

Minutes of the Meeting of Marwood Parish Council held on the 3rd April 2025 in the Marwood Methodist Church Hall, Guineaford

Present

Cllr C Latham (Chairman), Cllr D Chugg (Vice Chairman), Cllr R Berry, Cllr P Barker, Cllr A Bend, Cllr A Harvey-Bryant, Cllr D Hunt, County Councillor A Davis

Officer(s)

S Parkin (Clerk to the Council)

5380 Apologies for Absence

Cllr N Plumb, Cllr C Wallis, District Councillor J Hunt

5381 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th February 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes, as previously circulated, be approved.

5382 Report of the County Councillor

Attached to these minutes. Includes information on local government re-organisation, HAF programme and speed through Muddiford. Currently in pre-election period which restricts activity.

Cllr D Chugg arrived 7:15pm.

5383 Questions for County Councillor

It was asked what the County Councillor envisages will happen regarding the local government re-organisation. She is unsure as Torbay and Plymouth are Labour. After the May 1st elections the newly elected councillors will be required to submit a full proposal by November 28th.

5384 Report of the District Councillor

The District Councillor was unable to attend but a copy of her report is attached to these minutes. Includes information on local government re-organisation, the Devon Bus Network and Springfest.

5385 Police Report

There was no report at the meeting although up to date information is available online at https://www.facebook.com/BrauntonPolice/?locale=en_GB&_rd=1

5386 Correspondence

The following correspondence had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

- 2024/25 AGAR external auditor instructions

5387 Finance Matters

There were no financial matters discussed.

5388 Planning Applications

- **Planning Application 79987** at Herders Kings Heanton Barnstaple Devon EX31 4ED – erection of single storey rear extension to dwelling
RESOLVED the application to be recommended for **APPROVAL**.

It was proposed that video calls for applications received between Parish meetings be trialed. Clerk to arrange.

5389 Reports from Councillors

There were no reports.

Cllr Barker enquired regarding the Ring O' Bells committee.

5390 Ongoing Matters

- Bank accounts – once the Clerk has received all previous financial paperwork from previous acting Clerk, additional bank mandates can be circulated to add signatories to the account.

5391 Chairman's Discretion

There were no items discussed.

5392 Confidential Business

No confidential business.

Date of AGM: 8th May 2025, 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 7:45

Chairman:

Dated: / /

**Marwood Parish Council
District Councillor's report
April 2025**

NDC Report – Cllr Julie Hunt

Devon Bus Network – From 20th April 2025 there will be changes to the Devon bus network. Stagecoach are making changes to their services to improve reliability and punctuality, and there are also some improvements to services funded by Devon County Council using HM Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding. A comprehensive list of all of the changes and improvements, plus new timetables, can be found on the Travel Devon website.

Springfest – North Devon Springfest at Barnstaple Pannier Market on Sunday 13th April from 10am - 4pm. Following the success of the October Foodfest there will now be a springtime celebration packed with food, drink, plants, homemade crafts, live music, workshops, entertainment, demos and more! Smack bang in the middle of the Easter Holidays.

By 2030, Devon will most likely be split into 2, 3 or 4 unitary authorities, which would mean saying goodbye to the current County and District councils and replacing them with new, all-inclusive councils. There have been lots of meetings (occasionally heated) with more to be had. Currently there are a lot of focus on the boundaries. Exeter and Plymouth have both expressed a desire to "go it alone" while rural communities have expressed concerns that

they will face significant difficulties if they are not paired up with a city. Ultimately, we will not know the shape of the new unitary authorities until Spring 2026.

North Devon Council (along with several other district councils) have proposed a unitary authority that incorporates Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge but there are a plethora of other options on the table. There are still a lot of discussions to be had so nothing has been set in stone! We need to make sure that all our parishes are protected, strengthened and enhanced by the new unitary authority. Ensuring that the specific needs of Northern Devon and isolated rural communities are fully considered. North Devon Council will continue to examine all options before reaching any firm conclusions, in particular options that reflect the different cultures, economies and communities across rural and urban areas of Devon recognising the distinctiveness of Northern Devon.

Marwood Parish Council County Councillors report April 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

The update is that Devon County will have a full council meeting last month councillors voted on the County Submission: several options have been submitted so that the new council after May 1st can work on what is the best option for the whole of Devon.

Link to the report;

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=5326&Ver=4>

Background below;

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 all 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 5th 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.

A399 Bray Valley

Many of you will know I've been campaigning for the road to be repaired for many months, it is not in the area I represent but it is a vital road for many of us accessing the A361 North Devon Link Road. The road will be repaired under a full closure, subject to weather and any extenuating circumstances overnight Monday 7th April to Wednesday 16th April 7pm-06.00am

Muddiford

I've had a conversation with the road safety officer recently about the speeds through Muddiford, we have some new data and although I cannot take anything forward in the pre election period I have asked that this is looked at post election with whoever gets elected.

School holidays activity and food programme

The Programme for Spring is now live.

DCC have partnered with EEQU to use a new booking system which is better for families, here is the link please have a look at the activities available there is a map you can search in your own area. <https://eequ.org/devonhaf> .It will automatically check eligibility as well.

There are over 100 schemes offering physical activity and food for 4 hours for 4 days over the Spring holiday parents may book up to 4 session per child.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/eycs/new-booking-system-makes-it-easier-for-parents-to-access-holiday-activities-and-food-programme/>

The DCC website is very useful for reporting highway problems and the reports go straight to the contractor. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>

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; <https://www.traveldevon.info/>

Finally from me a personal note;

Thank you for being such a lovely Parish Council and residents, I've had a great time coming to the meetings and meeting so many of you, I hope to be back after May 1st but if I'm not re elected I want to wish you well for the future.

*Andrea Davis
County Councillor*

*Combe Martin Rural Division
Andrea.davis@devon.gov.uk*