being added to the grant's wording, encouraging the club to promote inclusivity and consider expanding to support women's teams in the future. The motion was proposed by Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Warner and the grant was passed unanimously. Due to the low number of applications received, the Council agreed to launch a second grant application round, with advertising planned for September 2025 with a view to reviewing and granting in November 2025.
05.07.25	Chawleigh Housing Project: Proposal to Convene a Parish Meeting To consider a proposal from the Chair to convene a Parish Meeting on Wednesday, 17th September 2025 - to discuss the Chawleigh Housing Project. District Councillor Simon Newton has been invited to attend. The Councillors began to discuss this project as it was noted from earlier in the Meeting that Mrs S. Jeens was to contact District Cllr Simon Newton with regard to a potential Parish Meeting on the 17th of September 2025

17.07.25	***At 8.53pm it was proposed by Cllr Keys and seconded by Cllr Phillips to extend the meeting for a further 15 minutes, with full agreement from the Councillors***. The Councillors resumed discussing the project and emphasised the importance of learning from similar community-led housing initiatives and engaging residents early in the process. A proposal was made to hold a Parish Meeting (open to all parish electors) on 17th September 2025 to discuss the initiative. The purpose of the meeting would be for residents to hear from District Cllr Simon Newton and Sharon Jeens and provide input. The motion to hold and publicly advertise the meeting was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Phillips and passed unanimously. A.O.B. • Approval of August Salary Payments for Clerks The Chair then asks the Councillors to approve the scheduled payments for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for August 2025, as there is no Council meeting planned for that month. He read out the proposal: the council should approve the gross salary payments totalling £1,508.16, the net amount of £1,206.53, and authorise the HMRC contributions of £301.63. Cllr Phillips seconded the motion and is passed by the Council. The Clerk explained that while the employment contracts stipulate monthly pay, the previous Clerk had handled August payments informally via email. In contrast, they are now aiming for a more transparent, formal process that reinforces accountability to the community. Staff Appraisals and Feedback Request Cllr Odulinski reminded everyone that the <i>People Committee</i> will meet in August to conduct performance appraisals for both the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. The appraisals will also establish objectives moving forward into September. Members are asked to review two forms that are part of the staff appraisal process: • Appendix A: A self-assessment form for staff members to reflect on their performance. • Appendix B: A form for councillors to provide feedback on what has gone well and what could improve. These are intended to foster a fair, constructive discussion during the appraisals. Councillors are encouraged to complete and return the forms on time, once the dates are set. The Clerk confirmed that the dates and times for the appraisals have already been coordinated with her Assistant and herself, and that the appropriate room at the Community Centre would be secured, and the relevant information would be sent to the relevant attendees. At the close of the meeting, the Chair issued a public apology to Cllr Odulinski, for his raised voice and the distress his comments may have caused during the early part of the Meeting. He noted that he was not retracting his earlier comments but wished to formally apologise for the way it was delivered. The Chair also made it clear that he was open to the matter being reviewed by the Monitoring Officer at TDC if Cllr Odulinski felt it was warranted. Cllr Odulinski expressed appreciation for the apology and advised that she did not intend to escalate the matter, and it was important that all Councillors worked together collaboratively and productively moving forward. The Clerk advised that this would be duly recorded in the Meeting's Minutes. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.
----------	---

Meeting ended at 9.01pm.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 24th September 2025

Chair..... Date.....